

		AGENDA ITEM 7
		<b>PSEG/09/17</b>
Committee:	Place Services and Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee	
Date:	23 February 2017	
<p><b>PASSENGER TRANSPORT</b> (Minute 8 / 22 September 2017)</p>		
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Deborah Fox, Head of Commissioning, Connected Essex Infrastructure (Passenger Transport) will be attending this meeting to update the Committee on Passenger Transport matters affecting Essex. A briefing paper is attached at the Appendix to this report.

The primary purpose of bringing this item to this meeting is for the sharing of information rather than conducting any specific in depth scrutiny on this particular occasion. Nevertheless following the County Council elections in May 2017 there are several matters that may be considered for potential inclusion in the Scrutiny Committee's work programme providing that a more in depth investigation would, in practice, add value to the consideration of how certain aspects of passenger transport might evolve in the future. By way of example:

- How might the County Council work with communities better to ensure passenger numbers increase?
- How might the County Council reduce the tax-payer subsidy of its park and ride sites?
- How might the County Council improve the market for those bus services that it supports?

**Action required by the Committee at this meeting:**

**To receive the planned update on passenger transport matters.**

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## **Appendix**

### **Delivering the Getting Around in Essex Bus Strategy**

Briefing paper prepared by Deborah Fox, Head of Commissioning, Connected Essex Infrastructure

Dated 3 February 2017

#### **1. Introduction and background**

A lot has changed since the launch of 'Getting Around in Essex – a bus and passenger transport strategy' in June 2015. There have been some significant challenges, as well as many opportunities. However, progress has been made in delivering the three objectives that were set:

- To support growth in the network by improving services
- To maximise the economic and social benefits of our services
- And for Essex County Council, to deliver good value for money and cost effectiveness for taxpayers.

This is a seven year strategy and the contribution made by all partners in this first year has been welcomed. The challenges that both the bus industry and local government face should not be underestimated.

1.1. This is a summary of recent progress and challenges in delivering the Getting Around in Essex Bus Strategy (the Bus strategy). It may be read alongside the bus strategy and the local bus priority policy, which may be found here: <http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Getting-Around/Bus/Bus-review.aspx> (See the documents at the bottom of the web page: Bus Strategy (40 pages) and Local Bus Service Priority Policy 2015 to 2020). In addition, section 10 of this briefing covers a new ECC vision for 'transport integration', which is an emerging approach.

1.2. Through the Bus Strategy was published in 2015. It aims to deliver a long term strategy for improving passenger transport (bus, minibus, taxi and community transport) services in Essex. It contains eight areas for strategic action in order to make bus travel better, easier and the way that more people get around:

- a. Working in partnership
- b. Customer quality commitment
- c. Better, well-used services
- d. Support for valuable, but not commercial, services
- e. Good customer information
- f. Tailored solutions
- g. Ticketing
- h. Focused local planning.

There are at least 15 active projects underway to deliver the Bus Strategy. A list of these is available upon request.

1.3. Successes and challenges are reported in various ways. Terms of reference and membership are available for the following structures:

- A new strategic partnership with a formal Board that meets quarterly to review progress, address issues and identify new opportunities.
- An external Bus Forum, which includes members, operators and community stakeholders, such as bus and rail user groups.

1.4. Other forums provide partnership arrangements to help ECC officers to deliver the Bus Strategy. A summary could be made available from:

- Transport representatives meetings every six months, with operators and local representatives such as parish councils or ward members in unparished areas.
- Colchester Blueprint meetings with Colchester Borough Council and operators and other stakeholders.
- Confederation of Passenger Transport meetings, to help build our partnership with the passenger transport sector.

1.5. Success is monitored by hard measures, such as passenger numbers and net cost. Operators also contribute data to a system of KPIs collated by ECC Contract Management colleagues.

1.6. Performance to others is compared nationally. Around the country, passenger numbers are declining. The next report on passenger figures is May/June 2017.

1.7. The three Essex park and ride sites (Sandon and Chelmer Valley in Chelmsford and north Colchester) have plans to increase passenger numbers and use the sites effectively. There is an opportunity for scrutiny members to feed into the plans through identifying the item as suggested item for scrutiny work programme.

1.8. An update on each of the eight areas for strategic action follows.

## **2. Working in partnership**

2.1. A multi-operator quality partnership on route 88 from Colchester to Halstead to improve service quality, grow passenger numbers and provide a model for others areas. This is together with First and Hedingham (Go-Ahead).

