

**Response to supplementary Scrutiny Panel Questions to bus operators.**

The following responses have been provided by Mr. Gavin Hunter, Arriva Area Manager for Hertfordshire and Essex.

**To understand the strategic role and benefits of bus operations and how buses can best serve the Community.**

- What discussions have taken place to link commercial services and those provided by Community360?

*No discussions to date. The Colchester Blue Print Transport Forum meetings have not covered this as far as I know either, nor has the bus strategy board.*

- What steps are being taken to encourage new bus users when new housing developments are built?

*Communication with a couple of developers representatives have suggested very little funding is available to kick start new or extended routes. This has been raised at the Blue Print Transport meetings and at bus strategy board meetings and it would appear that during the planning process, s106 funding [particularly for bus provision] was poor or non-existent. This has been raised with Colchester Borough and Essex CC. My understanding is most of the planned developments in the area have already gone through the planning process without adequate or any funding for bus services. Where it is possible to include new developments with little or within existing resource, this has been or is being considered.*

*Arriva produce welcome packs for new residential areas promoting bus travel with discounted travel tickets [usually, with s106 contribution.] We are extremely keen to be involved as early as possible in the planning cycle, even if it is several years in advance, so that we can support and influence planning applications for future developments with day one subsidy which really cater for the travel needs of the new home owners.*

- What is your view on the consultation regarding the Bus Services Act 2017: accessible information and Bus Services Act 2017: bus open data?

*Arriva have been at the forefront of progressing open data; and have been fully involved in the consultation process with the DfT [Department for Transport].*

### Punctuality of Services

- What technology would assist the transit of buses in central Colchester?

*Traffic light priority, bus lanes, key route pre-messaging for car drivers to use park and ride when town centre parking full, bus only routes using barriers recognising vehicles*

- At the meeting, it was mentioned that grouping of services for destination in the High Street may assist with congestion and new services, are there plans to introduce this?

*The High Street had revised stopping arrangements implemented on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to ease congestion in the area partly caused by bunching at busy bus stops resulting in reduce traffic flows. I understand traffic flows in the area are better [but that's not to say they are good!]. There are no plans to revised the bus stop allocations at this point.*

### Increasing Bus Usage

- What is your company doing to challenge the current perception of bus travel?

*Working with our partners at ECC, ECC secured funding from DfT to upgrade our vehicles [and First Group] to Euro 6 standard helping to improving air quality in and around the town centre. In partnership with Stansted we have introduced new vehicles on our route 133. We have a real-time app allowing customers with a smart phones to track their bus helping to give confidence when using our buses [particularly with so much major road improvements currently going on with the resulting delays]. This year, we introduced new ticket machines on our buses allowing contactless payments. Together with on-line/m-ticketing gives customers more convenience and flexibility about their ticketing and payment options. A lot of buses have free WiFi. Internal projects such as Community Fund to allow staff to bid for funding to support local community projects, clubs or charities, reconnecting local staff with the local communities.*

- What family fares are in place in your network, and what else are you doing to encourage families to use buses?

*Multi journey Family tickets are available for Arriva only Colchester wide day ticket. Additionally, the multi operator Colchester Borough Card day tickets are available for both zones. We have run summer campaigns in the past for families. We are looking at a similar campaign for summer 2019.*

- Do you participate in Catch the Bus Week?

*Yes, we historically offer £1 day tickets to new users to encourage trial of bus, also attending events to share information where appropriate, or attend bus surgeries with local authorities.*

- What are the obstacles for introducing multi-operator travel cards?

*We already have them in Colchester [see above]. Any card which undermines the commercial viability of existing tickets comes with no guarantee of a no better no worse outcome, far less a positive situation so the introduction of any card with a reduced price would need to be financially supported*

### Reducing Emissions

- Could you confirm what percentage of the buses that you operate in the Borough of Colchester are at Euro6 standard?

*50% once retrofitting has been completed*

- Do you have plans to introduce or trial electric buses in the Borough?

*We have championed the need previously and have supported funding submissions across Essex for clean air initiatives including electric buses. However, we do not currently have any plans to introduce electric vehicles but would be happy to be part of a trial supported by CBC*

### Communicate with passengers when services are cancelled or altered

- Could you outline the latest developments in technology, which do or would improve information for members of the public?

*Through the Colchester Blue Print Transport Forum, access to the bus stop real time information screens is being investigated to see if bus companies can update customer information when services are disrupted using fixed statements through pulldown menus to avoid misuse.*

*Social media is used to inform customers of any disruption currently, this is posted directly from our depot staff as any disruption occurs. We are currently looking into development of our app to push notifications direct to customers phones on the journeys they use, this is still in scope. Our website and app are being upgraded to improve information to customers in real time.*

### **Improving dialogue between bus companies and Colchester Borough Council, Councillors and members of the public**

- What consultation do you conduct with members of the public regarding removal of services, or introduction of new services?

*When contracted service 11 changed enough to potentially cause an issue to customers, on bus notices and questionnaire together with on-line feedback page to the proposals was arranged through ECC. Bus user group engagement and the Colchester Blue Print Transport Forum is the main method. There is some contact with Colchester Institute and Essex University. For our own commercial services, we write out to the local community via a number of channels and request feedback on what changes we should make to our services. These suggestions are either implemented or not depending on their validity, and we make sure we feedback to those who have put the ideas forward and thank them for becoming involved.*

- Is there a named contact available for Councillors, when information on bus services in a locality is required?

*John Copping*