MEDWAY COUNCIL BEST VALUE REVIEW OF PASSENGER TRANSPORT

OPTIONS REPORT

SERVICE PROFILE

&

APPENDICES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Profile</th>
<th>Public Transport</th>
<th>Education &amp; Leisure</th>
<th>Health &amp; Community</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective of the</td>
<td>To maintain an appropriate level of</td>
<td>The transport element of this service is to meet the need for statutory transport to</td>
<td>The National Assistance Act 1948 requires the provision of transport for specified client groups attending day care centres. In other areas, transport is not a direct objective of the directorate it is an important part of achieving the key issues which apply to all service users. These include</td>
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<tr>
<td>service</td>
<td>public transport provision in the Medway area and to work in partnership with the operators to encourage public transport use.</td>
<td>school in the most efficient manner</td>
<td>apply to all service users. These include • Improving access to services • Services to people from Ethnic Minority Communities • Development of directly managed services • Development of day care services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>Under the Transport Act 1985 any licensed bus operator may run a service where and when they choose if they do not need a subsidy to do so. The Council’s role is to identify situations where a service is felt to be needed but is not provided on an unsubsidised basis. The level of service provided in this way is discretionary, but there is a legal obligation to publish and consult on the transport policies pursued by the council. A further role is to work with the transport operators to encourage the use of public transport and develop the use of those services which do not require a subsidy.</td>
<td>The Education Act 1944 established the concept of statutory entitlement to free travel to school for those children living 2 miles (aged under 8 years) or 3 miles (to school leaving age) away from the school which is designated as their “nearest appropriate”. Discretion is also given to assist with the costs of transport to:- • a school where the walking route is not considered to be safe • religious schools • 6th form or college education to age 18. • unentitled children who may be sold vacant seats on any hired</td>
<td>The White Paper “Modernising Social Services” spelt out what the Government proposes to do to modernise social services, in line with the proposals for the National Health Service (NHS). Services are to promote and enhance people's independence, with better prevention and rehabilitation services. This has taken the form of the following priorities and strategies; • National Health Service (NHS) Plan • Health Improvement Plan (HImP) • Joint Investment Plan (JIP)</td>
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<td>Under the Transport Act 2000, councils have an obligation to ensure that a minimum concession of half fare is available to pensioners and specified people with disabilities. In Medway, the council has chosen to upgrade this concession to give the opportunity to travel at a flat rate of 20p per journey. The Group also supports a service for people with disabilities.</td>
<td>sold vacant seats on any hired transport if available. There is a particular requirement to assist children with special needs to travel to school. No charge is levied on these children even those over the age of 16. SEN support can continue until the age of 22 assuming that the student is 19 at the start of the course. The 1944 legislation has been perpetuated by more recent acts of parliament, the only significant change which has taken place being a requirement that 16 to 18 year olds are treated on an equal basis if they attend further education in the sixth form of a school or at a college.</td>
<td>• Primary Care Investment Plans • Quality Protects Services are available to children, the older people, physically disabled, leaning disabled and clients with mental health needs. There is not a standard charging policy across client groups. The present position on day care charging is complex. Day Centres for older people or physically disabled people involve a charge of 90 pence per day. However, where private sector centres are used, transport is arranged by the centre provider with no transport charge to the user. The day opportunities centres for people with learning disabilities do not charge an entrance fee, although there is a charge for people who use council transport services to attend the centre. This charge was introduced in 1997 and is now £1.05 per journey (£2.10 per return journey) regardless of distance and with a maximum charge of £6.30 per week. Transport is provided by; • Owned vehicles • Leased vehicles • Taxi’s and other public transport</td>
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| Customers      | Nearly 7.8 million passengers use bus services in Medway a year and a further 900,000 use the scheduled coach services. Of these, 1.2 million journeys (approx 15%) are made on the contracted services provided on behalf of Medway Council. There are a variety of customers for these services:-  
  • pensioners  
  • schoolchildren  
  • workers  
  • shoppers  
  • commuters | The customers are all children whose education is being provided by Medway Council, and who have been identified as eligible for assistance with transport. The total school population is 45,000. Those benefitting from transport are:-  
  Children under 8 | 25  
  Children 8 to 16 | 1893  
  6th form/college | 665  
  Special needs | 859  
  TOTAL | 3442 | % of school population = | 7.6 | The directorate has over 5000 clients at any one time. Transport facilities are available for;  
  • Children in residential care (11 internal placements and 14 external)  
  • Children in foster care (approx. 220 total clients) in certain circumstances.  
  • Elderly day care (approx. 440 total clients)  
  • Physical disability day care (approx. 150 total clients)  
  • Learning disability (approx. 310 total clients)  
  • Mental Health (approx. 250 clients)  
  • A vehicle is utilised for occupational team to deliver equipment. |
| Other stakeholders | Other organisations with an interest in public transport provision include:-  
  • public transport operators  
  • business  
  • town centres  
  • schools | Other stakeholders include:-  
  • schools  
  • parents  
  • bus & coach operators/contractors  
  • groups looking after the welfare | Other organisations with an interest in client transport provision include:-  
  • Public transport operators  
  • West Kent Health Authority  
  • Local Primary Care Trusts  
  • Voluntary Sector  
  • Education Directorate |
<table>
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</table>
| • other Medway directorates  
• groups looking after the welfare of elderly and disabled people  
• potential users  
• road users  
• Parish councils  
• ethnic minority groups | of people with disabilities | • Schools  
• groups looking after the welfare of elderly and disabled people  
• potential users  
• road users  
• special needs co-ordinators at colleges  
• Kent County Council |

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<th>Resources</th>
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<td>Human</td>
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| Implementation issues are dealt with by the public transport team within the Front Line Task Force of the Development and Environment Directorate (D&E). The Team consists of  
Public Transport Manager  
Public Transport Officer  
Public Transport Assistant  
The manager reports to the Public Transport, Travel Safety and Parking Manager  
The team also shares the responsibility for the implementation of the cycling and walking strategy |
| Pupil & Student services team  
3 full time and 2 part time posts (4 FTE) dealing with school and college transport, cash allowances.  
Escorts for Special Needs transport are provided by the contractors and not employed by Medway Council.  
Police checking of drivers and escorts is undertaken by the council.  
The team reports to the Pupil and Student Services Manager |
<p>| There are no specific officers involved in the purchase and organisation of client transport. The 2 Children’s Residential units lease their own vehicles and use public transport on occasions. The 3 Family Centres purchase public transport. The social workers for children purchase public transport for clients. The 4 Day Centres for older people have their own vehicles and strategic coordination is through the residential and domiciliary care manager. Learning and physical disability day care currently runs from 3 sites. Mental Health day care operates from 5 sites. Vehicles are also used within the Mental Health service provision team, which has 10 residential units. A residential and |</p>
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<td></td>
<td>respite manager has a strategic input into transport issues. Care managers for all adult client groups will also purchase public transportation on an ad hoc basis.</td>
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**Establishment**

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<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Drivers</th>
<th>Escorts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 – 24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 – 44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 65</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
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**Gender**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
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**Ethnic Origins**

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<th>Ethnic Origins</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2</td>
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**Proportion of working days lost due to sickness**

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<tr>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>1 member of staff absent on long term sickness; otherwise minimal.</th>
<th>No loss of service delivery due to staff sickness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current vacancy rate</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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**Additional staff involvement**

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<tr>
<td>Bus shelter issues are dealt with by an assistant engineer (street furniture) in the highways team (15% of time)</td>
<td></td>
<td>All staff mentioned are partially connected to transport provision. Children’s Services 2 residential unit managers and staff 3 Family Centre Managers and staff 13 teams of social workers (over 100 members of staff) 4 Linked Service Centre Managers and admin staff. Each Centre has contracted drivers – there are 7 part time drivers working 2 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon. Residential and domiciliary care manager.</td>
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<td>Policy is determined by the Integrated Transport Team Concessionary Bus Pass issue and balance is carried out by the Cashiers team – no staff employed specifically for this purpose</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Balfour Centre – Management and admin staff. There are 4 buses each having driver/carers. Busses out for 3.5 hours per day (plus attendant on board) plus occasional day trips. Balfour ECU – 2 drivers &amp; attendants @ 20 hours per week.(5 hours per day). Medway Day Opportunities – 6 busses each out for 5 hours a day plus occasional day trips. Employ transport officer. Mental Health Day Care – 2 people carriers purchased through SCA. Used both for getting clients to and from centres and ad hoc trips. No contracted drivers. Residential and domiciliary care manager.</td>
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</table>
| Information assets | In the fragmented environment in which bus services are provided, the Council is the only source of comprehensive information about all operators’ services. This includes:-  
- receipt of service registrations and published timetables  
- participation in the national traveline telephone enquiry service  
- electronic database of timetable information being | Database of those eligible for assisted transport | Client data is held on the Care Management System (CMS). This does not include details of transport. Individual units have travel routes and plans and some have vehicle logs. There is no detailed breakdown of transport ordered by children’s social workers or adults care management staff. |
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<td></td>
<td>developed</td>
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<td>partnership with operators for provision of bus stop signs and roadside timetable displays</td>
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<td>introduction of real time information system</td>
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<td></td>
<td>database of roadside infrastructure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>database of concessionary bus pass holders.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scope and volume of the service</td>
<td><strong>Usage information is shown included under the customers heading</strong></td>
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**Assessment against core values**

