

CABINET

Thursday, 7 July 2022

RESPONSE TO HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S PASSENGER TRANSPORT SERVICES AND CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL SCHEME CONSULTATION

Report of the Sustainable Transport Planner

Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet agrees the Council's response to Hampshire County Council's 'Supported Passenger Transport and Concessionary Travel Consultation' attached at Appendix 1.

Summary

Hampshire County Council (HCC) is consulting residents and other stakeholders on options for finding £800,000 of savings to supported passenger transport services and the concessionary travel scheme by:

- making operational changes to supported passenger transport services (including supported bus services, Dial-a-Ride, Call & Go, Taxishare and Minibus Group hire services);
- removing some enhancements to the Concessionary Travel Scheme currently funded by the County Council;
- increasing the contributions users pay for some services; and
- changes to back-office functions (which are not covered by the consultation).

Statutory Powers

Localism Act 2011

Strategic Implications

1. Transport is a cross-cutting issue that underpins all areas of the Corporate Plan. Most actions fall within the Tackling Congestion (Green Borough) objective, but the actions also deliver against the Council's Economic (Prosperous Place), and Health and Wellbeing (Healthy Communities) Corporate objectives.

Introduction

2. Currently HCC invests the following into Passenger Transport services:
 - £3.5 million per year on supporting passenger transport services made up of:
 - £2,077,145 for local bus services;
 - £416,952 for Dial a Ride, Call & Go and shopper services;
 - £205,428 for Taxishare Services;
 - £212,174 towards Minibus Group Hire Schemes;
 - with the balance being spent on publications, passenger information, infrastructure, maintenance and training.
 - £329,000 per year on discretionary enhancements to the Concessionary Travel scheme for Hampshire residents.
3. In addition to HCC funding, Eastleigh Borough Council invests £203,873 into public and community transport services made up of:
 - £67,632 for local bus services;
 - £99,428 for Dial a Ride and shopper services;
 - £25,688 for Taxishare Services;
 - £11,125 towards Minibus Group Hire Schemes.
4. Some contracts are funded jointly with HCC whilst others are held independently with operators. Many of the services that are supported by EBC supplement the services funded by HCC, by providing additional journey times, in the early morning or evening, or weekend and bank holiday services. A summary of the services provided by EBC can be found in appendix 2. A map showing all bus services operating within the Borough can be found in appendix 3, this map shows both supported and commercial services.
5. Following the publication of the National Bus Back Better Strategy in 2021 all Local Transport Authorities were required to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) setting out a high-level vision for improving local bus services and key interventions to deliver it, and to establish an Enhanced Partnership, with an Enhanced Partnership Plan containing the detail of how these key interventions will be delivered.
6. In 2021 HCC established the Enhanced Partnership and adopted a new Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which set out a plan for improving services and infrastructure countywide. The BSIP and associated funding bid was submitted to the Department for Transport in late 2021.

7. Hampshire's BSIP was not awarded funding through the Bus Recovery Grant, the Department for Transport feedback indicated that the BSIP application was not ambitious enough. Therefore the BSIP cannot be delivered as initially envisaged. The County Council states that they remain committed to the Plan's aim to develop bus services that provide affordable, attractive, easy to use and safe alternatives to the use of private vehicles.
8. In summer 2021 HCC held a consultation on a proposed plan to achieve £80m saving target, of which the Economy, Transport and Environment Service is required to find £10.3m of savings.
9. The HCC passenger transport service has been asked to identify £800,000 of savings. To meet this target the County Council has identified back-office savings of £150,000 which do not form part of this consultation, and a package of measures to achieve the remaining £650,000 saving, which are set out below:
 - Deliver services within a reduced budget:
 - To make operational changes to supported passenger transport services (including supported bus services, Dial-a-Ride, Call & Go, Taxishare and Minibus Group Hire services), which would deliver around £455,000 in savings through reduced County Council subsidy for these services.
 - Removing some enhancements to the Concessionary Travel Scheme currently funded by the County Council, including:
 - To stop providing travel vouchers to disabled people who are unable to use a bus service as an alternative to a Disabled Person's Bus Pass, delivering £95,000 in savings; and
 - To remove the use of the Older Person's Bus Pass and Disabled Person's Bus Pass on Taxishare, Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go Services, delivering £44,000 in savings.
 - Increasing the contributions users pay for some services:
 - To introduce a £1 fare for all single Taxishare journeys delivering a contribution of between £16,000 and £23,000;
 - To Implement a common fare structure across Dial-a-Ride and Call & Go schemes in Hampshire while reducing the subsidy of these services, delivering a contribution of between £14,600 and £19,950; and
 - To increase the fees charged for replacement of lost and damaged bus passes to cover the administration costs from £14 to £20, delivering a contribution of £16,500.

