

Forward Plan reference number: 'Not applicable'

Report title: TravelEssex Marketing Role	
Report to: Helen Morris, Head of Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (IPTU)	
Report author: Rachael Price, Lead for Commercial Operations	
Date: 04 MarchJanuary 2024	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: All	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Executive Director to extend the fixed term position of Marketing and Communications Officer at a value of £86,478 for a period of two-years.
- 1.2 To seek approval of a Marketing budget of £40,000 in 2024/25, fully funded by Supported Bus Services Grant.

2 Background and Proposal

- 2.1 In June 2021 the cabinet agreed to pursue an Enhanced Partnership (EP) between ECC as the Local Transport Authority (LTA) and bus operators whereby both sides agree to introduce a series of measures designed to improve the overall bus service (FP/063/05/21).
- 2.2 The National Bus Strategy stated LTAs must publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) setting out how they will increase the number of people travelling by bus, and how they will make travelling by bus more attractive than travelling by car for more people. In October 2021 ECC published their BSIP.
- 2.3 The BSIP objective is to increase the number of people travelling by bus and the Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP) sets out how ECC will do this. The EP plan includes a commitment by ECC to develop and launch a joint marketing campaign with bus operators.
- 2.4 In November 2022 the Head of IPTU approved the recruitment of Marketing and Communications Officer on a two-year fixed term contract and the successful candidate started in February 2023.
- 2.5 This role ensures ECC fulfils the EP commitment to provide a joint marketing campaign with bus operators.
- 2.6 Under the TravelEssex brand this role successfully currently works with marketing representatives from local transport providers and is delivering a Marketing Plan to market all bus services, supported and commercial, to make bus travel more accessible and attractive. Among the notable successes are

the awareness and use of the TravelEssex App – over 40,000 residents have downloaded and use the Travel Planning tool to make sustainable travel choices, and a 158% increase in Facebook visits in the last 6 months and a 1700% increase in the number of ‘likes’ on Facebook pages compared with 2022. Marketing measures have contributed to a 14% increase in passenger journeys taken by concessionary bus users (6,836,632 in 2022 increasing to 7,828,961).

2.7 Under the brand TravelEssex, the future Marketing Plan will include:

- Marketing all bus services, supported and commercial, to make bus travel more accessible and attractive.
- Reduce the number of cars in the city centres by marketing the Park and Ride (P&R) services.
- Improve access to customer information by marketing the TravelEssex Information Portal and the TravelEssex Travel Planning tool so bus and non-bus users can easily make sustainable choices. These tools will allow residents to plan their journeys whether that be by bus, walking, cycling, train or other sustainable methods; or a combination of those.
- Market Travel Training services to allow more residents to live independently.

2.8 As a vital part of the overall public transport network in Essex, marketing sustainable transport options can be a key element in achieving a range of ECC’s priorities including:

- Helping deliver economic recovery for the Covid pandemic.
- Achieving Zero Carbon Emissions
- Attracting inward investment from businesses
- Reducing congestion
- Improving air quality
- Allowing Essex residents to access a whole range of services from school, training, and work to health, leisure and shopping.
- Promoting social inclusion

2.9 Therefore, committing to the authorising the marketing role will also help deliver the following Strategic Priorities:

- Help people in Essex prosper by increasing their skills.
- Enable Essex to attract and grow large firms in high growth industries.
- Target economic development to areas of opportunity
- Help keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfil their potential.
- Enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care.
- Improve the health of people in Essex.
- Help to secure stronger, safer, and more neighbourly communities.
- Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment.
- Facilitate growing communities and new homes.
- Limit cost and drive growth in revenue.

- Re-imagine how residents' needs can be met in a digital world.

3 Links to our Strategic Ambitions

3.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision

- Enjoy life into old age.
- Provide an equal foundation for every child.
- Strengthen communities through participation.
- Develop our County sustainably.
- Connect us to each other and the world.
- Share prosperity with everyone.

3.2 This report links to the following strategic priorities in the emerging Organisational Strategy 'Everyone's Essex':

- A strong, inclusive, and sustainable economy
- A high-quality environment
- Health wellbeing and independence for all ages
- A good place for children and families to grow.

4 Options

4.1 **Option 1: Do Nothing (not recommended):** This option would result in the Council being unable to deliver the commitment as set out in the Enhanced Partnership. It would also hinder the Council's ambitions to increase the number of residents using sustainable travel modes for their journeys.

4.2 **Option 2: Authorise the recruitment of Marketing and Communications Officer on a fixed term contract for a further two years (recommended):** The Council has already invested in the development of a new brand TravelEssex, an Information Portal and Travel Planning app, and has ambitions to increase the number of people travelling on the P&R service: this role will ensure that these investments achieve their full benefits. It will also ensure that the Council meets its commitment as set out in the Enhanced Partnership.

5 Issues for consideration

5.1 Financial implications

5.1.1 The cost of a full-time Marketing and Communications Officer post (Grade G) for a further two years is £86,478, inclusive of on-costs. The breakdown by financial year is shown in the table below and include staffing pay assumptions of 4.5% in 2024/25 and 2.5% in subsequent years. This is to be fully funded by the external Supported Bus Services Grant.

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total (24 months)
	£	£	£	£
Marketing & Communications Officer	3,479	42,792	40,207	86,478

5.1.2 As the Officer will have been employed for longer than two years they could be entitled to a redundancy payment at the end of the fixed term. The potential redundancy cost would be in the range of £1,900 to £5,700 depending on the age of the employee, assuming their total employment is for 4 years. This is to be funded from existing Passenger Transport budgets.

5.1.3 In addition to the staffing costs, the service intends to undertake marketing linked to the marketing plan in paragraph 2.7 at an estimated cost of £40,000 in 2024/25. This will be funded from the external Supported Bus Services Grant that ECC has received.

6 Equality and Diversity Considerations

7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8 List of Appendices

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Helen Morris, Head of IPTU	04/03/2024