<p>| Improving the environment | the public transport network can provide an environmentally efficient alternative to the use of the private car and contribute towards improving the environment | many of these journeys are undertaken by bus or minibus thereby helping the reduce the number of vehicles being used to transport children to school. | Improving the efficiency and reducing the number of unnecessary journeys. Utilising one vehicle instead of several. |
| Giving value for money | over 80% of services provided are without subsidy from the Council. Tenders are sought for those services which the Council does fund reflecting the Transport Act 1985 | services are planned to make the most efficient use of resources by arranging for a number of children to travel together in the same vehicle where practical. Contracts are procured by competitive tender | Obtain best contract prices. Maximum utilisation of vehicles. Close working relationships with Health. |
| Promoting economic, physical and social regeneration | public transport provision can offer alternative means of access to and from regeneration sites for workforce, customers etc | choice and good access to education can help to promote social regeneration and individuals to realise their potential. However, the existing arrangement of assisting with transport costs only to the nearest appropriate school can inhibit choice. | Enables client’s to receive services that include training and rehabilitation. |
| Realising everyone’s potential | public transport can offer access to personal development opportunities such as employment, education and leisure | | Transport provision offers access to personal development opportunities such as employment, education and leisure |
| Working for equal | public transport gives access to the key criteria for this service | | Transport gives access to |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>opportunities and access</td>
<td>opportunities for those who cannot or choose not to use their own car.</td>
<td>relates to the walking distance between home and school. Therefore, users do not have equal access to the service. This inequality is compounded by the fact that those choosing a school which is not considered to be the nearest appropriate forfeit their right to assistance with school transport even if the designated nearest appropriate school is over the prescribed distance.</td>
<td>opportunities for those who cannot or choose not to use their own car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fostering citizenship</td>
<td>the availability of a good public transport network can help to encourage residents to take a responsible attitude towards their travel arrangements</td>
<td>encouraging children to use sustainable forms of transport may help them the give greater consideration to these options when they are making their own travel decisions.</td>
<td>Social integration for specific sections of the community encourages a positive attitude.</td>
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**Equalities**

| Current users | Public transport use in Medway falls into two categories:-
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- commuters travelling to work outside the area, primarily in London, by train or coach – the Council has little direct influence over these journeys</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- local journeys by bus and train for which the market share is approximately 12%.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>usage of this service is determined largely by a precise distance from school and other relevant eligibility criteria are taken into consideration. Although every effort is made to apply the criteria in an equitable way, the underlying legislation for this service does not promote equality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Each service user requires access to the provision centre. Accessibility and availability from all areas of Medway. Each client has access to a similar service. Each client is charged the same amount for the same service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>children and pensioners are the largest age groups using bus services.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>this service is provided specifically for children in full time education up to the age of 18. Children 8 and under are eligible for transport if they live 2 miles or more from the</td>
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<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>women use bus services more than men, particularly in the “middle” age range</td>
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<tr>
<td>accessibility</td>
<td>accessibility to public transport can cover a variety of issues:- - the availability of a service to the place or at the time required service penetration of the urban and rural areas is reasonable, although in some areas frequencies are weak. Evening and Sunday service provision is poor - having information about where and when people can travel readily available and understandable printed timetable information is distributed but the availability needs to be improved and the use of alternative formats investigated - affordability bus fares in the Medway Towns are recognised as being high</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
and the council’s initiative to introduce 20p fares for pensioners and people with disabilities will help for this age group
- **physically being able to board or alight from the vehicle**
  - Arriva, and other operators, are progressively introducing accessible vehicles which are being complemented by the provision of bus boarders provided by the Council.

**special needs groups**
actions being carried out include:-
- 20p bus fares for people with disabilities
- low-floor buses
- Medway Mobility service supported for those who have difficulty using the regular bus network

where children qualify for transport on the grounds of special needs transport is provided which takes full account of these needs.

**consultation over accessibility issues**
participates in the Medway Access Group

Service aims to meet the particular needs of the individual concerned in consultation with parents/carers/doctors

**Environment/sustainability**
no formal appraisal mechanism other than a general assumption that positive public transport measures will enhance sustainability

No formal appraisal mechanism

No formal appraisal mechanism

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<td>and the council’s initiative to introduce 20p fares for pensioners and people with disabilities will help for this age group</td>
<td>where children qualify for transport on the grounds of special needs transport is provided which takes full account of these needs.</td>
<td>All client groups.</td>
<td></td>
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<td>physically being able to board or alight from the vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arriva, and other operators, are progressively introducing accessible vehicles which are being complemented by the provision of bus boarders provided by the Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>special needs groups</strong></td>
<td>actions being carried out include:-</td>
<td>where children qualify for transport on the grounds of special needs transport is provided which takes full account of these needs.</td>
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<td>- 20p bus fares for people with disabilities</td>
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<td>- low-floor buses</td>
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<td>- Medway Mobility service supported for those who have difficulty using the regular bus network</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>consultation over accessibility issues</strong></td>
<td>participates in the Medway Access Group</td>
<td>Service aims to meet the particular needs of the individual concerned in consultation with parents/carers/doctors</td>
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<td><strong>Environment/sustainability</strong></td>
<td>no formal appraisal mechanism other than a general assumption that positive public transport measures will enhance sustainability</td>
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<td>No formal appraisal mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>empowerment of others in the community to share issues through partnership</td>
<td>bus operators have a key role in the level of service to be provided, but are businesses who are primarily driven by commercial motives. Partnership with the Council can help to place less emphasis on the profit or loss impact of their actions and to take broader view of the benefits of their actions</td>
<td>appeals against decisions on eligibility are considered by an Appeals Panel of the Council.</td>
<td>Potential partners include Health, voluntary sector and private transport suppliers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment against five year plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Existing views on service</td>
<td>A number of consultation exercises have been carried out on transport issues including the innovative Citizens' Inquiry. The results of these consultations are summarised in the Appendix</td>
<td>No specific consultation on transport, but the Special Education Needs review and Youth Service best value reviews have raised transport issues</td>
<td>No specific consultation on transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key service links</td>
<td>Public Transport operators within the Council Traffic management Education Cashiers' outlets</td>
<td></td>
<td>Public Transport operators Vehicle suppliers Voluntary sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key business processes</td>
<td>Decisions on level of subsidised services:-  1. assess level of service to be provided without subsidy or  2. Decision made on eligibility  3. If successful, team decides on the most appropriate service(s)</td>
<td>1. Parents apply for transport 2. Decision made on eligibility 3. If successful, team decides on the most appropriate service(s)</td>
<td>Decisions on transport provision:-  - assess charges and impact of any changes  - compare with need for service</td>
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<td>impact of any changes to this network - compare with need for service - design service to meet unmet need and invite tenders - compare cost with budget - award contract if affordable or review action if not</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In terms of developing the use of the network overall - co-operation with operators - identify opportunities to enhance services - agree contribution from all parties - implement identified projects</td>
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<td>for the journey 4. Ticket ordered 5. Parents advised accordingly</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- design service to meet unmet need and invite tenders - compare cost with budget - monitoring and management information - award contract if affordable or review action if not</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In terms of developing service overall - co-operation with operators - identify opportunities to enhance services - agree contribution from all parties - implement identified projects</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key national service standards</th>
<th>BVPI 94 Cost per passenger journey of subsidised bus services</th>
<th>£0.56</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BVPI102 Local bus services – passenger journeys per year</td>
<td>9,107,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BVPI 103 Users satisfied with local public transport information</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BVPI 104 Users satisfied with local bus services</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No specific national performance indicators are set</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Key local service</td>
<td>2% passenger growth target year on year for contracted services</td>
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<td>standards</td>
<td>99.6% of contracted journeys to be operated in full.</td>
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<td>Percent of school</td>
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<td>transport arriving</td>
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<td>on time and without</td>
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Appendix 1

Transport Best Value Review Service Budgets

Revenue Budgets 2001/02

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<td><strong>Total Public Transport Team Costs</strong></td>
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| Total service budgets included in Best Value Review  | 7,026 |

5% Saving would yield 351

5% Saving (Excluding Conc. Fares) would yield 279
MEDWAY COUNCIL

BEST VALUE REVIEW – PASSENGER TRANSPORT

Terms of Reference

1. To undertake a review of the Council’s passenger transport activities which supports current and proposed best value reviews in the Education and Social Service Directorates and also reviews the public transport activities within the Planning & Transport Directorate. The review will follow the Medway best value guidance and will be in compliance with national legislation.

2. To work within the established Terms of Reference for active reviews. The current Best Value reviews which will be supported in the Education Directorate are Special Education Needs and Physical and Learning Disabilities. In the Social Services Directorate, the active reviews are Family Support Services, Services for Older People and Services to Adults with Mental Health Problems. The Public Transport activities in the Planning & Transport Directorate include:-
   - Bus services provided under contract to Medway Council
   - Information and promotion
   - Concessionary fares
   - Bus Shelters

3. To explore the opportunity to achieve cost savings and/or improvements in services in the services under review by the integrated planning and procurement of the transport needs of these services.

4. To consider the impact on transport costs and services of the fundamental challenge process on the service areas being reviewed and to challenge the public transport activities of the Council to ensure that value for money is being achieved, and that the Council is maximising the benefits to the travelling public and maximising the contribution made by the operators to the provision of public transport services in the area.

5. To establish performance targets to meet legislative requirements and government targets and to contribute towards Medway Council’s core values and strategic objectives.

6. To complete enough of the review to feed into the reviews being supported to the timescales which have already been established. To conclude the review by considering the Public Transport activities, and to complete the review as a whole by September 2001.

7. To carry out the review in a rigorous and transparent manner, maintaining written records which can be audited or inspected at a future time.
8 To provide information to officers and Members which will allow the review to be challenged and progress monitored.

Key Objectives

1 To recommend actions to reduce the overall cost of passenger transport for the Council by:-
   • Identifying the transport needs of the services concerned
   • Integrated planning & procurement of transport needs
   • Reviewing eligibility for transport services
   • Exploring other adjustments to services – eg changes to opening hours – which may assist the Council in achieving savings in transport costs
   • Reviewing the benefits of in house operation of transport

2 To introduce improvements to services where they are identified by the review process

3 To encourage bus companies to maximise the level of service which is provided without subsidy

4 To determine the actions open to the Council which will be most effective and cost effective in encouraging additional users to the public transport network

5 To identify the criteria and ensure the maximum benefit from the bus services which are funded directly by the Council.

Priority issues

1 Action to contain the level of expenditure on transport costs by service teams and to contain the rates of increase in cost which are currently being experienced

2 Strategic Plan objectives and Citizens’ Inquiry recommendations to increase the use of public transport and improve the environment

3 Government requirement that half-fare concessionary fares permits should be made available to elderly people and people with disabilities from April 2001

Other issues

1 Development of benchmarks and performance indicators which reflect the commercial input of private companies into public transport provision.
**Project Team**

Geoff Walters – Public Transport Manager, P&T (Lead officer)
Tim Edwards – School Transport Manager, Education
Jon Crockford – Management Accountant, Social Services
1 nomination from the project team of each of the parallel reviews

Challenge agent – individual services will be challenged by the existing challenge agent. Challenge agent for public transport activities to be identified.
Summary of consultation already done on Passenger Transport in Medway

Passenger Transport

There has been extensive consultation done throughout Medway in relation to passenger transport. However further consultation has still to be done with users of social services transport and people with disabilities.