10. HCC are holding a public consultation on these proposed measures which is open from Monday 30 May 2022 and closes at 11:59pm on Sunday 24 July 2022. Further information about the consultation can be found at: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/consultation/Passenger-transport-consultation-2022.pdf> HCC will analyse the findings from the consultation and will report this data, along with recommended actions to the HCC Executive Lead Member for Transport and Environment Strategy in November 2022.

Summary of consultation response

11. The Council's full proposed consultation response can be found in Appendix 1, this highlights a number of concerning issues including:
- (a) The impact on the environment
 - (b) The impact on air quality
 - (c) The impact on health and wellbeing of our residents
 - (d) The impact on the local economy
 - (e) The impact on older and disabled people and people of an ethnic minority background.

Financial Implications

12. There are no direct financial implications to the Council in relation to this report, as the Council will not accept liabilities or costs arising out of HCC budget reductions.
13. The Council has a long history of supporting passenger transport schemes, and currently funds a number of services jointly commissioned with HCC in addition to contracts held independently. Many of the services that the Council commissions directly with operators add value to services supported by HCC by providing support outside the core hours that HCC fund.
14. However, if HCC proceeds with reductions in discretionary service budgets, there is a high likelihood that services currently funded by the Council would be impacted resulting in cost implications e.g. in providing for a higher volume of medical taxi share passengers or service withdrawals leading to retendering and contract costs increasing.
15. Therefore, staff will work with the Cabinet Member for Transport and HCC to assess the impact of service changes and identify possible solutions within the current public transport budget.

Risk Assessment

16. The proposed vision and associated outcomes for travel and transport will have an impact on all residents of the Borough and may disproportionately

affect low income household and vulnerable road users if not considered by HCC at an early stage in the development of travel and transport policy.

17. By not submitting a response to the consultation there is a risk that Hampshire County Council may decide on a course of action without appreciating the risks and local implications for communities. By providing a response to the consultation the Council seeks to minimise any harmful impact of HCC budget reductions on quality of life of Eastleigh Borough residents.
18. There is a risk that the Borough Council could be expected to bridge funding gaps of transport schemes.
19. The success of some the Council's own activities may be reduced in areas where they rely on joint working with HCC services.

Equality and Diversity Implications

20. The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report because it is a response to a consultation by an external organisation. Therefore, it is considered that for this decision the Equality Duty does not need to be addressed and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been carried out.
21. The Council recommends that HCC should undertake a detailed EqIA to ensure any impacts on people with protected characteristics are identified, minimised, mitigated and managed. Many of the proposed services changes will most affect people with protected characteristics, in particular older people, people with disabilities and younger people.
22. The EqIA should also consider the likely impacts on people living in poverty and in rural areas of Hampshire.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

23. Proposed reductions in public and community transport services or increased costs are likely to result in journeys being replaced by more private travel in petrol and diesel cars, leading to increased transport-related carbon emissions.
24. Very significant shifts in travel behaviour are required to achieve the proposed outcome of the revised HCC Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) to reduce transport-related carbon emissions to net zero (neutrality) by 2050. A developing approach to identify savings to supported passenger transport services and the concessionary travel scheme are at odds with this policy.

Conclusion

25. Cabinet is asked to agree the consultation response at Appendix 1.

CALI SPARKS
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT PLANNER

Date: 07 July 2022
Contact Officer: Cali Sparks
Tel No: 023 8068 8069
e-mail: cali.sparks@eastleigh.gov.uk
Appendices Attached: 1 – Draft Consultation Response
2 – Summary of supported services
3 – Eastleigh Borough Bus Route Map

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

Background papers - None.