

Report title: Supporting Local Bus Services – Public Consultation	
Report to: Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Report author: Helen Morris, Head of Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (IPTU)	
Date: 22 June 2023	For: Discussion and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
Enquiries to: Helen Morris - Helen.Morris@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Place Services and Economic Growth Policy and Scrutiny Committee (PSEG) is responsible for scrutinising Strategic Highways and Transportation including public transport. The Committee is asked to consider the upcoming public consultation on bus services (**Appendix 1**).
- 1.2 At its 23 May meeting, Cabinet considered a paper [Supporting Local Bus Services - 2024 onwards](#) (**Appendix 2**) and agreed to consult on the following:
 - (a) Retendering the 97 Local Bus contracts, with an approximate annual net cost of £4.9m, for a four-year period with the possibility of extending for a further two years.
 - (b) The re-design and re-procurement of 43 contracts: the 39 Local Bus contracts with an approximate annual net cost of £3.3m and 4 new Local Bus contracts with an approximate annual net cost of £1.1m for a two-year period with an option for extension for up to a further three years.
 - (c) That the consultation referred to in (b) will be on the basis that if these services are not on course to meet the subsidy requirement of no more than £5 per passenger journey by the time we need to make a decision on what happens after the end of the two year period, the Council may consult on withdrawal, noting that consultation would not take place until 2025 at the earliest.
 - (d) The withdrawal of the 21 low use Local Bus contracts, where the cost is currently more than £10 per passenger journey.

It was noted that following the consultation, decisions on which services to extend; which services to procure; which services to award; and which services to withdraw will be taken by the Cabinet Member for Highway Maintenance and Sustainable Transport as long as decisions can be accommodated within the overall local bus budget.
- 1.3 At the Cabinet meeting, it was agreed that the draft consultation should be considered by the appropriate scrutiny committee ahead of publication.

2. Action required

The Committee is asked to

- Note the decision taken by Cabinet on 23 May (Appendix 2);
- Consider the draft public consultation (Appendix 1) and suggest any additions or amendments before publication; and
- Consider how the Committee would like to respond to the consultation.

3. Links to Everyone's Essex

Everyone's Essex sets out the following strategic priorities for Essex County Council (ECC). That Essex:

- Has a strong, inclusive and sustainable economy
- Has a high-quality environment
- Offers health wellbeing and independence for all ages
- Is a good place for children and families to grow

Buses contribute to all these outcomes. They support economic growth by getting people to work, training and school. They support the reduction of adverse air quality emissions and carbon emissions. They allow young people, older people and those with disabilities or without cars to travel. They support diverse and thriving communities and help combat loneliness and isolation.

4. Next Steps

The Committee is asked to consider the proposed bus consultation and suggest any additions or amendments before publication.

Expected attendees to support the discussion:

Councillor Lee Scott – Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport and Highways Maintenance

Helen Morris – Head of IPTU

The Committee is also asked to consider how it would like to respond to the consultation and specifically whether it would like to respond as a committee or as individuals.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Draft Bus Consultation (please note that this draft is presented without formatting or design)

Appendix 2 - Cabinet Report - Supporting Local Bus Services - 2024 onwards.