This is a concise summary of the key findings from:
A citizens’ Inquiry on Public Transport: (Sept 99)
Focus Group Consultations with Residents (2000)
Physical and Learning Disability Review (July 2001)
SEN Review: (Aug 2001)
Advanced Project: (Sept 2001)

Trains

People are less likely to travel around Medway by train. Commuter trains are busy and old style carriages are difficult to use for disabled people and parents with pushchairs. It is felt that train travel is expensive and various issues around safety have been raised in relation to the stations and the trains.

Buses

This is the area where there is most scope for change. Most residents in Medway see the bus as the poorest way to travel. There is a consensus between all groups consulted on passenger transport that buses are costly, unreliable and unsafe with timetable information being very poor. 75% of residents in say they rely on their cars to travel within the area. All sections of the community have raised issues around the safety of the bus station in Chatham and that all bus routes seem to converge there. Routes are indirect and infrequent and many stop running after 8.00pm. Young people pointed out the lack of evening and late night buses in the area. People like the easy access buses for getting push chairs on, but feel there are too few of them around. Timetable information is poor and not readily available. However since this consultation has been done some stops have electronic information installed. There were several comments made across the groups about driver’s attitudes towards them. Young people find them rude, the women’s focus group agreed with this and said they can be intolerant of children.

Social Services Transport

People travelling to day centres are mainly driven by parents/carers or use the centre mini bus. People like to use the minibus service as this generates contact and interaction. However some people use public transport or walk. All of those who use public transport complained about a poor standard of service, with buses being unreliable or late. There were also strong complaints about the levels of fares that they had to pay. They pointed out that despite having Medway 20:20 passes they couldn’t buy return bus tickets before 9.30 in the morning, yet they have to travel before that time to get to
the day centre on time. A few people have multi-modal journeys using both car and bus. One person uses a taxi and orders it through *Typetalk* (a text-based telephone service for people with hearing impairments.) This was reported to be a slow process between ordering and arrival. Although the taxi is expensive it was a preferable to a considerably longer journey by public transport.

**Taxis**
There is an extensive network of taxi companies in Medway. However the service seems to be variable across the area. Few people use them as their main form of transport and they feel they are expensive. Most people use taxis in the evening to take them to and from entertainment venues. Young people felt they had no option but to use taxis to get home from clubs and always tried to share to reduce the cost.

**Other forms of transport**
Many commuters use coaches to travel from Medway to London. They are cheaper but take longer. Cyclists say there are too few routes and have raised concerns about safety in the area. There are some smaller bus companies throughout Medway, which service small contracts seen not to be viable by the main provider of buses.
Background

Medway Council provides a number of passenger services including:

- **Education transport**: provision of transport to school for those deemed to be eligible under distance rules (mainly bus passes issued) or for special educational needs (mainly private contracts)
- **Social Services transport**: services to children, people with physical and learning disabilities, older people and users of mental health services. These services are provided to enable parents/carers to carry on with their own lives and users to participate in day to day activities
- **Public transport**: including bus services provided under contract to Medway Council, information and promotion, concessionary fares and bus shelters. Arriva is the main provider of public transport in Medway. The council subsidises 15% of services with the remainder being provided without subsidy by the bus companies concerned

These services are currently being reviewed through the Passenger Transport Best Value Review. The role of the Best Value Review is to challenge why and how these services are provided in the future, obtain the views of stakeholders, test council’s performance against best practice and evaluate the competitiveness and quality of alternative options of future service delivery.

The review will also test the objectives of the services against the council’s core values and priorities expressed in Medway Council’s Plan for 1999-2004, the objectives and actions of Medway Council’s transport plan and the emerging priorities of Medway’s Community Plan. (See summary in Attachment One)

Input from local people and organisations are being sought in a number of ways. Initial stakeholder-scoping workshops have been held to gain views and suggestions on the services being reviewed. (See summary of outcomes in Attachment Two). This material, along with the results of the visioning workshops as documented here, will be used in developing options for further stakeholder consultation.
The role of the visioning workshops

The objectives of the day were to:

- Seek participant views on Medway’s role in passenger transport.
- Encourage creative thinking and develop a longer-term vision for the services under review.
- If possible identify specific actions to achieve the vision.

What was discussed

Two hour sessions were held; one in the afternoon and one in the early evening. Geoff Walters, the Public Transport Manager at Medway Council, introduced each.

Small groups were then formed and asked to:
1. Identify issues for passenger transport in Medway.
3. Identify actions needed to progress the vision.

In doing this each group was asked to consider:

- Bus services.
- Social Services transport.
- Education transport.
- Taxis.
- Train services and other forms of transport.

During the afternoon session each group was asked to initially focus on the needs of one of the following:

1. **A young person** who uses education and public transport to travel to school and when going out at weekends. Has concerns about cost and safety at night. Feels safety is an issue also at Chatham and the buses she or he needs stop at 8.00. Therefore shares taxis if coming home late.

2. **A parent** who uses a mix of public transport and Social Services or Education transport to go shopping, ferry children and go to work part time. They find the Social Service mini bus provides contact that is good. They feel that buses are easy to get pushchairs on but timetable information is poor, routes are indirect and some drivers are intolerant of children.

3. **An older person** who uses Social Services transport to the day centre and public transport for shopping and other activities. They find getting in and out of busy commuter trains hard especially if there are old style carriages. It’s also expensive but so too are the buses. Those buses with easy access help but there are only a few. People including some drivers are
often impatient. Safety is a concern. They are also worried that as they get older and less mobile their transport options will become very limited.

4. A bus operator which, faced with a potential market of 250,000 people, is planning services to meet local needs.

All groups were also prompted to talk about meeting the needs of people with disabilities and/or special needs, their physical access, the impact of costs and discrimination and their access to information.

PARTICIPANTS

Some 130 people were invited to attend, plus an open e-mail to all staff members. These people were drawn from the variety of stakeholders who have an interest in passenger transport issues within Medway.

On the day 30 people attended; 22 in the afternoon and 8 in the evening. A list of participants is provided in Attachment Three.

NOTES FROM AFTERNOON SESSION

Group 1 – Focus on young people

The issues

- The need for more traffic priority measures so that buses and taxi turn up when expected.
- Integration of passenger transport services by:
  - More efficient scheduling
  - Officer responsible for overseeing all transport procurement.
- Need to build passenger confidence in using passenger transport services. This calls for an investment in the transition between getting people from cars to buses.
- Tourism - services should be run on a regular basis throughout the year to raise the profile of open top buses.
- Questioned the effectiveness of bus lanes and issues were raised regarding allowing taxis in bus lanes and using lanes for peak times only.
- Smarter ticketing - electronic ticketing on buses could be included in contracts and reduce the call for conductors.
- Chatham bus station - the design is not user friendly.
- Student concessions - unfair that students under 16 do not get half fare in the morning and that over 16’s are required to pay full fare at all times.
- Schools start times - staggered start times would bring the benefit of using transport resources better.
- Direct routes - look at the basics not just fine tuning the existing services.
- Development of park and ride would bring significant benefits.
- Dedicated school buses - could be used for the rest of the day for social services.
- Community transport - small buses for youth clubs, luncheon clubs, etc.
- Access for the disabled on buses - concern that it is provided at a cost for which subsidy is not always available.

At this point participants were asked to review the notes from the consultation that has been completed to date on passenger transport issues. The group agreed with the issues that had been raised previously and did not raise any further issues.

A vision for the future

In 2010 passenger services in Medway will:

- Be better planned and controlled within the council so that the way the council operates its fleet of procured services across directorates is more integrated. This will result in more joined up working across the council on services and policies.
- Be more responsive to the needs of young people, as a result of research into where they want to go in the evenings and the establishment of the necessary level of service required.
- Be cheaper and therefore more accessible for young people as a result of an extension of the concessionary fare scheme to include all young people up to the age of 18 years in full-time education as well as cheaper fares for all under 18 years of age in the morning peak time.
- Be primarily provided from a developed major transport mode in Chatham from a relocated bus station that will be user-friendlier to the public and therefore result in greater use.
- Be benefited by a more extensive park and ride system to reduce the amount of cars in the city centres and therefore a reduction in pollution levels.
- Be supported by an electronic form of ticketing and the choice for passengers to buy tickets in other outlets such as shops and post offices.
- Be supported by a more effective passenger transport infrastructure, with more bus priority lanes as well as other priority measures.
- Be controlled by a dedicated transport officer responsible for overseeing all transport procurement issues.
- Be served by more direct bus routes that will take people to their destination quicker.
Getting there – action needed (Group’s top three priorities identified)

- Council to develop more integration of their passenger transport services, resulting in more joined up working across the council. (1)
- Council to work in partnership with Arriva to either redesign or relocate the central bus station in Chatham, to make it more user-friendly and attractive to existing and new customers. (1)
- Council to research and develop a new system of passenger transport in Medway, in the hope of tackling many of the issues raised. The two proposed options to be considered are the Positano bus system and a rapid transport system. (1)
- Council to subsidise half fare for students up to the age of 18 years at all times.
- Council to introduce more park and ride facilities across Medway.

The top three action points were seen as having equal importance in the development of Medway’s passenger transport system.

<table>
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<th>Group 2 – Focus on older people</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The issues</strong></td>
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- Bus service information, reliability, frequency/bus flow – all are important in terms of encouraging more people to use the bus for a variety of purposes.
- Both bus and train fares are relatively high.
- Lack of late buses – elderly people go out in the evening as well, do not use the bus just for shopping.
- Lack of buses to support 7 day working and shopping i.e. changing lifestyles.
- Better parking enforcement needed – i.e. cars in bus stops/lanes, parking on pavements, parking on yellow lines, etc.
- More integration of council services needed – more cross directorate co-ordination of total transport need/demand/supply.
- Access to out of town shopping centres, GPs etc – elderly people have as wide a range of travel destinations as others.
- Safety – Buses seen as mostly safe, except evenings and schoolchildren can seem threatening.
- Early morning access to the Pentagon Centre – many jobs start at 6 or 6.30 am.
- Reduce the need for car use and journeys – in terms of using the adopted Local Plan to reduce car dependency across the board, especially for new commercial and housing developments.
- Access to buses – like low floor buses – need more of them.
• Access to and condition of railway stations is poor – this was seen as a major issue. Access and safety need urgent improvement, but given RailTracks’ current status i.e. in receivership, station investment has been deferred.

