

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 4 June 2018



Subject: Essex County Council (Passenger Transport) - Scrutiny of External Organisation

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee undertake appropriate external scrutiny of Essex County Council, in response to the concerns of members with regard to the support of local bus services operating across the Epping Forest District.

1. (Director of Governance) As the Committee will recall, Members have expressed a desire to undertake external scrutiny of the support provided for local bus services operating across the Epping Forest District, by Essex County Council.
2. The following representatives of the County Council will therefore be attending the meeting in this regard:

Councillor R. Gooding (Cabinet Member for Education)
3. The following specific issues relating to the services provided by the County were identified by the Committee at its meeting on 17 April 2018, which have been notified to the County Council as the emphasis for such external scrutiny, in order to ensure that maximum value can be derived from this activity:
 - (a) the total budget of Essex County Council for the support of local bus services across Essex and the amount currently allocated to the support of services operating within the Epping Forest District or serving its residents;
 - (b) the level of contracted local bus service provision by the County Council, currently operating within the Epping Forest District or serving its residents (and details of such routes);
 - (c) the level of otherwise financially supported local bus service provision by Essex County Council, currently operating within the Epping Forest District or serving its residents (and details of such routes);
 - (d) the amount of the total budget of the County Council for the support of local bus services across Essex, that is spent on concessionary travel and, bus passes etc.;
 - (e) the plans of the County Council for future changes to local bus services that operate within the Epping Forest District or serve its residents;

- (f) the financial or other constraints faced by the County Council that affect its support of local bus service provision;
 - (g) the County Council's future funding arrangements for the support of local bus services that operate within the Epping Forest District or serve its residents;
 - (h) the cost to the County Council of a single older persons bus pass;
 - (i) the arrangements of the County Council for the modelling of need for the provision of local bus services across the County;
 - (j) the value for money derived from local bus services that are contracted or financially supported by Essex County Council;
 - (k) the arrangements of the County Council for the promotion of local bus services as a more sustainable alternative to other forms of vehicular transport;
 - (l) the general standards expected by the County Council of contracted or financially supported local bus services, in terms of the reliability, roadworthiness and cleanliness of operational vehicles;
 - (m) the requirements of the County Council for the provision of seat belts on contracted local school transport services;
 - (n) the arrangements of the County Council for the identification of new bus service routes (i.e. does the County Council determine where a service is needed and go out to tender or do operators propose routes to the County Council);
 - (o) the effectiveness of the County Council's Bus Strategy and associated Priority Policy;
 - (p) the criteria applied by the County Council for the grant of a licence to an operator for the operation of a specific bus service and route; and
 - (q) the criteria applied by the County Council for the withdrawal of financial support for the operation of a specific bus service and route.
4. The identification of additional lines of questioning to be raised with Essex County Council has also been sought from members through the Council Bulletin.
 5. Details of the County Council's supported bus services (March 2018) is attached as Appendix 1 to this agenda and local bus service route maps are attached as Appendix 2.

Resource Implications:

The recommendations of this report seek to enable scrutiny activity to more effectively meet work programme requirements.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its overview and scrutiny responsibilities. Although external organisations are not generally required by legislation to attend before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is hoped that most would be willing to engage constructively with the Council's scrutiny activity when invited to do so.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the

Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the district.

Consultation Undertaken:

The scrutiny of a number of specific issues relating to the support provided by Essex County Council for local bus services was identified by the Committee at its meeting on 17 April 2018.

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its overview and scrutiny responsibilities.

Equality:

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.