

## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

## LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)

DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER 2013  
 LEAD OFFICER: DAVID LIGERTWOOD  
 PASSENGER TRANSPORT PROJECTS TEAM MANAGER  
 SUBJECT: GUILDFORD PARK & RIDE  
 DIVISION: ALL DIVISIONS

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

This report updates Guildford Local Committee on the contract arrangements for the Guildford Park & Ride bus services. The report also considers the rationalisation of the season ticket offer and recommends the introductory fare structure for the new Onslow Park & Ride service.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:****The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to:**

- (i) Note the award of the contracts for the operation of Park & Ride Services 100, 200, 300 and 400 to Stagecoach (South) Ltd
- (ii) Agree the revised four weekly season ticket charge
- (iii) Agree the fares for the Onslow Park & Ride service 400

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The award of the Park & Ride bus service contracts to Stagecoach (South) Ltd on the basis of their alternative package bid was the most cost-effective option for Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council. The proposed fares amendments to the season ticket will enhance the flexibility for regular users, while the introductory fares for Onslow will assist with encouraging demand for this site.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and Surrey County Council (SCC) currently operate three Park and Ride services in Guildford. GBC are responsible for the operation and management of the car parks at Artington, Mellow and Spectrum. SCC manage the bus service contracts to the three permanent car parks at Artington, Mellow and Spectrum. Park & Ride in Guildford is funded through the CPZ on-street surplus.

- 1.2 A new car park at Onslow is scheduled to open late October 2013. The construction costs of the car park, associated bus corridor works and the bus service/car park operational costs up until March 2015 have been funded through a Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) grant secured from the Department for Transport

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

### **Results of Park & Ride Bus Service Contract Tenders**

- 1.3 As reported to Guildford Local Committee 28 November 2012 the contracts for services 100 Spectrum and 200 Artington were due to expire on 31 March 2013. The contract for Service 300 to Merrow expired 1 September 2013. These contracts have been subject to competitive tender to secure replacement services, led by SCC Procurement & Commissioning Team. Tenders were also invited for the Service 400 Onslow contract.
- 1.4 To meet the timelines of the SCC Contract Standing Orders for the competitive tender process, and pragmatically, to enable the successful tenderer(s) to mobilise it was agreed that the contracts for services 100 and 200 should be extended with the incumbent supplier (Arriva) from 31 March 2013 to expire 1 September 2013. This also had the advantage to enable contracts to change on the same date.
- 1.5 A Tender Evaluation Panel, comprising officers from Procurement & Commissioning and Travel and Transport Group developed evaluation criteria to identify the supplier offering the most cost-effective service to the required quality. Tenders were evaluated using a price/quality ratio of 60/40.
- 1.6 Compliant tenders were received from four bus operators. A range of alternative bids were also submitted and assessed, including options which offered a degree of commercial operation. While the longer term strategy for Park & Ride in Guildford aims to secure a fully commercial operation the Tender Evaluation Panel did not feel that these bids were advantageous to SCC and GBC at this stage, and they did not fully meet the existing service criteria.
- 1.7 The evaluation panel considered that an alternative package bid from Stagecoach (South) Ltd for all four contracts had the capability to deliver the service at the best value to GBC and SCC. Overall contract costs increased by approximately 2%.
- 1.8 Stagecoach (South) Ltd has extensive experience operating park & Ride services, including the Winchester Park & Ride network.
- 2.1 Stagecoach South Ltd has been awarded the contracts for the operation of service 100, 200 and 300 with effect from 1 September 2013. The contract for service 400 is scheduled to start Monday 21 October 2013, subject to the Onslow Park & Ride car park being completed.

2.2 It should be noted that Arriva has operated Park & Ride in Guildford on behalf of GBC and SCC for some 20 years, while Safeguard has provided the 300 Merrow service since 2010. Both bus companies have given excellent service and the change of supplier is not a reflection on the quality of work provided. A number of positive comments from passengers have been received about both operators.

### **Park & Ride Monthly Season Tickets**

2.3 Park & Ride users are offered a range of ticket options; daily, weekly and monthly. The price of each varies according to attractiveness of site and bus service offered. Spectrum 100 operates 5 buses/hour, a journey time to the Friary Bus Station of 9 minutes, an adult return fare of £2.40. Merrow 300 service operates 3 to 4 buses/hour with a journey time of 13 minutes and an adult return fare of £1.80.