• Bus drivers – can be rude, but their pay and conditions are not good.

• 20p bus fares welcomed but people want more direct routes – elderly people want fast journey times as well.

At this point participants were asked to review the consultation that has been completed to date on passenger transport issues. The group agreed with the issues that had been raised previously and did not raise any further issues.

A vision for the future

In 2010 passenger transport services in Medway will:

• Be more reliable as a result of an improved passenger transport infrastructure and will provide more information i.e. expected arrival times at bus stops.

• Be provided in an integrated way, with the council working in partnership with a number of transport providers.

• Charge reasonable fare levels, with worthwhile concessions for children and the elderly.

• Be provided by drivers who are more tolerant of elderly and disabled passengers. This will be achieved by more comprehensive training provided by the service provider(s).

• Be available to all children up to 18 years at half fare at all times, in order to make these services accessible to young people at affordable prices, so reducing pressure from parents.

• Providing quicker journey times and able to support all sections of the community in their varied travel needs.

• Providing a light rail, metro or tram system that will provide rapid transit around the core shopping areas.

• Be more easily accessible as a result of ticket machines being located at bus stops and other places.

Getting there – action needed (Group’s top three priorities identified)

• Improve bus reliability, through infrastructure improvements, better co-ordination of services, improved ticketing. (1)

• Train station upgrades/safety improvements. (2)

• Taxi concession fares/token system. (equal 3rd with next)

• Active use of the planning system to reduce car dependency.(3)
• Integrated council transport making better use of the council's fleet of vehicles.
• Ramps to improve access to buses.
• Subsidised elderly train travel.
• Development of a rapid transport system.
• Subsidised electric scooters.

**Group 3 – Focus on families**

**The issues**

• Buses are mainly used by children to access schools and parents strongly disagree with the fact that children are charged full fare in morning peak times. As a result of this many parents take their children to school themselves in their cars.
• Children that have free bus permits because they live more than 3 miles from an appropriate school are being taken to school by car also. Medway Council is therefore paying for a service that is not being used.
• Smart cards could be introduced so that the council does not overpay for school children using buses. Under such a system, the council will only pay for those journeys that are actually taken rather than a flat fee for each pupil.
• There were concerns by parents that the 3-mile free school permits rule is now archaic and needs researching and modified.
• Punctuality of school buses is an issue. However, the prime cause of this seems to be parent's cars obstructing the buses.
• Bullying and anti-social behaviour by children on buses is an issue that could possible be reduced by educating children on how to use public transport.
• Driver intolerance - especially if people fail to have the right change but also with regards to children and elderly people.
• Possibility of zoning bus routes and introducing flat fares.
• The main issue for parents of using buses in the evening for either themselves or their children is safety.
• There are concerns over bus reliability that could be remedied by introducing more priority traffic lights through the GPS system and also installing more electronic timetable updates of expected arrival times.

At this point participants were asked to review the consultation that has been completed to date on passenger transport issues. The group agreed with the issues that had been raised previously and did not raise any further issues.
A vision for the future

In 2010 passenger transport services in Medway will:

- Be provided by contracted drivers who are more tolerant of children, families, elderly and disabled passengers. This will be achieved by more comprehensive training provided by the service provider.

- Be more reliable as a result of an improved passenger transport infrastructure and also be more accountable to passengers through the provision of electronic updates of expected arrival times at bus stops.

- Experience fewer incidents of bullying and bad behavior as a result of better education of users particularly children.

- Be available to all children up to 18 years at half fare at all times, in order to make these services accessible to young people at an affordable prices. This will relieve the pressure on parents.

- Be more easily accessible as a result of ticket machines being located at bus stops and other places.

- School bus permits will be run on smart card system so that Medway Council does not overspend on permits that are not used. This is especially applicable in the mornings.

- Be provided on a zoned basis, so that inconsistencies in fares are removed.

Getting there – action needed (Group’s top three priorities identified)

- Work with Arriva to stop full fare for children before 9am - this may influence parents/pupils to use the bus and thus remove vehicles from the roads. (1)

- Review council’s 3-mile school permit rules that was introduced with the 1944 Education Act. (2)

- Integrate Social Services and Education transport that will reduce the need to pay for private operators. (3)

- Introduce smart cards so that subsidies to bus companies for school travel are not overpaid.

- Extend the 3-mile free school bus pass to other times and at weekends.

- Educate children and bus drivers about behavior on buses.

- Increase the number of outlets that sell bus tickets and the possibility of introducing ticket machines at bus stops.

- Increase the number of bus stops that have electronic timetables and updates.

- More traffic priority measures for buses to increase reliability of the services.
The issues

- Service punctuality, reliability and consistency – important if more people are to be encouraged to use the bus service – Frequency and reliability of service also important in terms of the safety of passengers waiting for services.
- Pollution and air quality.
- Costs - and the need for ‘reasonable’ fares.
- Recruitment of drivers - a major problem.
- Safety – in cycle lanes - and need for shelters for bus users.
- Sharing of service information between providers important for customer service – there is a need to provide integrated information re timetables and routes – build on the common phone number for public inquiries which already exists.
- Co-ordinated planning for new urban development needed – passenger services need to be planned ahead in order to get the benefits of scale and avoid service gaps.
- Need for more integrated bus and train services – these need to be managed more at the local level and changes are being made with the setting up of a Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) as in the metropolitan areas.
- A control system is needed to support stronger integration of passenger services.
- More priority measures needed for buses – to tackle congestion effects – but active enforcement required.
- Changes to industry regulation system needed - needs to be more localised.
- Service gaps – in the evening/early mornings and on Sundays - need to meet diverse lifestyle needs – but is there enough demand?
- Much depends on resources - lobbying for more funding for buses needed.
- Middle East oil supply – what redundancy in the overall transport system is there?

Participants were asked to review the list of issues that have been raised in consultation to date. Specifically they were asked to indicate if they agreed with the summary or felt that issues had been overlooked. Participants did not add any further issues and some people responded that they felt that much depended on the age and locality of the individual service user – that their experiences can be very different – and used the example of school buses as
illustrative. While bus drivers may appear rude, large numbers of school children can be unruly and tax the patience of staff.

A vision for the future

In 2010 passenger services in Medway will:

- Be in receipt of more central government funding for priorities like new technology to support co-ordinated information systems and new passenger transport infrastructure.
- Be more locally planned and controlled.
- Be better supported by council e.g. coordinated timetables and service information for all trains and buses will be provided at the local level and co-ordinated across boundaries, integrated ticketing will be provided and a system of online advice re roadwork and other problems will have cut delays.
- Be better marketed and communicated.
- Be informed by the public through effective ‘real’ public participation.
- Be cleaner as a result of the 2004 target having been met for all new buses.
- Be more accessible for people with disabilities as a result of the requirement that by 2004 all new vehicles, related facilities and pedestrian infrastructure be accessible.
- Be better planned in relation to new urban development.
- Be provided using better road infrastructure that will take into account public transport needs e.g. transponders.
- Be supported by more effective enforcement of bus priority lanes and other priority measures.

Getting there – action needed (Group’s top three priorities identified)

- Council to take a bigger role in the planning and co-ordination (and operation???) of passenger bus services. Council should push to take on a licensing role and use it to drive environmental, service improvement and access objectives. (1)
- Council to develop more effective mechanisms for community and industry input to planning – use the Local Strategic Partnership and develop direct relationships with key local groups e.g. disability groups and local industry groups. (2)
- Council to develop more park and ride infrastructure and explore Dial a Ride schemes and Council to push for more central government funding. (Both equal 3)
These improvements to be supported by stronger communication to the public and co-ordinated service information provision – possibly developed in partnership with the industry through the LSP.

NOTES FROM EVENING SESSION

Group 1

The issues

- Bus reliability - there was a general concern that buses were either late or left early and there was no effective mechanism to tell people about this.
- Cost of public transport and the distribution of subsidies and whether the current system uses resources in the most cost-effective way.
- Potential benefit to others and the environment through the use of buses.
- Helping people with disabilities to lead a full lifestyle:
  - Social Services users like having their own fleet of minibuses - they know the staff and staff know their needs. Drivers are employed by Medway Council but the transport fleet comes from Kent County Council and they find that an effective and reliable system. However, there is not in place a transport system that meets all their day-to-day needs.
  - Public discrimination against people with special needs using public transport.
  - Under European legislation Medway Council needs to tender for suppliers with specialist transport. This would enable people who were less able bodied to have access to the community at weekends and evenings. A previous out-and-about service fell through. Users felt this was because there was no long-term though put into the project, it was under-funded, run by volunteer drivers and were selective of users. Is there a need for a less expensive commercial service?
  - Social Service transport users liked having escorts on the buses. However, there are difficulties in recruiting drivers for these buses because of low pay.
- Service gaps - 50% of pensioners do not have a car and would like to see integration of all modes of transport so that timetables and services work together.
- Bus routes are historical and new areas and developments are poorly serviced.
- Journeys are too long and complicated and there are multiple changes between destination.
- Information about services is difficult to understand and often inadequate.
• The local service infrastructure has an impact on delays e.g.) bus bays on the A2. This highlights the importance of buses having priority.
• There is a concern that when engineering works where taking place on roads that pedestrians were not given priority.
• People experience problems with taxis in that fact that they can not always guarantee that a customer can be brought back from their destination. There is also a concern over the ability to purchase customized taxis for disabled persons.
• The is a need to mainstream access for disabled people across the whole transport network, however, people are aware that this is an economic challenge.
• Safety issue about waiting for buses because of poor lighting.

A vision for the future
In 2010 passenger services in Medway will:

• Be more accessible for vulnerable groups served by a co-ordinated timetable.
• Be a transport 'system'.
• All citizens of Medway should have equal access to travel and choice.
• All services will be marketed.
• Fed with better information and better communication.
• Subsidies will be more effective.
• Be delivered through partnership with Medway Council as the lead player.

