

Consultation on proposals for a review of Essex County Council's supported evening and Sunday local bus services - Consultation December 2018 to March 22nd 2019

- **Why are we doing this?**

Essex County Council (ECC) is reviewing the way it supports local bus services which operate on evenings and Sundays. It does not include those which are run commercially across the County. This consultation gives you the opportunity to let us know your views about the proposals. It will take place until March 22nd 2019

We hope you will take this opportunity to comment on your services.

The consultation is set out in 3 sections and outlines the three proposals that ECC are considering:-

1. The level of service we fund in the evenings and on Sundays. The evening journeys affected by this consultation are listed in Appendix A and the Sundays are listed in Appendix B. We are only consulting on the Essex elements of any service affected – where elements of services are run commercially these are not part of the consultation. There are two evening services where the cost per passenger journey exceeds £5.00 (the level above which ECC would not normally support). Therefore we are proposing to withdraw those 2 services.
2. Proposals to get the right type of service to meet your travel needs by making more use of a wider variety of ways for providing services, such as small vehicles, demand responsive transport or taxi-buses.
3. Giving local people more control over what when and where services are run by adopting a policy of devolution. This would give local communities and their representatives at district, town and parish level the opportunity and funding to commission local bus services in their area, based on their understanding of local needs.

- **What about my area/does it matter where I live?**

We have asked which district you live in and or travel to, and which service you use so that we can understand your journey. You will only need to comment on the service/area relevant to you. The areas are:

- Basildon,
- Braintree
- Brentwood
- Castle Point
- Chelmsford
- Colchester

- Epping Forest
- Harlow
- Maldon
- Rochford
- Tendring
- Uttlesford
- Out of County

- **How long does the consultation last?**

The consultation will run for 12 weeks and will close on 22nd March 2019

Where is the consultation questionnaire on line?

www.essex.gov.uk/local-bus-consultation

- **How do I get paper copies of the questionnaire?**

Call 0345 743 0430 or email contact@essex.gov.uk

Paper copies are also available in your local library,

- **If I have questions about the consultation, where can I get more information?**

You can contact Essex County Council on 0345 743 0430 or email passenger.transport@essex.gov.uk

- **What happens after the consultation finishes?**

We will collate the responses from the survey and summarise them as part of our report regarding the renewal of these contracts. Essex Insight will publish the findings of the consultation.

- **Will I see any differences with my specific bus service following the consultation?**

The County Council is looking at a range of options for the services under consultation, trying to reduce the cost to the taxpayer of providing the services, while maintaining key transport links. This could mean no change at all, a change to the operator, reduced frequencies or reduced hours or days of operation or changes to routes. ECC also needs to manage the network in the light of changes to the commercial bus network (buses that are not funded by ECC), travel demand and changing corporate priorities over time. Bus services are non-statutory (not required by law), and the Council will always, quite rightly, have to fund the services it is legally required to provide (its statutory services) first.

- **When will the services change?**

Once this consultation is closed the outcomes will be considered and there may be further changes to the timetables and/or routes. The services will then be tendered: bus operators will be asked to bid for the work. We may ask for a number of options during the tender process if no affordable option from the initial tender.

The outcome will be available in Autumn 2019 and via the Transport & Travel communications and the information teams web page:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Getting-Around/Bus/Bus-timetable-changes.aspx>

Changes to the services will commence from March 28th 2020

Equality and Diversity Questions – why are they included?

Our Equality Impact Assessment has highlighted some groups who may be affected by changes to our strategy. Questions are asked to ensure we have identified any specific issues for equality groups. It is not compulsory to answer these questions but it would be helpful in our analysis of the results.

- **Where will I see a copy of the timetable?**

You can obtain a copy of the timetable on Travel line. via www.traveline.info 0871 200 22 33 however, please note we are only consulting on the journeys that we fund and these are listed in Appendices A and B

- **Are you changing the start times of the concessionary fares?**

This consultation does not make any changes to the concessionary fares scheme. Currently a pass holder can travel for free in Essex from 09.00 Monday to Friday and all day at weekends and Bank Holidays anywhere in Essex. Full information about the concessionary bus pass can be found at www.canigetapass.org.uk

- **My child has free transport to school – will this be affected?**

Children who are entitled to free transport to school will still have their transport provided. As the consultation is focussing on Evening and Sundays services, this consultation is unlikely to affect school students.

My child uses a local bus service to get to school – will this be affected?

As the consultation is focussing on evening and Sunday services, this consultation is unlikely to affect school students.

- **Will my Community Transport be affected by this review?**

Community Transport has an important role to play in delivering services. We are considering its contribution, where and how it might grow, and how to get best value as part of these local reviews.

- **Park and Ride Services – are they part of the review?**

No. There are no proposals on the Chelmsford and Colchester Park and Ride schemes.

- **Why do many of the questions refer to the cost per passenger journey? What does this mean?**

The Council will not normally continue to support a service where it pays the operator £5.00 or more per single (one way), passenger journey. This is referred to as the Cost Per Passenger Journey (CPPJ).

- **What does the change to a two hourly frequency on Sundays mean?**

Many Sunday services already run on a two hourly frequency – so journeys run every two hours e.g. 8am, 10am, noon etc. But some run hourly and a few run half hourly. We are asking people if a two hourly frequency would be enough for them to make the journeys they need to on a Sunday. This means that bus operators could run fewer buses and still meet people's travel needs but at less cost to taxpayers.

- **Does this consultation relate to other current transport consultations?**

No. This is separate consultation and does not relate to:
The Passenger Transport Customer Satisfaction Survey. (This closed at the end of December)

- **Why are you asking questions about devolution**

We are looking to see if we can devolve more to communities. It could be that services are best commissioned and delivered as close to the communities they service because that way they can reflect the needs of that community and are as cost effective as possible.