

16 July 2019

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director Policy and Corporate</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Owen Howell</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Bus Review: Further actions.</b>		<b>☎ 282518</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Scrutiny Panel at its meeting in September 2017 agreed to review the bus services operating in Colchester. Further details of the scope and history of the review are set out in section 4 of this report. However, at its meeting in August 2018 the Panel determined that a series of questions should be sent to Essex County Council (ECC), the bus operators and Community 360.
- 1.4 This report was produced at the request of the Panel to review the responses provided by Essex County Council, bus companies and Community360 to these questions. The responses received from Essex County Council and Arriva to these further questions can be found at Appendices C and D respectively. The Panel is also invited to consider the next steps for the review and what further action, if any, it wishes to undertake to conclude the review.

## 2. Action Required

- 2.1 To review and note the responses received from Essex County Council, the bus operators and Community 360 to the Panel's request for information agreed by the Panel in August 2018.
- 2.2 To consider what further action needs to be taken in respect of the review of bus services in Colchester.

## 3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 The Panel received a request from a member of the Panel to review bus services in Colchester. Following the creation of a scoping document, the Panel agreed for a review to be added to the Scrutiny Panel work programme.

## 4. Background Information

- 4.1 In July 2017 Councillor Scordis submitted a scoping document to the Panel to request a review be held to examine the operations of bus companies in Colchester Borough. In September 2017 the Scrutiny Panel resolved to hold this review and objectives and a formalised scope were agreed.
- 4.2 The review followed the objectives as agreed at the September meeting.

These included:

- To understand the strategic role and benefits of bus operation and how it can best serve the community;
- To investigate and scrutinise what bus companies are doing to:
  - Improve the punctuality of services
  - Increase bus usage
  - Reduce emissions
  - Make buses more accessible
  - Communicate with passengers when services are cancelled or altered.
- To improve the dialogue between bus companies that operate in the Borough and Colchester Borough Council, Councillors and Residents.

4.3 The Scrutiny Panel meeting on 16 April 2018 was attended by representatives of bus companies, Community360 and ECC. Prior to this meeting, officers had collected information from the invited organisations and the Panel discussed this with the representatives in attendance. A summary of the discussion held can be found in the minutes extract found at Appendix A. A summary of the written answers provided by the invited organisations can be found at Appendix B.

4.4 The Panel resumed its consideration of the issue in August 2018: A follow-up letter with questions to operators and ECC was approved by Panel. The questions related to the Bus Services Act 2017, Colchester Blueprint and follow-up questions based on the objective areas for the review and responses to the Panel's initial questions.

4.5 In November 2018 a response was received from Essex County Council. There were no responses from operators.

4.6 At its meeting on 29 January 2019 the Panel resolved to schedule an update on the review for the 2019-20 municipal year. At the Panel meeting held on 11 June 2019 the Panel further resolved that this update be scheduled for its meeting on 16 July 2019, and that the supplementary questions be re-sent to those bus companies which had not yet provided responses.

## **5. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

5.1 There are no specific implications regarding Human Rights, however there are implications regarding equality and diversity, in that the efficient and comprehensive operation of local bus services should take account of the needs of disabled service users.

## **6. Standard References**

6.1 There are no particular references to consultation or publicity considerations or financial, community safety, health and safety or risk management implications.

## **7. Strategic Plan References**

7.1 The operation of efficient and environmentally-sustainable bus services within Colchester Borough has reference to the following themes and priorities of the Strategic Plan 2018-21:

- Growth:
  - Help make sure Colchester is a welcoming place for all residents and visitors;
  - Ensure residents benefit from Colchester's economic growth with skills, jobs and improving infrastructure;
  - Work with partners to create a shared vision for a vibrant town centre.
- Opportunity:
  - Promote green technologies through initiatives such as SMART Cities;
  - Promote initiatives to help residents live healthier lives.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Minutes extract from Scrutiny Panel meeting on 16 April 2018.

Appendix B - Summary of initial written answers to the review, as provided by the invited organisations and companies.

Appendix C - Responses to the Scrutiny Panel's follow-up questions, as provided by Essex County Council.

Appendix D - Responses to the Scrutiny Panel's follow-up questions, as provided by Arriva.