Getting there – action needed (Group’s top three priorities identified)

• Bus priority on the A2 - the range of options being red routes; bus bays and buses controlling traffic lights. (1)
• Release Social Services from non-competitive suppliers via Kent County Council. (2)
• Greater use of penalties for unreliable buses. (3)
• Ticketing - different outlets and methods to be explored with industry.
• Review routes structures through partnerships.
• Development of park and ride.
• Use Medway Transport Partnership Board.
• Greater use of penalties for undeliverable services.
• More passenger information regarding delays and changes to timetables.
Group 2:

The Issues:

- Train stations – there are some planned station refits. An issue is how stations in town centres bring cars into the centre of towns.
- Train fares – still regarded as expensive. Group felt people only use trains regularly if you are a commuter. Similarly, in general you would never drive to London (because of parking problems), so that the train is the only viable means of travel to London.
- Disability access on trains very poor – ‘can end up in the goods wagon’.
- Reliability – no reasons given for delays on buses or trains. Bus drivers are rude and do not explain delays or cancellations.
- What is the council's role in getting people on the bus? - Positive discrimination could be shown towards the disabled.
- Changing start/finish times for schools/Social Services transport, to avoid duplicating fleets. This was considered in some detail, with the conclusion being that start times would need to be staggered by at least one hour, and the idea should be to organise transport according to user need, not according to transport need.

At this point participants were asked to review the consultation that has been completed to date on passenger transport issues. The group agreed with the issues that had been raised previously and did not raise any further issues, except to stress the importance of driver training re disability issues and rudeness to passengers.

Being a diverse group, participants were asked to consider transport issues in terms of the following 3 needs groups:

1. Young People
   - Many current routes are seen as indirect.
   - Little public transport in the evenings and none at all in rural areas – see below.
   - Rude bus drivers.
   - It is important to bring young people in to the centre, reduce vandalism in the suburbs.
   - Concessionary fares for children – not relevant if there are no services.
   - Need to concentrate on need and subsidise these.

2. The elderly
   - Cheap buses (20p fares) do not compensate for unreliability.
   - Safety issues, especially for the frail elderly.
• Need more disabled access buses - despite the increase in the number of buses that have wheelchair access/space, do not know if your next bus will be suitable.
• Seat belt are impractical, where does shopping go?
• No assistance on buses for the elderly or for those with shopping/kids. Bus drivers seem unaware of disability issues.
• Wheelchair users still find it difficult to use the bus – kerb heights, etc.

3. Rural dwellers
• Whilst people choose to live in rural areas and want to retain their isolation, rural dwellers do want access to the town centres evenings and weekends.
• Demand lies in urban areas – potential conflicts where subsidy should be spent.
• Chatham Vision – need to enable people to get there before we develop the centre.

A vision for the future
In 2010 passenger transport services in Medway will:
• Be available at a reasonable price to enable all sections of the community to travel to their destinations.

Actions: (Short term)
1. Concessionary fares and the inclusion of children.
2. Making bus journeys shorter through infrastructure improvements.
3. Where and why does Medway Council subsidise services – need for review of current services/night services for young people to local nightspots.
5. Raising awareness of services particularly ASD.

Actions: (Long term)
1. Rapid transit system.
2. Accessibility to train stations.
3. Park & Ride.
4. Operators want more council planning, which is a change from previous attitudes.
5. Information strategy for public transport information needed to set standards as to what is wanted- to then be imposed on the operators who
should be liable to meet these standards – if they fail to do this then they would be liable.

The above numbering reflects the group's priorities in these areas.

**NEXT STEPS**

This report is being circulated to all who participated in the visioning event. It is also being circulated along with a short questionnaire to those who were invited but unable to attend on the day. Their responses, in addition to the material contained here, will be used by the Best Value Review Team to develop options for further consultation in early 2002. A further consultation event will then be held to which all who were advised of the visioning event will be invited.

**YOUR FEEDBACK**

Please let us know if you have any comments on this report or the event itself. Call or e-mail either Geoff Walters, Public Transport Manager on 01634 331058, geoff.walters@medway.gov.uk or Duncan Bruce, Senior Policy Officer on 01634 332239, duncan.bruce@medway.gov.uk.
ATTACHMENT ONE - WHAT IS MEDWAY COUNCIL HOPING TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE PASSENGER TRANSPORT REVIEW BEST VALUE REVIEW?

Public transport – to work in partnership with train and bus operators to:

- Assist in the reduction of congestion and pollution by:
  - Increasing the use of public transport in Medway from 12% to 20% by 2004
  - Reducing car use by making other forms of transport attractive in terms of affordability, accessibility, reliability and integration
- Improve satisfaction with buses
- Improve satisfaction with public transport information
- Encourage the use of services by those on low incomes and address the problem of travel in remote areas
- Make public transport more accessible to people with disabilities

Education and Social Care transport provided by Medway Council – to:

- Examine client transport policies and eligibility criteria to ensure consistency and fair treatment across services
- Reduce costs to the level of the best performers
- Eliminate gaps, overlaps in services and funding
- Improve usage/take-up

WHAT DOES MEDWAY COUNCIL WANT TO ACHIEVE THROUGH ITS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 1999/2004?

Council value – Promoting physical, social and economic regeneration

- An integrated transport and accessibility plan for each regeneration site
- A review of charging policies by 2002 to encourage the use of services by low income people

Council value – Improving the environment

- A company transport plan for Medway Council including proposals for car sharing, flexible working and working from home, cycling initiatives and workplace charging
- A River Medway action plan to increase use of the river for transport, leisure and tourism
- Strategies for cycling and walking
• A five-year local transport plan to drive a more integrated transport system and better travel safety
• A green transport corridor with bus priority measures linked to park and ride facilities
• Promotion of a Medway light rapid transport system

**Council value – Equal opportunities and access**

• Ensure all services are monitored in terms of equality of access
• Promote improvements to public transport to make it more accessible to people with disabilities and buy in reasonable special services for people with disabilities who cannot use their own transport, buses or trains
• Provide information on cassette, in Braille or large print on request

**Council value – Fostering citizenship**

Develop a rural strategy to maintain and develop employment opportunities for rural communities, address the housing needs of those who live in the countryside and tackle the problems of travel in remote areas.
ATTACHMENT TWO – MEDWAY PASSENGER TRANSPORT BEST VALUE REVIEW

WHAT HAVE PEOPLE TOLD US?

The council has conducted three surveys through:

- Citizens’ panel
- Citizens’ inquiry
- Focus group

Citizens’ panel survey findings (January 2000)

- 75% of people in Medway rely on the car because they perceive it to be more reliable, safer and cheaper than any other form of transport. Medway residents are more likely to use the car for travelling to work, going shopping, reaching entertainment venues, and travelling outside of Medway.
- Parents reported that they are most likely to take their children to and from school either by walking or by car.
- 32% of users/non-users rated cycling in Medway as good or very good, a similar proportion rated it as poor or very poor.
- Although residents rated the bus as the poorest way of travelling around Medway they did perceive it as one of the safest forms of transport (this is in contrast to other national consultation which considered bus travel unsafe).
- Not very easy to get information about train or bus services.

Citizens’ Inquiry – September 1999

Three main problem areas:

- Public transport – a high cost for a low quality of service, including frequency, reliability, lack of bus stops, lack of buses, poor staff attitude.
- Road users – Congestion and poor air quality.
- Cycle routes – Not enough, unsafe at times.

There was a clear link identified between congestion and poor public transport and the inquiry team recommended the following:

- The creation of an integrated transport system in the Medway area
- Greater incentives offered to transport providers.
• The council to take the lead in co-ordinating partnership arrangements with bus and train companies
• The council to focus in the short term on road measures and parking
• Longer term consideration of light rail/tram system

Transport Focus Group

Mental Health Service user feedback
• As no definable town centre routes are generally poor
• The cheapest form of transport is considered the car
• Poor policing of traffic offences, especially parking/speeding
• Congestion at peak times
• Buses – Indirect routes, expensive, poor information, poor access
• Trains/Taxis – Expensive, coaches cheaper but slow

Young peoples’ feedback
• Buses - Unreliable, expensive, untimely, overcrowded, Chatham bus station unsafe, rude staff
• Trains - Unreliable, expensive, dirty
• Taxis - Expensive, only use in evenings
• Walking/Cycling - Cycling dangerous, area too hilly, walking unsafe at certain times

Womens’ feedback
• Buses – Poor information, expensive, rude staff, uncomfortable, have to change to often, unsafe
• Trains – Expensive, older carriages not suitable for pushchairs etc
• Taxis – Expensive, variable service across Medway
• Walking/Cycling – Unsafe at nights, hilly area
ATTACHMENT THREE - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Afternoon session:
Councillor Mrs. Gilry - Medway Council
Mr. Barry Clout - Kent Council for Voluntary Youth Services/Medway Youth Action Forum/LA21 Medway
Mr. Roper - Medway Neighborhood Watch
Mrs. Roper - Medway Neighborhood Watch
Sue Hannant - Transport Forum
Mr. Blackwood - Transport Forum
Mrs. Lou Lynch - Medway Pensioners Forum
Mr. Hosking - Transport Forum
Mr. Ratcliffe - City of Rochester Society
Mr. Smart - Windmill Taxis
Mr. Avenell - Strood Town Centre Forum
Mrs. Eatwell - Medway Forum
Mr. Green - Nu Venture
Mr. Grubb - North Kent Rail Users Association
Mr. Dosangh - ASD Coaches
Mr. Davies - Arriva
Mr. Hall - Clarkes Communter Services
Mr. Jones - London Coaches
C. Smith - Medway Council
Mr. Bob Moore - Medway Transport Forum
Councillor Derek Munton - Medway Council
Mrs. Sandra Woodfall - Medway Council

Evening session:
Councillor Bacon - Medway Council
Councillor Shade - Medway Council
Derek Gooch - Medway Council, Unit Manager, Balfour Centre
Mr. Tebutt - Medway Pensioners Forum
Mr. Roskilly - Rainham Cycle Club
Mr. O'Neil - Kingsferry Coaches
Jacqueline Welch - Medway Council
Malcolm Spalding - Arriva

**Review team members:**
Geoff Walters - Team Lead/Public Transport
Duncan Bruce - Best Value Advisor
Maggie White - Best Value Advisor
Steve Hewlett - Challenge
Steve Heather - Education transport
Liz Nicholas - Social services transport
Claire Currie - Team Support
Options for Improving Passenger Transport

A report of consultation with staff and stakeholders held 25 March, 2002

Medway Council Passenger Transport
Best Value Review
Background

Council’s role in passenger transport
Medway Council provides a number of passenger services including:

- **Education transport**: provision of transport to school for those deemed to be eligible under distance rules (mainly bus passes issued) or for special educational needs (mainly private contracts)

- **Social Services transport**: services to children, people with physical and learning disabilities, older people and users of mental health services. These services are provided to enable parents/carers to carry on with their own lives and users to participate in day to day activities

- **Public transport**: including bus services provided under contract to Medway Council, information and promotion, concessionary fares and bus shelters. Arriva is the main provider of public transport in Medway. The council subsidises 15% of services with the remainder being provided without subsidy by the bus companies concerned.

