

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment
Date:	28 August 2020
Title:	Bus Service 95-96 Contract
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek authority to make arrangements for the continued provision of the 95/96 local bus services for a period of 12 months at a cost based on existing service provision and to be met within existing resources from the Public Bus Budget.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approves the proposal set out in this report for the continued provision of the 95/96 local bus service in East Stratton and Micheldever for a period of 12 months, at a cost based on existing service provision.
3. That authority is delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport, and Environment, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, to make the necessary contractual and other arrangements for provision as set out in this report.

Executive Summary

4. This report seeks approval to make arrangements for the continued provision of the 95/96 local bus services for a period of 12 months at a cost based on existing service provision and to be met from the Public Bus Budget.

Finance

5. The proposed 12 month provision of this service will be funded from the existing public bus budget and based on the costs of existing service provision.

Contextual Information

6. The 95/96 (East Stratton - Winchester) service was operated commercially by a coach company (Mervyn's) for many years. As of 1 January 2020, coaches were required to comply with the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR). These regulations require coaches to be fully accessible and the operator of this service had insufficient accessible vehicles to enable them to continue with the legally compliant provision of their respective services.
7. As a result, an interim measure was put in place in January 2020 for this service to allow for continuity of service. The service was then competitively tendered in February 2020 via the Public Bus Dynamic Purchasing System. A number of options were scoped including adjusted bus service patterns and the use of a Taxishare. The local County Council Member, Cllr Porter, was engaged in the development of proposals and made suggestions which were considered as part of this process.
8. Approval was granted at the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment Decision Day on 10th March for future transport provision in this area at a cost of up to £16,390, the details to be finalised under delegated authority in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy, Transport, and Environment. Further market testing was required to determine the best possible option within existing resources, and approval was subsequently granted by the Director for Economy, Transport and Environment to extend the contract arrangements made in January with the operator in order to allow market testing to take place.
9. However, due to the disruption caused by Covid-19, a decision was taken in June 2020 to suspend public re-tendering of any Local Bus contracts due to expire. Suppliers are not in a strong enough position currently to undergo full tendering exercises, and therefore might not bid in a re-tendering process at present, or else prices might be very high due to uncertainty in the market.
10. Another factor is that levels of patronage since Covid-19 have dropped dramatically, and the context in which this service now operates has therefore altered significantly. With reduced numbers, a Taxishare would normally be considered as an option, but current social distancing requirements mean this option is not viable.

11. It is therefore recommended that the 95/96 bus service be sustained for a period of a year until such time as provision can be reviewed when retendering is likely to be more viable.
12. It is requested that authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport, and Environment to make the necessary arrangements, including contractual, to deliver the continuation of the 95/96 service.

Performance

13. It is proposed that the same timetable is retained for the 95/96 service. However, the service will now operate on a Monday and Friday (previously Tuesday and Friday). As the service has been previously reduced, and the budget available is not changing, it is proposed that no further efficiencies are made.

Consultation and Equalities

14. The 2018 Passenger Transport Review consultation asked respondents which they would prefer: fewer journey opportunities or a service which operated on fewer days. The outcome was that people would prefer fewer journey opportunities over the same number of days. This approach has been applied to this proposal.
15. No negative impacts have been identified on Hampshire residents, including those with protected characteristics. People with disabilities, older and younger people, and women, are more likely to use this bus service. The effect of this decision will be to ensure a continuity of service within existing resources, and the service modes and patterns are designed to minimise the impact on Hampshire residents, including those with protected characteristics.

Conclusion

16. The proposed approach achieves the key aim of the 2018 Passenger Transport Review, that any community which currently has a transport service will retain an essential transport link.
17. The approach set out within this report ensures continuity of service.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	No
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Strategic Plan but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	
N/A	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Local Bus Contracts in Andover and 95/96 Service in Winchester and 49 Service in the New Forest. https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s46294/Report.pdf	<u>Date</u> 10 th March 2020
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u> Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Note 02/20: supplier relief due to coronavirus (COVID-19) Action Note PPN 02/20 March 2020 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874178/PPN_02_20_Supplier_Relief_due_to_Covid19.pdf	<u>Date</u> March 2020
Cabinet Office Procurement Policy Note – Recovery and Transition from COVID-19 Action Note PPN 04/20 June 2020 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891154/PPN_04_20-Recovery_and_Transition_from_COVID-19.pdf	June 2020

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss 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. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

18. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

19. Equalities Impact Assessment:

20. No negative impacts have been identified on Hampshire residents, including those with protected characteristics. People with disabilities, older and younger people, and women, are more likely to use this bus service. The effect of this decision will be to ensure a continuity of service within existing resources, and the service modes and patterns are designed to minimise the impact on Hampshire residents, including those with protected characteristics.