



# **Woking Passenger Transport Improvements**

**11 September 2002**

## **KEY ISSUE:**

To inform the Committee of the work programme and initiatives being developed by the Passenger Transport Group in Woking Borough.

## **SUMMARY:**

The programme for Passenger Transport initiatives is in line with the County's strategy to improve transport in Surrey by:

Working in partnership to improve key bus routes, provision of Real Time Passenger Information, improving bus stop infrastructure, submission of an Urban Bus Challenge to promote social inclusion and improve interchange points in partnership with operators.

## **CONSULTATIONS:**

No specific consultation on the report has been undertaken as the aims are in accordance with those of the Local Transport Plan.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

None – this report is for information only.

## INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. The Passenger Transport Group at Surrey County Council has the lead role in developing passenger transport schemes in the County. It does this by working in partnership with others such as Surrey's Local Committees, the Local Transportation Managers, Borough and District Councils, Bus Operators, Train Operating Companies and Railtrack. Schemes are financed through the Local Transport Plan, Department for Transport funding, County revenue budget, transport operators funding and developer contributions.
2. Woking is the busiest rail station in the County and along with Guildford has been identified by South East England Regional Assembly as a potential regional transport hub. The station is also the hub to a well-developed bus network. The best of which is Route 91 that offers up to eight buses per hour west through the Goldsworth Park estate to Knaphill. The success of this commercially run service is largely attributed to the link that it provides to the station for commuters.
3. The projects currently underway or in development in Woking are:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Woking Station Interchange	Improving access to station and bus/rail interchange.
Route 34/35 Guildford - Woking – Camberley	Restructured and strengthened service up to 4 buses per hour using developer funding. New low-floor buses, new bus stops and Real Time Passenger Information will be introduced.
Route 91 QBP	Re-launch of Quality Bus Partnership, introduction of larger buses, Real Time Passenger Information and Rail-bus ticketing
Pyrford - Fullbrook School at New Haw	New school service to reduce car dependency, with attractive fare initiated by Surrey County Council.
Woking-St. Peter's Hospital-Staines	In November an enhanced service with two buses per hour Mon-Sat, up to 21:45 operated commercially.
A245 Transportation Study	The study on this congested corridor is proposing a package of measures to reduce congestion for all traffic and make bus services more attractive.
Urban Bus Challenge – Woking SMARTbus	Surrey County Council have applied to Department for Transport Funding for funding to develop a highly accessible and

Project	Activity
	funding to develop a highly accessible and responsive bus service to serve the Sheerwater and Maybury wards.

## **ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY**

### **Local Bus Services in Woking Borough**

4. Woking is served by 26 bus services covering most parts of the Borough as well as longer-distance links to destinations such as St. Peter's Hospital, Guildford, Camberley, Farnborough, Chobham, Addlestone, Chertsey, Staines, Kingston, Weybridge and Walton. Of these 26 services, 6 are run commercially Mon-Sat daytime. A successful Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) has been operating on Route 91 for three years and another QBP will commence in the next six months of Route 34. Nine different bus operators are responsible for the mixture of commercial and tendered services overall. In addition to these local services there are nine bus services targeted at specific school travel requirements, and these supplement the network of "normal" services

### **Woking Railway Station and Interchange**

5. Last year saw improvements to the bus stops at Woking Railway station to upgrade the lighting and provide better information on bus services. This year It is proposed to install Real Time Passenger Information Boards on the station platforms and in the Waiting Room which will give passengers using Route 91 information on when their next bus will depart.
6. Despite this work there is still much room for improvement to create a high quality interchange, and Surrey County Council is working in partnership with Woking Borough Council, South West Trains and Railtrack to look at a more encompassing scheme to create better waiting facilities. Better parking facilities for cyclists and improved provision of taxi ranks will be addressed.
7. A study is being carried out with Sustrans (the charity responsible for developing the National Cycle Network) to establish a network of pedestrian and cycle routes to Woking Station.
8. The proposal for Woking to be identified as a Regional Transport Hub may generate long term major improvements to the station and interchange together with redevelopment proposals for adjacent sites.

### **Improving Bus Shelters in Woking**

9. As with elsewhere in the County, provision of bus shelters is the responsibility of the Borough and District to arrange. Currently this is done by the Borough or District having an agreement with an outdoor advertising company such as Adshel or J.C. Deceaux who will provide and maintain the shelters for a number of years in return for the right to include illuminated advertising. As well as covering the capital cost of the shelter, the maintenance of the shelter (repairing vandalism etc) can offer a significant saving to the Council and so makes the deal an attractive proposition. The most contentious issue is the need to identify sites where advertising is appropriate. However, all sites require planning permission, so there are safeguards that the Borough or District can exercise.
10. It is understood that the agreement between Adshel and Woking Borough Council was for 15 years commencing in 1998, with Adshel offering to provide and maintain 88 shelters free of charge. Provision exists within the contract for Woking to fund additional bus shelters providing they meet the capital cost and for Adshel to maintain for the life of the contract. The provisions of the contract would need to be checked to see whether there were any restrictions placed on providing shelters from other suppliers in the Borough. If this were possible the cost of maintenance for the life of the shelter would have to be considered along with the capital cost of the shelter.
11. The Local Transportation Manager is considering the best way to finance and procure improved or additional bus shelters, in consultation with the Passenger Transport Group and Woking Borough Council.