These services are currently being reviewed through the Passenger Transport Best Value Review.

The Best Value Review of Passenger Transport
The role of the review is to challenge why and how these services are provided in the future, obtain the views of stakeholders, test council’s performance against best practice and evaluate the competitiveness and quality of alternative options for future service delivery.

Input to the review is being sought from local people and organisations in a number of ways. Initial scoping workshops were held with stakeholders to gain views and suggestions on the services being reviewed. These were followed in November with ‘visioning’ workshops. Using both the outcomes of these discussions and research undertaken by council officers, options were then developed which addressed issues identified by local people and council staff. The issues identified included:

- Information
- Fares
- Parking enforcement
- Priority measures to assist buses through traffic
- Accessibility
- Smartcards
- Integration
- Park & Ride.
In developing options council officers considered a range of options intended to achieve differing cost outcomes including:

- Cost savings
- Service improvements with no additional cost
- Service improvements with additional cost.

The options they developed are detailed in Attachment One.

The workshops

The objectives of the day were to:

1. Discuss options for improving passenger transport with staff and stakeholders
2. Identify stakeholder views about the priorities.

The workshops were facilitated by the Office for Public Management and attended by relevant Medway staff.

What was discussed?

Geoff Walters, Medway’s Public Transport Manager, outlined options for improving passenger transport. He identified options for the short to medium-term and explained how they had been developed and how input to previous consultations had helped shape these options. He acknowledged that a number of the issues raised in the consultation required consideration in the longer term work currently being undertaken by council officers to address long-term strategic transport needs. This work is considering:

- Resiting of Pentagon Bus Station
- Light Rapid Transit
- Taxis (including concessions)
- Bus driver recruitment (with service providers)

Participants

All staff were invited to attend one of the two staff workshops. Several people were invited to attend from stakeholder groups previously contacted in regard to the Best Value Review.

On the day _ people attended the staff workshops and _ the stakeholder workshop. A list of participants is provided in Attachment two.
Staff workshops

Two workshops were held with staff. A summary of the discussion follows.

Staff workshop one - issues raised

- Transport needs of library staff and users were discussed. The ability of the council to extend evening services is inhibited by the availability for transport for staff and service users. Better co-ordination between council service planners and local bus services is required.

- Staff working with services for older people indicated that many problems exist with social service transport. Problems highlighted included difficulties with vehicle leasing schemes; the reliability of service, the appropriateness of training of drivers and the standards of service. It was felt that existing tendering arrangements and the service specification needs review.

- Bus information was discussed at length. Issues included the need to communicate with people who don’t currently use buses but might if they were aware of potential service extensions. Discussion highlighted the need to target potential end users with publicity about potential service extensions and to do so in a user-friendly manner. Better co-ordination of information is needed when local facilities close or when bus services are affected by road works or accidents. It was suggested that passenger information including up-to-date bus timetables and information on service improvement and temporary problems, could be provided by libraries.

- Discounted travel tickets for volunteers were suggested.

- An urgent need for improved signage at the Pentagon Bus Station was highlighted.

- With regard to youth transport it was suggested that council monitor the impact of the use of school yellow buses by other councils with a view to determining whether this should be a future option for Medway.

- Some felt that promotion of bus services should be linked to subsidies; receivers of subsidies should be expected to actively market their service. Discussion identified the need to change public attitudes to the use of buses in order to build patronage; council should consider ways to communicate the reality and benefits of current bus services to the general public.

- The proposed introduction of a central transport co-ordination unit within the council was generally supported as a way of improving service provision.
Priorities
Participants were each asked to identify five priorities amongst the options council had identified and circulated for discussion on the day (See Attachment Two). Priorities identified by participants in both staff workshops are set out later in this report.

Staff workshop two - issues raised
• An emphasis on the needs of older people is needed. People cited bus timetabling and the predictability of services as key issues for older people who need reliable service especially at night.
• The introduction of the 20p fare was very strongly supported as a real improvement in services for local people.
• The nature of the proposed bus priority measures were discussed and received support.
• A number of suggestions were made for improvement in bus information including the use of voice messages or visual prompts at stops.
• More assertive marketing was also regarded as important. People felt that the importance of public perceptions of the reliability of public transport needs to be better recognised by service providers.
• The proposed use of volunteers on school buses was greeted sceptically. People felt schools should take more responsibility for any bad behaviour of their students or at least make a greater commitment to support transport providers to control behaviour on buses.
• There was discussion of the age definitions adopted in relation to initiatives for younger people; people queried why 19 to 21 year-olds?
• The equity of providing dial-a-ride access targeted to young people was raised. Why not other people they asked? In response council officers noted that the dial-a-ride programme is intended to be related to major events which tend to attract young people.
• Leasing problems regarding social service transport were raised; poor use of dedicated vehicles, problems with recruiting staff, poor value for money because of poor use of vehicles and impacts on service provision eg. Sunday opening of social services is often difficult due to a lack of available vehicles. Management of transport is a drain on the time of staff who often do not have the expertise to procure transport services.
• Participants felt that the benefits of reducing car use need to be highlighted to the general public; benefits need to be broadly defined to include reductions in accidents and environmental benefits.
• Concern was expressed that a new central co-ordinating unit, if staffed with newly recruited staff, is not required; what is needed is to better co-ordinate the relationships between existing staff and better manage resources.
**Priorities**

Participants in this workshop were also asked to identify five priorities from the options identified by the council in the workshops (See Attachment Two).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Identified as a priority by number of staff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Options for improving and increasing the use of public transport</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Improving the quality of bus information</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Promoting public transport in Medway</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Improving bus infrastructure</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Reviewing subsidised bus routes</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Removing barriers to access for disabled customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Improving safety on public transport</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Options for improving public transport for young people</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Reviewing concessionary fares for children aged under 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Introducing Dial-A-Ride services for young people</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Introducing community transport for youth clubs/organisations</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Options for improving education transport services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Reviewing the current arrangements for procuring taxis</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Smart card system for school season tickets</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Options for addressing other transport issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Park and Ride in Medway</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Centralised Transport Unit</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Community Transport</td>
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Stakeholder workshop

Issues raised

• Participants queried whether or not ‘contribution to community safety’ has been used as a criteria in establishing the options. It was noted by Geoff Walters that this is difficult to measure in respect to individual options but it has been considered as a broad strategic criteria.

• Bus information. Participants indicated a preference for geographic maps as they are more meaningful than line maps; it was noted that London bus maps are difficult to use due to their reliance on numbers.

• Information at bus stops was identified as very important as was adequate lighting and readability of information; less is more in regard to information at stops. It was suggested that information on council services could also be provided at bus stops on information boards. There was support for real time information which was considered to be especially important at night.

• Internet information was considered a relatively low priority. Information on-site, especially at bus stations, was seen as more important.

• Participants stressed the need for central information points possibly in libraries or in local shops.

• The potential introduction of an integrated train and bus ticket was regarded as a real issue for the longer term and something participants suggested council should work on with bus operators.

• **Questions were raised about what happened to the bus lane on the A2? Is this answered?** It was noted by Geoff that transponders have been included in the priority measures. Discussion focussed around whether bus lanes or ‘crawler’ lanes are planned. Geoff confirmed that the intention is priority bus lanes. Participants then noted that enforcement of bus lanes is essential. In response the police representative present noted that bus lanes need ideally to be self-enforcing.

• It was suggested that the viability of a demonstration bus priority project on the A2 be explored. Discussion then concentrated on bus service provider attitudes to customers and whether there is any difference between the needs of bus users who just want quick access at peak times and bus users who enjoy the social contact associated with travel.

• Day to day operating issues were raised and it was felt that bus operators and authorities need to meet regularly to discuss ‘nuts and bolts’ issues. Geoff indicated he would move to initiate a regular meeting of this sort.

• The proposed use of volunteers on school buses raised concerns about potential legal liabilities.
In regard to the needs of young people, concessionary fares were seen as very important from a social inclusion perspective. The question was raised of how this relates to subsidies and requirements of providers.

Discussion around the behaviour of school children and the impact on adult bus users led to the suggestion that council liaise more frequently with schools regarding pupil behaviour.

The 20p fare for pensioners was regarded by people at the meeting as a very significant improvement.

In regard to future service planning people noted a need to ‘think outside the loop’ and consider initiatives like small-circuit buses. It was noted that the role of Park & Ride schemes needs to be considered in regard to the overall parking strategy.

