



## OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

### Route 479 Quality Bus Partnership

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010

#### KEY ISSUE

To report on the development of the Route 479 Quality Bus Corridor in Mole Valley, between Guildford and Epsom via Bookham, Leatherhead and Ashted. As well as improving accessibility to key services in those town centres, the route also services key educational facilities such as All Saints and St Andrews schools in Leatherhead.

The service is operated commercially by Countryliner with a small subsidy from Surrey County Council. To date in the region of £200,000 has been committed to this Quality Corridor from three separate funding streams – Local Transport Plan Capital, SEEDA grant and Section 106 contributions.

#### SUMMARY

The Passenger Transport Group would like to make Local Members aware of the extensive work already undertaken on this route, including waiting facilities, passenger information and accessibility improvements, as well as highlighting future improvements to infrastructure and working arrangements that may be delivered through the Quality Bus Partnership.

#### OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to agree that:**

- (i) They will endorse the Route 479 Quality Bus Partnership
- (ii) They will support further improvements to the route where they can be shown to have benefit for residents of Mole Valley

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Surrey County Council, primarily through the Passenger Transport Group but working closely with the Local Transportation Service, are currently in the process of implementing a package of measures targeted at improving passenger transport infrastructure and information along the route of the service 479 Guildford – Bookham – Epsom bus corridor, with the overall aim of encouraging a greater number of passengers to use the service.

1.2 The initial phase of work focussed on the Bookham – Leatherhead – Ashted route section targeting residents/bus users travelling to/from Leatherhead. Similar packages of measures have been implemented in other parts of Surrey through Quality Bus Partnerships (QBP's) and have proved successful in meeting the set targets and objectives of the various schemes.

## 2 ANALYSIS

2.1 A Quality Bus Partnership is a statement of intent, and is not a legal agreement. It provides a schedule of initiatives that the Partners wish to pursue to improve and develop high quality bus services. All QBPs Surrey County Council are involved in have demonstrated a significant increase in ridership and passenger satisfaction as a direct result of the investment in the scheme.

2.2 The partners in the QBP include Surrey County Council, Mole Valley District Council, the bus company (Countryliner), SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) and any other significant trip generator (e.g. school) or interested stakeholder (e.g. access group). Any other significant stakeholder that can add value to the partnership is welcome to join.

2.3 The scope of works undertaken so far include:

- New bus stop poles/flags/information displays at every stop (already done on 479)
- Six buses equipped with RealTime equipment
- Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) installed at Leatherhead North St – Lidl, Fetcham and Bookham. Leatherhead North St – Lloyds – awaiting installation.
- Bus stop accessibility improvements at Sunmead Parade and North Street (Lloyds) Leatherhead
- New bus shelters with lighting and seating
- Safety and security enhancements such as CCTV on buses
- Modern low floor fully accessible buses
- Better printed passenger information including route maps and bespoke route specific information
- Real time passenger information displays
- Access improvements at bus stops to make it easier for passengers to board/alight the buses such as raised kerbs, better pedestrian routes and additional crossing points
- Road markings and traffic management to assist with reducing cars/vans parking at bus stops

2.4 Further works for the future could include:

- Improved waiting facilities for passengers, including additional/replacement bus shelters
- Improved passenger information, including extra RTPI displays at the busiest stops and text updates
- Additional accessibility improvements such as raised kerbs
- New road markings and traffic management

2.5 These improvements could be funded through a combination of sources including:

- Section 106 Developers Contributions
- Bus operators
- External agencies including SEEDA
- District and Parish councils

### **3 OPTIONS**

3.1 To continue developing the QBP with our partners in keeping with Local and National Transport Policy. Failure to invest in the QBP will see an erosion of the advances in patronage and passenger satisfaction already achieved.

### **4 CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 In keeping with the Council's Constitution, para 6.4.2, the Passenger Transport Group will seek agreement from the Local Committee before carrying out any improvement scheme that affects the highway.

### **5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This capital investment to encourage more passengers to use bus services assists with maintaining a healthy, commercial local bus network and reduces the need for County Council revenue support to retain a core local bus network.

### **6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 QBP improvements such as low floor-fully accessible buses and raised kerbs at bus stops improve accessibility for all members of the community, particularly the mobility impaired and those with young children in prams. On bus displays help those with visual and hearing impairments to get off at the right stop. Timetables are available in large font on request. Over 60s and the registered disabled, who are entitled to free bus travel, will be among those groups who benefit most from QBP-associated improvements that help to make bus services more accessible, convenient and sustainable.

### **7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Part of the infrastructure improvements along the 479 include transparent, well-lit shelters that help with perceived and actual personal security. Buses on the route are due to be fitted with CCTV next year, reassuring passengers and assisting with the prosecution of those who commit crimes on the bus. We are also looking at safe and secure routes to bus stops to ensure that public transport users feel and are safe for the entirety of their journey.

## 8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The Route 479 QBP is a success story and an excellent example of partnership working delivering benefits at a local level.
- 8.2 Future development of the 479 corridor will rely on continued partnership working between the interested parties, including local members and Surrey Highways.
- 8.3 The Passenger Transport Group would like Mole Valley Local Committee to formally endorse the Quality Bus Partnership and agree in principle to future development of the 479 quality bus corridor.

## 9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Further investment in the QBP will continue to deliver patronage and satisfaction increases, as well as providing excellent value for money and a vital part of the County Council's sustainable travel agenda.
- 9.2 A formal endorsement of the Route 479 QBP will serve as recognition of the benefits derived from the Quality Bus Partnership concept and the Route 479 in particular.

## 10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 Surrey County Council's Passenger Transport Group will continue to develop the 479 QBP, subject to the continued cooperation of all interested parties and the outcome of the Bus Review.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Version No.      Date:                      Time:                      Initials:                      No of annexes: