

13 September 2012**Agenda Item:6****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR TRANSPORT, PROPERTY AND
ENVIRONMENT****PERFORMANCE REPORT – Transport and Travel Services****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides information to the Committee on the performance of Transport and Travel Services.

Information and Advice

2. Local bus services are a key priority in ensuring that people can access services and in promoting economic recovery by getting people to jobs and training. Over 80% of services across the county are provided commercially and without financial support from the County Council. The supported local bus budget, which provides services not met commercially and mainly for rural areas, reduced from £10 million in 2003/04 to £5.9 million in 2012/13. This reduction in funding is comparable with other similar sized shire authorities. The County's average spend per head of population is £7.87 against the national average spend of £6.62 for 2012/13.
3. Councillors should be aware that local bus subsidy and regulation is currently being reformed by the Government which is likely to result in changes to the distribution of BSOG (Bus Service Operators Grant) (fuel duty rebate) in 2013. A separate report on this matter is included on the meeting agenda. BSOG was reduced by 20% (8p per litre) in April this year which is likely to have serious impacts on future prices for contracted services and the commercial network. Provision was made for this in the 2012/13 financial strategy to meet any extra costs. If commercial shrinkage occurs then this will put further pressure on the supported bus budget and additional funding may be required from 2013/14 onwards.
4. The supported bus budget and its performance is measured using a scoring methodology which includes amongst other things the number of passengers per journey and subsidy per passenger. It is proposed that this system is reviewed so that a new model and the scores accurately reflects recent changes in priorities, supports the investment and meets the objectives of the Strategic Plan. Work on a new 'Passenger Implementation Plan' has commenced which will bring forward proposals to Committee later this year on determining future investment in bus services to achieve minimum service levels using an Investment Appraisal Tool approach.

Summary of Performance

5. **Appendix 1** shows current levels of performance for the service area. Despite the reduced funding, less government subsidy and very difficult market conditions, the Strategic Plan action to promote public transport has resulted in satisfaction levels increasing to 95% in 2011/12. 85% of non frequent and 89% of frequent bus services, supported and commercial, are running on time (ATCO all counties benchmark 89%). In future, bus services that are performing poorly with a high cost will be reviewed by Committee in the light of any interventions to improve performance and the funding available. Services operating well and at low cost should eventually move to commercial operation without funding support.
6. Local bus and light rail journeys originating in the authority area reduced slightly by 1.8% in 2011/12, due to a reallocation of trips between the County and the City. Nationally bus trips reduced by 3% in the same year. Rural household accessibility to bus services remains at 71% and should improve as networks are reviewed, this outcome is mainly attributable to the continuing funding of bus services in rural areas. 67% of buses operating in the county are fully accessible which will rise to 100% by 2015 to meet legislative requirements (Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000 - SI 2000/1970).
7. This area of service continues to operate very successfully and remains one of the top three performing authorities across England and Wales for local bus service operation.
8. A central fleet service within the Environment and Resources Department has been created providing support to all services and staff across the County. All corporate vehicles have been fitted with a electronic vehicle tracking system (Masternaut) which provides management information on the operational performance of each vehicle. This has enabled 51 vehicles to be removed from the fleet in 2011/12. Improved monitoring of the fuel card system through Masternaut has resulted in a 92k saving in fuel costs.
9. The Day Service Review and TITAN projects are working together to make savings across the day centre transport, ten vehicles have already been withdrawn this year generating £48K savings.
10. The service area for local bus services and concessionary travel has recently been subject to an audit inspection and both services have been scored as satisfactory.

Analysis

11. Through better planning of the network and partnership working, the Council has reduced costs whilst only seeing a very small reduction in passenger numbers. Service reliability and customer satisfaction continues to improve.

VOSA spot checks on vehicles indicate that vehicle standards and maintenance are improving as fewer penalty notices are issued.

12. The TITAN Improvement project and review of the bus networks across the county by April 2014 will ensure that the funding is used in the most cost effective and efficient way. It should be remembered that this position may change at very short notice due to actions taken by commercial operators regarding their services, further reductions in Government subsidy, further local budget reductions or unforeseen higher operating costs such as fuel, insurance or staffing.

Other Options Considered

13. None – this is a noting report.

Reasons for Recommendations

14. The promotion of supported local bus services contributes to the strategic plan in enabling people to access key services jobs and training.

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

16. The monitoring of service performance will ensure that the spend on passenger transport services and facilities will be used efficiently and effectively.

Implications for Service Users

17. The continued investment in supported local bus services will ensure that quality standards are maintained and appropriate services provided to meet local needs.

Recommendation

- 1) That Committee note the contents of the report.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

DfT - 'Green Light for Better Buses' – 26 March 2012

Report to Transport & Highways Committee – Corporate Vehicle Fleet Update 12 July 2012

Electoral Divisions

All