Priorities
Again each participant was asked to identify five priorities from the options identified by the council and in the workshops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Identified as a priority by number of stakeholders</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Options to improve public transport for young people</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Reviewing concessionary fares for children aged under 16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Co-ordinating bus times with the end of social events</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Introducing cheaper fares for 19-21 year olds in partnership with the University of Greenwich</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Introducing Dial-A-Ride services for young people</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Introducing community transport for youth clubs/organisations</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Options for improving social services transport</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Options for improving education transport services</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ticket production</td>
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<td>5. Sponsorship opportunities for transport services</td>
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<table>
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<th>Options for addressing other transport issues</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. Smart card system for school season tickets</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Additional options identified by participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Explore viability of demonstration bus priority project (A2?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Consider role of Park &amp; Ride along with overall parking strategy/cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Look at small buses on circuit routes with bus operators as a possible partial solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Use conductors on busses during school runs to control behaviour and reduce bullying</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Next steps

Geoff Walters outlined the next steps in consultation to all three workshops. He noted that this summary report would be considered during the next phase of the review; the development of recommendations for action over the next five years. These would then be forwarded to the Council for its consideration in June.
## MARKET ANALYSIS – Public Transport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Summary of existing situation</strong></th>
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</table>
| **Unsubsidised ("commercial") bus services** | Under the Transport Act 1985, any licensed bus (or taxi) operator may declare an intention to introduce, change or withdraw a service at 56 days notice if he is prepared to do so without a subsidy. There is no provision for the council or the licensing authorities to prevent such a service being registered.  
Approximately 85% of bus services in the area are provided without subsidy by operators who have chosen to provide the services at their own commercial risk. Over 95% of this mileage is provided by Arriva, with Nu Venture (competitive services to Hoo) and Citibus (sole provider on some services running to Hempstead Valley) offering unsubsidised services.  
Bus companies are licensed by the Traffic Commissioner who examines, and reviews, the company’s financial base, maintenance arrangements, professional competence and good repute. The Commissioner is also responsible for monitoring the running of any timetabled services (commercial or contracted routes) and tighter timekeeping standards for these are being introduced in April 2002.  
The Pentagon Bus Station in Chatham is on a long-term lease from the Council to Arriva. After a Monopolies & Mergers Commission review of its predecessor company – Maidstone & District – other bus companies have the option of running services into this facility but the charge levied is considered to be too high by most. The council offers an alternative bus stop in Military Road for services to Chatham, but this only offers the ability to pick up and set down passengers without the other bus station facilities. It is fair to say that the Pentagon bus station is disliked by passengers and the bus operator. |
| **Council involvement** | If there is felt to be a social need for a service but no provision is made commercially, a council may enter into contract for the provision of a service. Outside prescribed de minimis levels, tenders must be invited for the running of the service and tenders must be sent to anybody who asks for their name to be included on the list  
Councils have a duty not to “inhibit competition”. Examples of actions which might be considered to inhibit competition include providing subsidised services which might compete for passengers from route which are provided without subsidy, preparing tenders in such a way that only certain operators may bid or awarding all tenders in a particular area to one company. Councils are obliged to publish tender results and explain situations if they award other than to the lowest bidder. |
| **Medway Council involvement** | Medway Council has identified a number of gaps in the commercial service network and has contracts for services in the following categories (% of gross contract prices in brackets):-  
Daytime – ie running to areas not served commercially |
weekday evening services (20%), Sundays (7%), weekday morning services (7%), Mobility bus (4%), rail feeder (3%), school (1%).

5 bus companies provide contracted services on behalf of Medway. By gross contract value these are:- Arriva (76%), ASD Transport (10%), Citibus (7%), Nu Venture (6%) and Royal Mail (1%). Nu Venture also provide the Saturday Park & Ride service on behalf of the Council.

Medway Council funds (wholly or partly) a number of contracts for bus services for very specific needs ranging from individual journeys to the all-day service on the Chatham to Tunbridge Wells corridor. 39 contracts are held by Medway, 12 of which, are joint with Kent County Council, and one is joint with Maidstone Borough Council. Medway also contributes to the cost of 6 contracts held by Kent County Council. Joint contracts are held where passenger needs cross the administrative boundaries and the costs are shared according to the respective mileage run in each area unless there is an agreement to split the cost in another way.

26 copies of tenders are sent out, but the average number of bids received for each tender is between two and three. All day services are attractive to smaller operators (4 to 5 bids received for each tender) and the smaller companies are often able to win services of this type. Early morning, evening and Sunday services are less attractive to the market and Arriva have been the only bidder for several tenders at these times.

Contracts are generally let for a period of 4 years (5 is the maximum length allowed by the 1985 Act) with renewal dates staggered to ease the burden on operators and the authority at the time of contract renewal.

The Case for Change

People & Customer results

As has been outlined above, a large proportion of the bus service in this area is provided by the industry without direct input from the Council. Clearly, in expressing a view on this service, people largely respond on their perceptions of the bus industry overall rather than the Council’s involvement in this particular area of operation.

The contracted network accounts for 1 million of the 8 million passenger journeys a year made by bus in Medway.

Certainly the overall satisfaction with public transport at 44% is below average (30th out of 46 English unitary authorities). The satisfaction among users is slightly higher at 48%.

In general, public transport is poorly regarded (3) among residents of the area.

Costs

In simple terms, the 85% of the network provided commercially costs the council nothing to provide. The cost per passenger journey for contracted services is £0.52. Only 8 english unitary councils reported a lower figure than this.

Sustainability

Efficient public transport contributes towards sustainability as it offers a choice of mode which is safer, more efficient in terms of roadspace and more fuel efficient than the use
Equalities

Two of the key groups who use public transport are elderly people and women. However, both groups feel that the service does not fully meet their needs, and perceived safety, often related more to waiting at the roadside unsure whether a bus will arrive or walking to or from a bus stop rather than accidents on the bus journey itself. The Council has recently improved the concession for pensioners and people with disabilities from half fare to 20p per journey. A number of low floor level access buses are now run in this area, primarily by Arriva, but also by Citibus, and Nu Venture. In some instances their use has been financially supported by the Council. In addition to offering wheelchair access, these buses make access easier for all groups of users.

Market Analysis

Market place benefits and risks

Arriva are clearly dominant in the market for bus services in Medway, both contracted and commercial.

The other large groups in the bus industry currently run in East Kent (Stagecoach) or South East London (Stagecoach and Go-Ahead) but their existing depots are too far away for them to be able to operate reliably and viably a substantial service in the Medway Towns. There are few parts of the country where the major bus companies are actively in competition with one another and no interest has yet been shown in moving into Medway from any of these groups, although the East Kent part of Stagecoach did run an unsubsidised service from Medway to Canterbury and Margate for a while.

The problems with running buses in Medway, such as traffic congestion, will apply equally to any incoming bus operator as they do to Arriva. The more attractive the road network can be made to bus operators, the greater the chance that new operators will be attracted.

Where commercial competition does occur, the quality has not improved dramatically. Smaller operators such as Citibus and Nu-Venture are generally able to offer better reliability and can normally allocate an individual driver, or a small group, to a service to improve passenger relations because of their less complicated networks. Companies of this type do, however, have difficulty financing new or reasonably aged vehicles. In other cases, commercial competition has brought about little or no visible improvements standards of vehicle, reliability and customer care.

For contracted services, a significant number of bidders have expressed interest in seeing the tenders but only a small number respond. The guidance to award tenders to the lowest bidder unless there is a good reason to the contrary can help to maximise the level of service which is provided but can mean that quality standards are at the minimum allowed by the licensing regime. Medway Council has had to terminate contracts with two small companies where service delivery has been poor and replace the service with other companies at a higher price, and with a period of increasing disruption for users of the service.

The volume of work the council offers for contract (and the
fact that it is heavily skewed towards services at unsocial
times of day) has not offered a sufficiently large base for a
new operator to invest in providing services in Medway.

The balance of the way in which contracts are awarded
largely reflects the way in which operators respond to the
tenders, although where no satisfactory response is
received the council will negotiate with operators.

The taxi industry has shown little interest in offering regular
services at bus type fares on the occasions when it has
been approached in the past, and where interest was
shown, they were unable to offer the cheapest price. In the
last year, however, the restriction on the number of taxi
licences issued by Medway Council has been lifted. This
will mean that there will be an increasing number of taxi
operators looking for business, and it is hoped that this will
encourage them to be more imaginative about the types
of service which they will provide.

The public perception of the bus service is of a single
service with the expectation that comprehensive
information will be readily available and that tickets will be
available throughout the network. Introducing a number of
operators can introduce barriers to travel as operators,
particularly those of commercial services, seek to look after
their own interests and do not act in the interests of the bus
network as a whole. The Council can ease this situation
where its contracted services are concerned through the
terms of the contract, and through the opportunities offered
by the Transport Act 2000. This does, however, add a cost
and manpower burden on the Council.

The Community Transport Sector in Medway is relatively
undeveloped. A limited service for people with disabilities is
provided under the name Medway Mobility is funded by the
Council and provided by a professional operator. A number
of voluntary sector organisations own and operate transport
for their own purposes. There is a need to develop ways in
which the benefits of these resources can be shared more
widely amongst the community in general.

There is no reason, in principle, why community transport
providers should not provide services of the types
sponsored by Medway Council. There are licensing issues
to consider, but generally the licensing requirements are
more relaxed for this type of service where no profit is
being made and/or where a driver is not receiving any pay
other than expenses incurred. There are no community
transport providers currently on the bus service tender list.

However, the way in which the community transport
operates needs to be taken into account. Early morning,
evening and Sunday services for example need to have a
commitment that they will operate reliably throughout the
year. If volunteer drivers are used this places a heavy
burden on those drivers who may not find it attractive to
work at antisocial times for the good of the community.
Running at these times also imposes additional wear and
tear on the vehicles increasing maintenance costs and
potentially accelerating the time until vehicle replacement.
There is no funding provision currently for a more
widespread dial a ride type service in the area.
The need to develop community transport in this area is a potential outcome of this review and this needs to be carried out in a way which recognises the possibility of supporting the core bus network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track record of providers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Council is aware from a variety of consultations that the bus service in Medway is poorly regarded. Only 44% of the people of Medway are satisfied with public transport, among non users the figure is 29%. The highest unitary authority satisfaction achieved was Nottingham with 75%.

This level of satisfaction relates to the network as a whole, rather than the Council’s direct involvement with supporting the socially necessary network. Because of Arriva’s dominance in the market, a large part of this satisfaction, or lack of it, is determined by perceptions of the service delivered by Arriva.

It has already been outlined that 85% of these services are provided without direct input form the Council and therefore it is simple to say that there is little that the Council can do to improve on this situation. There are, however, a number of things which the Council can do. Prime among these are measures with the road network to enable buses to avoid congestion and to achieve consistent journey times. These will enable the bus companies resources to be used more efficiently and efficiency savings can then reinvested in service improvements. Other support can be given by developing fares concessions such as the 20p fares offered to pensioners and people with disabilities.