### **Route 34/35 Guildford - Woking - Camberley**

12. It is proposed to introduce service enhancements on Route 34 in November 2002 to 4 buses per hour Mon-Sat daytimes between Woking, St Johns, Knaphill, Bisley, West End and Lightwater. This scheme is the fruition of a partnership between Surrey County Council and Arriva to improve the quality of the service. A Quality Bus Partnership will be developed for early next year. The bus service improvements are part of a package of transport measures funded by developers of two sites in the area. A Real Time Passenger Information system will be introduced along the route to be funded by an additional Department for Transport Funding Supplementary Credit Approval. All the bus stop flags along the route will be replaced this year using Local Transport Plan funding.
13. The Local Transportation Manager at Surrey Heath has £100k through the Local Transport Plan this year to bring forward improvements to bus stops (ie raised kerbs and bus stop markings) along the route. At the southern end of the route the new bus lane along the A320 Woking Road will assist bus access to Guildford town centre.
14. The Local Committee may wish to consider supporting these service improvements by bidding for Local Transport Plan funds to upgrade bus stops along Route 34/35 in Woking Borough next year. The provision of

raised kerbs and clearer road markings will make it easier for people with mobility problems to access the buses.

### **Route 91 Knaphill – Goldsworth Park – Woking**

15. This successful Quality Bus Partnership will be re-launched in October 2002 and this will coincide with the introduction of the first rail/bus tickets scheme in Surrey. Surrey County Council has worked in partnership with Arriva and South West Trains to develop this scheme, which will be more convenient for bus and rail passengers. This scheme will enable bus passengers to buy one ticket on the bus that will take them to any rail station in the London fare zone.
16. Following this will be the introduction of a Real Time Passenger Information, giving passengers waiting at bus stops information on when their next bus will arrive. Along the route intelligent bus priority equipment will be installed at the following traffic signals to detect buses and assist late running services make up time:
  - Knaphill High Street / Anchor Hill
  - Lockfield Drive / Victoria Way
  - Victoria Way / Cawsey Way

This commercial operation run by Arriva will also be allocated larger vehicles to provide greater capacity on this increasingly popular service.

### **Pyrford - Fullbrook School at New Haw**

17. In September 2002 Surrey County Council will introduce a new school service between the Pyrford area and Fullbrook School at New Haw. The service will be attractively priced to encourage more school children to use the bus and so reduce car dependency and congestion caused by the journey to school.

### **Woking-St. Peter's Hospital-Staines**

18. In November 2002 an enhanced service between Woking - St. Peter's Hospital - Staines will be introduced providing two buses per hour, Monday to Saturday, until 21:45 in the evening. This service will be operated commercially.

### **A245 Transportation Study**

19. The A245 Study is examining the long term improvement of the eastern corridor that links the A3 at Painshill with Woking Town Centre. This corridor has a number of congested bottlenecks, a recognised regeneration area and two key employment locations. Passenger transport provision is poor despite the close proximity of the London – Woking – Portsmouth line.
20. Consultant WSP has identified that three quarters of the traffic using the A245 is local having it's origin and destination within Woking, Runnymede or Elmbridge. With this in mind the proposed improvement is an integrated transport solution that will involve treating some of the bottlenecks to

benefit all modes of travel. In the long term congestion will be controlled by the provision of improved bus links between the key employment sites, residential areas and transport nodes.

### **Urban Bus Challenge – Woking SMartbus**

21. Surrey County Council has submitted to the Department for Transport Funding an application for funding through the Urban Bus Challenge in order to support the provision of an accessible bus to serve the Sheerwater and Maybury wards. This area is acknowledged to be relatively deprived in comparison with other areas in Surrey and has been awarded funding from the Single Regeneration Budget programme. A bus service will be provided that will provide better access to people with mobility problems and serve local community facilities set up under the Single Regeneration Budget programme. (Please contact the Local Support Officer for Woking, Anita Kim, on 01483 518094 if you would like a copy of the application).

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

22. The Local Committee is asked to support a bid for funding to enable the upgrading of bus stops in the Woking area to compliment the Quality Bus Partnership for Route 34/35 in 2003/4.

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

23. By promoting the use of passenger transport, the Local Committee is providing an alternative to the car that will reduce congestion and pollution.

### **CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

24. The provision of better designed interchanges and lighted bus shelters can reduce the fear of crime.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

25. The provision of low-floor buses and raised kerbs will assist people with mobility problems.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

26. The Woking Local Committee has a key role in supporting measures to improve passenger transport services. This report outlines the extent of the existing programme in the area and explains the roles that the Local Transportation Manager, Passenger Transport Group, Woking Borough Council, Bus Operators, Train Operating Companies and Railtrack have securing and sustaining improvements.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: Nil**

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