

MINUTES

LOCAL BUS FORUM

Meeting held on Thursday 30 January 2025 from 2.00pm, via Teams

Present:

- Alastair Gould (AG)
- Dan Bruce (DB)
- Dolley Wooster (DW)
- Emma Wiggins (EW)
- Ian Harrison (IH)
- Karen Watson (KW)
- Mike Baldock (MB)
- Roland Eglinton (RE)
- Tim Lambkin (TL)
- Tony Winckless (TW)
- Remy Laporte (RL)
- Daniel Millis (DM), *for Matthew Arnold*
- Steve Benjamin (SB)
- Andy Bates (AB)

In Attendance: Lorraine Burke (LB) Minutes

Apologies: Matthew Arnold (MA)

NO	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Welcome, Introduction and Apologies	
1.1	Apologies received from Matthew Arnold (MA)	
2.	Minutes of Local Bus Forum – 19 September 2024	
2.1	No comments further to the last meeting and updates can be discussed within today's agenda.	
3.	KCC General Updates	
3.1	Dan Bruce discussed the ongoing delivery of the existing programme for 23/24 & 24/25. Revenue funding is vital for keeping network running and currently supporting approx. 51 services. Has also funded pricing initiatives for the Kent Travel Saver for both 23/24 and 24/25 Three bus priority schemes for out of Borough are almost complete (Pencester Road Dover, Rennie Drive Dartford and A256 Thanet), Whilst not in Swale this demonstrates to Government that Kent can delivery priority.	DB
3.2	Communications schemes: Considered screen/s for Sittingbourne Bus hub and the next tranche for Sheppey. Prioritisation of stops has been implemented. Interactive bus tool will be launched shortly before the end financial year, hosted under the enhanced partnership banner. QR codes to access live information. These would not be a replacement of current paper timetables. DB provide detail/emails. Highway schemes progressing across the County. Ticket machine grant has been implemented to improve standards.	
3.3	25/26 funding allocation: Funding known as Bus Grant, announced for Kent just before Christmas and anticipated 11.9mil capital, 10mil revenue. High Level Delivery plan on categories of spend to be submitted to Government by end of March 2025. Input requested from Focus group.	

MINUTES

3.4	Proposed a meeting end of February (WB 24 Feb) to ensure group opportunity to review and comment. DB to lead of timings to arrange a suitable date when the draft delivery plan is available to view.	EW/LB/ DB
3.5	Consideration to be given to a way forward for Boroughs to move/relocate island bus stop and encouraged to work collectively with districts.	
3.6	DB noted that from a revenue point of view, the majority of funding will need to be allocated to sustaining the current network and effectively standing still. This is due to contract cost increases, operational pressures such a NI increases and commercial changes /withdrawals. This is despite KCC increasing its core funding by £450k. There are options for capital funding with bus shelter improvements a potential areas of focus., option to review and upgrade of shelters via capital stream, but does not affect the Borough maintenance contracts.	
3.7	Further details or history background of any projects and initiatives can be received via email.	EW / DB
3.8	Support from rural parishes who could contribute funding and a dialogue to be had on support for bus services. Consider how initiate and facilitate.	
3.9	Bell Road: A lot of history around the location for buses to queue for school collection and requested for more provision for bus parking in the area. A plan for bus stands has been created to support schools. Remy Laporte (LM) shared the plans. There is not a formal consultation required, however can take comments and feedback. Propose that ward members are briefed and involved. Propose to include ward Cllrs of areas of residents that use the bus service. Consider inclusion of proper crossings and impact / safety of children. School are required to consider implications and proposed plans.	
3.10	Reference around residents for Wiggles and bus transfer ref Mill Mead: Cllr Wooster to email Dan Bruce directly and provide details to consider.	DW / DB
3.11	Any plans for Kent to retain £3 cap will depend on Government Legislation.	
3.12	Thanks to DB and wider team for obtaining funding and positive outcomes.	
4.	Area Committee Feedback	
4.1	Opportunities for Area Committee Members to feedback anything to attendees or request input.	
4.2	Western: School Parking	
4.3	It was questioned whether there are any plans to increase services after 6pm on a weekday and on Sundays. DB updated that it would depend on remaining budget for enhancements and level of step change beyond the 25/26 funding stream.	
4.4	Sheppey: how replacement bus services work once Network Rail go down. Train companies plan and arrange so therefore would require Southeastern response.	
5.	Bus Companies Updates	
5.1	Tim Lambkin: Bell Road affects Travelmasters and is encouraged that proposals are being considered for way forward.	

MINUTES

5.2	Concerned regarding available bus shelters to ensure assessable and safe for residents to encourage use.	
5.3	Access roads on new developments, are not always have accessible to bus services ad considered in the planning process. Support from KCC Highways is required and engaging in problem when replying to planning application consultations. Points have been raised and a process and flow of information can be implemented. Unsure if this has occurred. EW to chase. Propose to invite Alan Miller to attend and discuss at a future meeting..	EW
5.4	Encouraged by Town and Parish Council consultation for bus service/stops improvements.	
5.5	Emergency roadworks on island, ensure that bus companies are affected and communicated. Requested reassurance and support from KCC that emergency or general/planned roadworks are communicated to relevant parties in a timely manner. RL updated on process and procedures that KCC follows and assured that they have a process in place to try to notify as soon as possible. A training session has been scheduled for Travelmasters and Stagecoach have had the training on the system.	
5.6	Roland Eglinton: Concerns for buses receiving parking tickets in the bus hub in Sittingbourne. Requested common sense approach whilst drivers are on break. Cllrs required to discuss and review outside of the meeting.	
5.7	Danny Millis: Reduced off peak X3 Service from half hourly to hourly due to passenger reduction.	
6.	SBC Updates	
6.1	Raise any potential planning developments that require SBC to alert attendees of this forum for input and consultation. As discussed in 5.3.	EW
7.	AOB	
7.1	Propose a longer meeting moving forward to ensure all updates can be considered and timely.	
Next meeting:		
Around Week Commencing 20 February for focus on the High-Level Delivery plan on categories of spend to be submitted to Government by end of March 2025.		