



**QUALITY BUS PARTNERSHIP AND  
BUS SERVICES IN THE WOKING  
LOCAL AREA**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR WOKING  
20 October 2005**

**KEY ISSUE:**

To report on progress with the development of a Quality Bus Partnership to the east of Woking, and to update Members on alterations to the local bus network.

**SUMMARY:**

There have been a number of important and positive, alterations to bus services in the Woking area during 2005, which are highlighted in this report. In addition over the last 12 – 18 months a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to progress the aims and objectives of the East Woking Quality Bus Partnership.

**CONSULTATIONS:**

No specific consultations on the report have been carried out other than regular dialogue with bus operators in the area.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

None – this report is for information only.

## INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. Members of the Local Committee requested at the ir meeting of 18 July 2005 an update report on local bus service changes in the Woking local area, and the development and progress with public transport initiatives in the east Woking area.

## ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

### Local Bus Service update

2. There have been a number of important, and positive, alterations to local bus services in the Woking area during 2005. These have included a change of bus operators, increased number of passenger journeys, better information delivery for the marketing of services and the introduction of modern, fully accessible low floor buses. Many of these changes have come about as a direct result of the work Passenger Transport Group and Woking Local Transportation Service are doing with the bus operators to establish a successful Quality Bus Partnership.
3. **Travel London:** During June 2005, the bus company Tellings-Golden Miller sold its entire Surrey bus operations to Travel London, a subsidiary of the National Express Group. To date there have been no changes to services and the same vehicles operate the routes, albeit re-branded externally.
4. **Travel Information Office:** during May we were advised that the Travel Information Office could no longer be accommodated within the Tourist Information in Crown House. This valuable facility was transferred to Woking Library over the summer and the new location has generated a significant increase in enquiries.
5. **Service 472 (Woking – New Haw – Byfleet):** Centra are now using a fully accessible low floor 12 metre Mercedes Citaro bus. This bus is route-branded to strengthen the identity of the service and to personalise it for the users. Passenger Transport Group have installed new bus stop poles and flags, with timetable information at every stop along the entire route as the first stage of an overall route enhancement.
6. **Service 71 (Woking – Old Woking):** On 5 September 2005, Centra introduced additional early morning journeys on this service, thus offering better commuter links into Woking and improving bus/rail integration. These additional journeys will also make this local bus service a more realistic alternative to the private motor car for residents in the new housing developments along the route. Route-branding has also strengthened the identity of the service.
7. **Services 426/446 (Staines – Woking):** Centra have taken over the operation of these routes from Travel London. Additional journeys at school times and early mornings have been introduced, together with later departures from Woking to Sheerwater. As a result of the work being carried

out in partnership in the East Woking area, Centra have invested in additional vehicle resources to improve reliability and timekeeping, and employed more on-road supervision. A new fleet of low floor route-branded buses is planned, as is a joint Centra/Surrey County Council marketing and promotion campaign.

8. **Service 446 (Staines – Woking):** On Sundays a new service has been introduced on route 446 to replace service 442 which was operated by Timetrak and has been withdrawn as it was no longer commercially viable.

### **Quality Bus Partnership**

9. Over the last 12-18 months considerable work has been carried out to progress the aims and objectives of the East Woking Quality Bus Partnership (Woking – Sheetwater – Byfleet). Essentially, the QBP aims to improve bus travel along the corridor through the provision of high quality, reliable and accessible bus services meeting the needs of the local community.
10. A programme to replace all bus stops along the QBP route was completed in early 2005. This included new bus stops poles, bus stop flags providing details on routes, direction of travel and destinations, and the provision of bus timetable information at every bus stop. The bus stop is often the first “contact” a non-user has with the public transport network and research has shown that providing a high quality well maintained environment offers a greater degree of user confidence in the services.
11. The bus stop replacement programme has been complemented by accessibility improvements at bus stops along Albert Drive in Sheerwater. Existing bus bays have been in filled and buses are able to parallel park at the revised stops. This has a two-fold benefit. Firstly, buses are able to pull away from the bus stop and enter the traffic stream with minimal delay thus improving reliability and reducing journey times, and secondly the driver is able to position the entrance door of the bus close to the kerb. This takes advantage of the level access between footway and bus and is of particular benefit to passengers with mobility difficulties and those with buggies/pushchairs or encumbered with shopping. Surveys carried out on other Quality Bus Partnership routes in Surrey have demonstrated a high passenger value placed on this type of initiative.
12. The bus operators have identified a number of traffic management issues that will assist with improving bus services. These include providing bus stop clearways at all stops to prevent indiscriminate parking, and a programme for the implementation of these along the entire route is currently under consideration. In addition, with the move towards longer buses (12 metre which are becoming increasingly common) the existing traffic calming through Albert Drive is causing difficulty. Woking Local Transportation Service, Passenger Transport Group and the local bus operators have been working together to agree an appropriate bus-friendly traffic calming scheme. Until such measures are implemented it is unlikely the bus companies will be able to introduce new vehicles, thereby in some respects negating the value and benefits of the other improvements being undertaken through the QBP.

13. A range of bus priority measures aimed at improving reliability of the services and reduce journey times are also being considered. These include providing intelligent bus priority at traffic signals and a bus gate/bus lane scheme at Lavender Park Road.
14. Passenger Transport Group continue with the development of the County Council's real time passenger information system, Suretime. A recent investment to provide an additional radio mast has improved the radio signal across Woking and this will enable the County Council to roll-out the system, as and when funding becomes available.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

15. No new financial implications as a result of this report.

### **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

16. The development of the East Woking Quality Bus Partnership seeks to improve the quality of bus services, making it easier for everyone in the community to access everyday facilities.

### **CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

17. There are no Crime & Disorder implications as a result of this report.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

18. There are no Equalities implications as a result of this report.

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

19. This report is for information only.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: None**

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