

		AGENDA ITEM 9
		<b>PSEG/20/16</b>
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	12 September 2016	
LOCAL BUS CONSULTATION: LOCAL BUS TENDER ROUND 2017		
Enquiries to:	Christine Sharland, Scrutiny Officer 0245 430450 Christine.sharland@essex.gov.uk	

In July 2016 a briefing paper was circulated electronically to Committee Members setting out background on a consultation that was due to be published on 'Local Bus Tender Round 2017' in August and September. At that stage the Committee's feedback was invited on how best to engage with councillors on this issue from a strategic perspective with the expectation that specific route changes would tend to be matters for the individual Local Member to take forward through the consultation itself.

### **Overview of briefing paper**

There are **67** local bus services with contracts that are due to expire in 2017. The County Council has followed the standard procedure for reviewing the network when contracts are expiring.

Last year consultation was undertaken on a revised local bus network covering the majority of services which taxpayers support. However, there were around 70 services where contracts were due to expire in 2017 and were not part of that review. All districts, except Tendring will be affected but the majority of the changes are in Braintree, Epping, Harlow and Chelmsford.

Most of these contracts have been in place for 7 years, so the tender prices are likely to increase. In addition over those seven years there have been changes in passenger usage and increased congestion.

Therefore, as is standard practice and a part of the re-design, it is proposed to make some larger changes to some services, including timetable changes and in

some cases the use of smaller vehicles. These changes are to reflect actual usage patterns and in order to maximise the likelihood that services will come in below £5 per passenger journey. So the changes in the re-design are to:

- Reflect changes in usage and travel
- Ensure that as many of the routes as possible meet the £5 value for money test

### **Summary of proposals**

- 21 services will be subject to either no change (**18** services) or only minor timetable changes (**3** services). These services are not exceeding or close to the ECC maximum subsidy level.
- 5 services will be withdrawn, either where there are commercial alternatives, or where the service is not sufficiently used to be viable.
- **6** services in Maldon will be reviewed in a separate consultation later in 2016 to allow the impact of the de registration of the Monday to Friday 91, 92 and 95 services in the areas affected to be taken into consideration.
- **12** services will see changes to the way in which they are currently delivered. These rural lifeline services are currently exceeding our maximum funding level per passenger journey or very likely to when tendered. Alternate transport such as shopper services, the use of a smaller vehicle more suited to the rural roads and demand responsive transport are being considered.
- It is proposed to make major changes to the timetables of **23** services. Due to the reasons outlined above it is expected that there will be a significant rise in the cost when we go out to tender. This will mean these services may exceed the maximum cost per passenger journey. For the majority of these services two or more options are being considered. The consultation asks residents to comment on each option. All options will be tendered. Options where the cost per passenger journey exceeds £5 can be disregarded and the affordable option put forward as a viable service.

Overall the re-design is seeking to protect the network. There will inevitably be changes to some individual journeys that are unwelcome, but the proposals try to minimise these while protecting the service by reducing cost. We will test the impact on individuals through consultation.

### **Next Steps....**

No particular issues were raised by Committee Members in response to the

briefing paper, albeit the opportunity to learn about proposals before they were circulated more broadly was welcomed.

At the next Committee meeting Helen Morris, Director for Place Commissioning, will be attending to provide an oral update on passenger transport matters.

**Action required by the Committee:**

**To note the action taken in July to advise the Committee about the proposed Local Bus Consultation.**

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