2.2. The Colchester Bus Blueprint has nine elements that are being worked on with Colchester Borough Council and operators:

- 2.2.1. Vision
- 2.2.2. Ticketing
- 2.2.3. Business Engagement
- 2.2.4. Current Services
- 2.2.5. New developments
- 2.2.6. Car Parking Provision & Pricing

- 2.2.7. Marketing Bus Travel In Colchester
- 1.1.1. Town Centre Bus Hub Infrastructure
- 1.1.2. Route and Stop Infrastructure.

To date, circa 100 local infrastructure issues have been identified and most of them have been resolved. Local businesses have offered incentives to people travelling to their facilities by bus. Through a local travel club, there is access to local businesses with a combined total of thousands of employees. Operators have looked at maps of proposed developments in Colchester, to see where additional services might be funded through Section 106 agreements or run commercially. This suggests that locality based-working creates better conditions for customers to travel by bus, subject to resources being available.

### **3. Customer quality commitment**

- 3.1. A new bus quality standard has been established, with operators being awarded gold, silver and bronze based on how they perform against the set of criteria that passengers told us were important.

### **4. Better, well used services**

- 4.1. A modernised local bus network bringing value to passengers and tax-payers.
- 4.2. There is a communications plan for reactive and proactive messaging. Current challenges include reactive messaging on commercial withdrawals, which necessitates commercial confidentiality.
- 4.3. In 2016, campaigns were run for children to go free on park and ride in August and opened the Chelmsford park and ride sites on Sundays in the run-up to Christmas. Park and ride sites were free on 'Small Business Saturday' in December.

### **5. Support for valuable, but not commercial services**

- 5.1. There were around 20 commercial service withdrawals in 2016/17. This is a challenging process. The network is largely (around 85%) driven commercially, which is Central Government's preferred approach.
- 5.2. ECC gives a lot more support to the local bus network than other councils – around £7.8 million a year. The statutory requirement is to review non-commercial services and not, as some would believe it, to support any service deemed non-commercial.
- 5.3. Work is underway to secure a new voluntary agreement with operators to a 90 day notification period for significant changes including service

withdrawals. This will help us to find new commercial providers, or community transport, to run services deemed non-commercial.

- 5.4. Three new Demand Responsive Transport services were launched, providing 50 parishes with flexible services to fit their needs.

## **6. Good customer information**

- 6.1. Starting the roll out of real time bus information across the county – a technically complex project that has required significant commitment from all the partners involved and real time bus tracking available on the First and Arriva apps.

## **7. Tailored solutions**

- 7.1. The Total Transport project is to find solutions for people wanting to travel in remote rural areas. This is a project together with Suffolk County Council and FutureGov.

## **8. Ticketing**

- 8.1. Supporting Bus Operators in moving the Colchester Borough Card to a smartphone application ticket.
- 8.2. Operators including First Bus, Ensign and Arriva have developed their own apps.
- 8.3. Online ticket purchasing at Colchester park and ride is being introduced.

## **9. Focused local planning**

- 9.1. Development locations with operators were considered at the Colchester Blueprint meetings. This is to identify where they might establish new services supported by developer contributions.
- 9.2. A scarcity of forward planning by operators was identified in developing the Essex Growth and Infrastructure Framework that would be useful to address.

## **10. Transport integration**

- 10.1. If ECC is to be successful in further reducing spend whilst safeguarding outcomes for citizens, changes to operating practise, processes and policies will be necessary in order to support the development of an an integrated approach, incorporating the wider public and private sector.
- 10.2. The following Vision Statement was developed during the development of the Outline Business Case on Transport Integration to communicate the transformed, beneficial future state to the programme's stakeholders:

*When this programme is completed, ECC will have a holistic, efficient, streamlined and integrated passenger transport system which supports communities to access a range of both public and private services at a reduced cost to the taxpayer.*

10.3. The Programme Objectives are as follows:

By the end of the Programme in March 2018, ECC will have a transport delivery model which

- is aligned to Essex Residents needs
- is sustainable over the longer term
- is informed by a single view of transport supply and demand
- clearly articulates ECC's requirement of the market
- enables improved utilisation of available vehicle capacity.

10.4. The first project in delivery is the 'Getting around in Essex' procurement. The CMA for this was published in December 2016.

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