

Record of decision taken under delegated powers by a council officer



Title:	Surrey County Council Response to Covid: providing support to service providers for loss of on-bus revenue
Divisions Affected:	All Boroughs and Districts
Key Decision:	Yes
Reason Key:	Affects two or more Divisions
Decision taken under delegation by virtue of:	Cabinet decision 31 March 2020 Min ref: 41/20

Summary

Government has allocated £855,050 to Surrey County Council from its Covid Bus Service Re-start Support Fund (CBSSG), to support the significant revenue loss on tendered bus services which continue to operate, brought about by the huge drop in patronage during the Covid 19 pandemic lock-down. This covers a sixteen-week period commencing 9 June 2020, in order to help sustain levels of service required which were adequate for key worker travel and essential food shopping trips, as well as ensuring that adequate bus provision was available for the re-start of school and colleges in September. Department for Transport allows local authorities to distribute this funding to compensate loss of farebox revenue, in addition to the request to continue making contract payments and concessionary fare reimbursements as normal. Revenue losses have been calculated which reflect the lower mileages generally being operated during some of the period and have then been factored down for this. Support will be provided using Government grant provided for this specific purpose and will not create a financial pressure for the Council. Such support for tendered services cannot be obtained by contractors from other government funding. Payments are being made in accordance with the conditions outlined in the document template supplied with the Delegated Decision Record for 17 March-9 June 2020.

Decision made

Decision made:

It was AGREED that:

1. Payments would be made to 13 contractors (Arriva, Carlone, Compass, Cruisers, Falcon, Hallmark, London United, Metrobus, Reptons, Safeguard, Southdown, Stagecoach and White Bus), totalling £838,947 to be funded by the government's Covid Bus Service Re-start Support Grant.

Reasons for Decision:

To enable support for the continuation of bus services at a sufficient level for travel required by key NHS and other workers and for those needing to undertake essential food shopping, whilst providing support for the ramping-up of services with reduced revenue, as lock-down restrictions are eased and schools and colleges return from September 2020.

Decision taken by:	Katie Stewart – Executive Director ETI Matt Furniss – Cabinet Member for Transport
Decision taken on:	06/11/2020
To be implemented on:	Payments backdated to 09/06/2020

Alternative options considered

The alternative is not to provide financial support, in which case the funding would have to be returned to the DfT. The funding placed contractors in a far-stronger financial position for when services needed to be increased as more workers and school students started travelling as lock-down was eased and for when bus services have been impacted by reduced patronage and the need for social distancing on board.

Summary of any financial implications

The proposed payments totalling £838,947 will be met from the Covid Bus Service Re-start Support Grant.

Declarations of conflicts of interest

None

Consultation/Process Followed

Decision taken in consultation with Cabinet Member for Highways.

Background Documents

Exempt:

Cabinet report 31st March 2020 setting out the council's response to Covid-19. Letters from DfT setting out CBSSG Re-start.