

CABINET – 23 JUNE 2015

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Member's Question

Question from Mr Jonathan Essex (Redhill East) to ask:

1. The first Local Transport Review resulted in a host of measures being proposed by bus users in Surrey to improve Surrey's bus travel, which are clearly prioritised and set out in the Cabinet report. Please can you confirm how these set of positive suggestions will be taken forward with 'invest to save' proposals across Surrey (or similar) as opposed to being limited to specific capital funding bids such as the excellent news of an improved bus corridor between Redhill, Reigate and Horley announced recently. What will the time scale for considering these positive opportunities to make savings through improving the service level be considered. Could you please confirm when the consultation for the further bus budget savings is expected to focus on these elements to avoid the need to impact even more bus routes in the two subsequent parts of this Local Transport Review are proposed in 2016 and 2017.
2. The number of passengers affected of 234 appears to assume that the average user uses a bus 5 times a week. Please can you confirm the total number of people that are likely to be affected by the changes.
3. Surrey's Local Transport Plan (published July 2014 – see Executive Summary at http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/29898/STP-Executive-Summary-2014.pdf) includes an objective for Sustainable Transport (to provide an integrated transport system that protects the environment, keeps people healthy and provides for lower carbon transport choices) alongside objectives to improve the effectiveness, reliability and safety of transport in Surrey. This implies a greater role for sustainable travel options, including bus travel in the future, with this taking a greater share of transport on Surrey roads, thereby reducing congestion. Please can you confirm if this understanding is correct and also whether the impact of the Local Transport Review has as its baseline an increase in annual use of bus travel or maintaining bus travel as the same percentage of total transport on Surrey's roads, and how the chosen baseline sits with the Surrey Local Transport Plan commitments.
4. Some of the bus changes will require passengers to change journeys and use separate buses to complete their journey. With the current ticketing arrangements this will be more expensive. Please can you confirm that through-ticketing is being considered by Surrey to ensure that impact of the proposed changes are minimised, as well as to encourage increased bus use in Surrey.

Reply:

The responses are in the same order as the questions:

1. Surrey County Council will work in partnership with our bus operators and other stakeholders, including large businesses, Boroughs/Districts, hospitals, the rail industry and others, to deliver improvements to bus services in Surrey. The focus of this work will be to increase attractiveness of bus services, enhance reliability,

encourage greater usage and support a sustainable and realistic alternative to the private car, delivered through Quality Partnership Agreements and Joint Investment Plans. The impact of these schemes will be monitored and will assist the shaping of Local Transport Review proposals in 2016 and 2017.

2. Based on current usage pattern data supplied by bus operators, the figure of 234 relates to the estimated number of people on average on a weekday that could be impacted by the changes as currently tabled in the report, some of which are to be amended. The majority of this number would result from a requirement to change buses to reach certain destinations, rather than having no bus service at all. If a required journey can still be accomplished within the new timetables, there may be no impact, thus it is not straightforward to suggest a figure for the people actually individually affected, rather than perceived to be.
- 3) Surrey's Local Transport Plan contains a broad range of objectives (which still remain valid) and to support them, the Local Transport Review has sought to maintain where possible the primary bus network and to enhance frequencies in certain cases, whilst being mindful of the affordability of securing those services not deemed commercially viable by the bus industry. The Review seeks to focus available investment to obtain the best value and maximum benefit for Surrey residents. Prioritising and working to enhance the main commercial bus network will contribute to these objectives, alongside the delivery of capital funding for infrastructure and information improvements. The outcome of the current Bus Review is expected to be similar to the one undertaken in 2010-2012, whereby overall patronage loss and environmental impact was minimal.
- 4) Ticketing arrangements are matters for the bus operators. Already, some offer multi-journey products that give a discount over purchasing two separate fares. Surrey County Council is encouraging consideration of through ticketing in those cases where significant demand manifests itself for a through fare with a change of bus, where a current direct link may be severed. The Council welcomes the availability of multi-journey and flexible ticketing offers, to encourage increased bus patronage.

Mr Mike Goodman
Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning
23 June 2015