2.4 At the three existing sites the cost of the monthly season ticket varies; Spectrum is £33, Artington is £31 and Merrow is £27. Currently these monthly tickets are not interchangeable for example if you buy a ticket for the Spectrum site you cannot park/travel on the Merrow service if Spectrum was full/busy.

2.5 Stagecoach (South) Ltd propose to offer Park & Ride customers the opportunity to purchase monthly season tickets online, as a smartcard. Using the commercial knowledge gained developing their online smartcard model Stagecoach advise that a four-weekly pass be issued rather than a calendar month, and that the four-weekly charge for the sites be standardised. The standard price also removes any confusion for users purchasing online. The pass could then be made more flexible and enable users to use all sites. Period tickets will still be available for purchase on bus from the driver.

2.6 A smartcard ticket has long been an aspiration for the Guildford Park & Ride network and will bring positive benefits to users. This new initiative should be introduced to coincide with the start of the Onslow Service 400 during October 2013.

2.7 It is recommended that a new four weekly ticket be offered to replace the current monthly season ticket. A standard charge of £30 for on bus purchase and £28 for tickets purchased online be introduced and usage monitored.

### **Onslow Park & Ride Fares**

2.8 Guildford Local Committee on 28 November 2012 approved a revised fares and pricing strategy to reduce the pressure on the Central Parking Zone surplus. It is anticipated that when the Onslow service has been established the fares will be consistent with this revised fares and pricing strategy, and will be in line with the longer term aspiration that the Onslow service may be operated on a commercial basis.

2.9 LSTF revenue funding has been secured to assist with the initial bus service operation costs, and the charges associated with running the car park. This revenue funding is available until March 2015.

2.10 To assist with generating usage of the new Onslow Park & Ride service it is recommended that the introductory fares are set at a lower rate to encourage

patronage. It is proposed that the initial Onslow fares will be set as follows: adult day return £1.50 and weekly £6.00. Specific targeted fares initiatives aimed to attract customers will also be considered. Comparable fares at the three existing sites are Artington £2.20/£8.80, Merrow £1.80/£7.20, Spectrum £2.40/£9.60.

- 2.11 Usage and performance of the Onslow site/service will be monitored with a further report to Guildford Local Committee during 2014.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

- 4.1 The Guildford Local Committee Task Group has been consulted on these proposals.

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

- 5.1 The slight increase to the contract costs for services 100, 200 and 300 will add pressure to the CPZ on-street account. This could be mitigated by additional fares revenue generated through the two phase fares revision agreed by GLC 28 November 2013. The initial phase was implemented January 2013 and a report will be presented to Guildford Local Committee 11 December 2013 to provide a revenue/patronage update.
- 5.2 The bus service running costs for service 400 and the car park operational costs for Onslow are funded through the LSTF grant until March 2015.

#### **6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 There are no direct Equalities and Diversity implications as a result of this report.

#### **7. LOCALISM:**

- 7.1 Park & Ride is a sustainable transport choice, reducing congestion and enhancing the environment to the benefit of the wider Guildford community.

#### **8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### 8.1 Sustainability implications

The provision and promotion of bus-based park & ride services encourages the use of sustainable transport, assists with reducing traffic congestion in Guildford town centre and reducing carbon emissions. Park and ride has positive sustainability outcomes.

#### **9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 9.1 The proposed fares amendments to the monthly season ticket will enhance the flexibility for regular users across all park & ride sites in Guildford, while the introductory fares for Onslow are designed to encourage use of this site.

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**10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

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- 10.1 The new contracts for the Guildford Park & Ride bus services started on 1 September 2013.
- 10.2 Subject to Committee approval the revised four weekly tickets, with smartcard option will be introduced to coincide with the start of the Onslow Service 400. Fares information will be included in all marketing and promotional material used for the Park & Ride services.

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**Consulted:**

GLC Task Group

**Annexes:**

N/A

**Sources/background papers:**

- Item 11 Review of Guildford Park & Ride Service Guildford Local Committee 28 November 2012
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