To be successful, actions of this type will need a commitment of the Council’s resources - which may be money to support a fares scheme or roadspace to support bus priority. If this commitment is to be made it is essential that there is a certainty that the bus industry will deliver benefits in return, and there is a need to a partnership agreement to ensure that the benefits are identified and delivered by each of the partners.

Both the bus companies and the council wish to improve on the current position, however they are approaching the issue from different perspectives. The Council is keen to see the number of people using the bus services increase. The bus company wishes to see the net financial benefit from carrying these people improve. One does not always lead to the other. For example, free fares would maximise the number of people using the services but give an unsustainable financial position.

Arriva is showing, in some way, an interest in improving. It has invested in low floor single deck buses and has introduced fares initiatives in the evenings and at weekends to encourage patronage. The question is whether the council and the people of Medway can be persuaded that this commitment is strong enough to justify significant investment in the bus industry from them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option Assessment</th>
<th>Suitable ✔ 1 ✔ 2 ✔ 3 Suitable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cessation of the service</strong></td>
<td>Medway Council funds 15% of the bus services provision and, as has been suggested above, few people appreciate the difference between a service which is provided at the behest of the operator or the council. The power to support public transport services under the 1985 Transport Act is discretionary and there is no obligation to support any bus services providing that the policies which support this are consulted on and published. However, the Council has a strategic plan aspiration to change modal shift in favour of public transport from 12 to 20%. In practical terms, services will be withdrawn if the funding is removed and the opportunity for 1 million journeys per annum to be made by bus would be lost. The Council has a legal obligation to offer a minimum level of concessionary bus fares to pensioners and people with disabilities in the area. However, the greatest driver for retention is that it is the people of Medway have told us through consultation that they want to see public transport in this area improved. The bus companies have shown little interest in doing this in their own right, and it will need support from the council if this is to be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer</strong></td>
<td>The Council’s role is in the planning and procurement of the socially necessary bus services to be provided and it is for the bus operators to deliver the required service. Clearly, the bus companies undertake similar work in planning the services which they will provide. However, it would not be appropriate to transfer the running of this service to a bus company for two reasons:- 1 – the obligation to treat all bus companies equally if the service is being provided by a company – particularly a major one 2 – the company may be able to set its levels of commercial service according to where it feels it can maximise the subsidy requirement from the council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Externalisation</strong></td>
<td>The operation of the authority’s concessionary fares scheme has already been placed with an external organisation – MCL – taking advantage of economies of scale through a joint arrangement with Kent County Council and the District Councils of Kent. There are companies who will provide the public transport planning and procurement function on behalf of local authorities, either as part of a partnership arrangement to deal with a, say, a Council’s Highways and Transportation functions or simply as the individual service itself. East Sussex County Council contracted out the operation of its public transport unit to a private company with bus service deregulation in 1986. Their experience was that the numbers of staff used overall increased. The council has since taken this work back into its own organisation. Kent County Council, on the other hand has separated the client role from the provider role moving this to a commercial arm of the council. Points to take into account when considering externalisation include:-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pros</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • potential greater pool of resources to handle peaks and troughs in workload  
• broader base of experience on which to draw | • potential loss of local knowledge/input  
• development of an appropriate reporting process between council and external agent adds a new level of bureaucracy  
• lack of flexibility at the margins of the agreement  
• weakening of the integration with the other Council departments |

Medway Council’s partnership arrangement with Mouchel can offer the externalisation benefits without the upheaval of going to the market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Market testing</strong></th>
<th><strong>Renegotiating existing contracts</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| If externalisation is considered this needs to be compared with the pros and cons of retaining an in-house service. Any proposal should, therefore be market tested allowing in-house and external bids to be submitted. The pros and cons of externalisation will apply equally in this context. | The bus service contracts are generally achieved through competitive tender and specify a particular level of service to be provided. There is a break clause and termination arrangements in the event of failure to deliver. Operators are encouraged to put forward alternative options at tendering stage and there is flexibility for either the Council or the contractor to propose changes to the contract during its life.  
Clearly, successful renegotiation will depend on being able to satisfy the contractor’s business case as well as that of the Council. Regular contract renewals, every 4 years in this case, do give the opportunity to introduce new standards at retender. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Partnership</strong></th>
<th><strong>Joint commissioning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality partnerships with bus operators offer the prime opportunity to enhance the core commercial bus market, and depend on the Council and the bus company each contributing in their own particular areas.</td>
<td>This concept has already been used by Medway in respect of cross boundary bus services, concessionary fares and information management, all of which are undertaken jointly with Kent County Council.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Continually improving in-house service</strong></th>
<th>****</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| This service is heavily dependant on working with organisations outside the council, in the potentially conflicting roles of partners and contractors. The council’s performance is judged publicly through Best Value and the BVPIs; the private sector performance is judged by shareholders and the market. Both may have differing aspirations.  
Clearly there is a need for continuous improvement for all parties but the public understanding of the bus companies and the council’s role is limited. In these circumstances, the involvement of a further outside organisation will confuse the picture further. Retaining an in-house service will also maximise the opportunity to integrate dealings of the council’s full range of services with the public transport industry rather than separate out this particular area, of the council’s work and leave operators having to make their own contacts for issues such as traffic management. |
Schedule of - bus contracts (excel spreadsheet)
rural bus grant contracts (excel spreadsheet)
Education Transport

Current performance

Mainstream transport

A sample survey of users found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied/ fairly satisfied</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
<th>No comment/ reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall base</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey home</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of bus stop</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items identified by respondents to make going to school by bus better:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Less bullying/bad behaviour</th>
<th>51.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buses running more often</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A shelter at the bus stop</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A bus stop closer to home</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better drivers</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cheaper fares</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buses getting to school on time</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bus stop closer to school</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Safer route to the bus stop</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training on how to use buses</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overcrowding and smoking come through as strong areas of concern among users.

Special Needs Transport

A similar survey showed the following levels of satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Fairly satisfied/ satisfied</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
<th>No comment/ reply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall base</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escort</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comfort | 62.9 | 34.2 | 2.9 | 0.0
Safety | 62.9 | 31.4 | 5.7 | 0.0
Ease of access | 68.6 | 25.7 | 2.9 | 2.9
Journey time | 60.0 | 32.0 | 8.6 | 0.0

100% punctuality to of school transport is reported most periods as part of the Corporate Performance Monitoring.

Social Services Transport

Satisfaction of users being transported to day care centres has been measured as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Very Satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Fairly satisfied</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of access</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey time</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fares</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality partnership

Users and non users of buses in Medway are telling the Council that the services are unattractive because they are seen as being unreliable. This is a general comment with no specific differentiation between contracted and unsubsidised services, although the impact of unreliability on users of contracted services can be greater because, by their very nature, they run less frequently than many of the unsubsidised routes.

Unreliability may appear to the passenger in two forms:-
- the journey does not operate at all
- the journeys runs but significantly adrift from the scheduled time (either early or late)

The passenger is not interested in why the service is unreliable but clearly it is important to understand the reasons if solutions to the problem are to be found. The operator does have control over some of the causes of the unreliability. However, some of the problems will come from trying to make use of a constrained road network which can be vulnerable to delays.

Bus services attempt to work to a schedule. A bus, and driver, will travel out to the destination and back to the origin and then continue to provide another journey, which may be to a different destination, and so on through the day. The ability to run to time depends on being able to make each journey in the time allocated. Delays on one part of the trip will mean that the return journey is delayed, and – potentially – the next trip. If the delays are severe, it may not be possible to provide the next trip at all.

The schedules the operator prepares will make allowance for anticipated delays on a service, but those with experience of driving around Medway will know that the journey time for any particular trip can vary considerably, and can be vulnerable to a simple action like a poorly parked car (which can have a greater impact on large vehicles than other cars).

A key to reliability from the bus operators point of view is consistency of journey times and being able to predict accurately when a bus will leave and when a bus will return. Clearly, the Council can make a contribution to improved reliability of bus services through its traffic management strategy and there is a policy in place to offer traffic light priorities, and other small scale measures to help to make the running of bus services more dependable.

If journey times can be shortened significantly, bus operators can make tangible resource savings which can then be reinvested in service improvements through a quality partnership.

On a route such as Chatham to Earl Estate, for example, 47 minutes is currently allowed for the return journey, 3 minutes is allowed for recovery at the outer terminus and 10 minutes at the Pentagon. Therefore, 6 buses are needed to provide a service every 10 minutes. Efficiency savings for the bus company arise if the vehicle commitment can be reduced to 5. This needs the return journey and recovery time to be reduced reliably by 10 minutes. A lesser reduction in the time taken to make this journey would not reduce the vehicle commitment.

With a significant efficiency saving, the bus company is in a position to reinvest. This may be through:-
- increasing the frequency – eg to run every 8 minutes rather than every 10
  or
- provision of new, improved vehicles
  or
- fares reductions
Clearly it would be expected that service improvements of these types would also be expected to encourage additional use and revenue to the services which will bring greater opportunity to invest in enhancements.

Experience in London has shown that bus priority at traffic signals achieves a time saving of 3-5 seconds per bus per junction. With 7 traffic light controlled junctions between Chatham and Earl Estate, a potential 35 seconds each way could be saved, 1 minute 10 seconds overall – significantly less than the 10 minutes the bus company need to trigger a significant enhancement to the service.

There is, therefore, a need to develop more radical bus priority measures if services are to improve dramatically and the Strategic Plan target is to be achieved. This will raise concerns about the impact on other traffic where capacity is dedicated to bus services. However, traffic in the Medway Towns is expected to increase by 17 to 38% by 2012. As a result of this, traffic flows will grow over the area as a whole and congestion will become increasingly common, even if no action is taken to offer bus priority. Buses, on the other hand, do make more efficient use of the roadspace and can carry 50 or more people in the length occupied by 3 cars. Increasing use of buses can, therefore, help the road network to accommodate additional movement more effectively.

The majority of Medway’s bus network is provided without the council’s involvement at the commercial risk of the operators, chiefly Arriva Medway Towns. Under the duty not to inhibit competition, the council is unable to subsidise services which compete with services which are provided without subsidy. Indeed, it could be argued that this would be a wasteful use of public funds to pay for a service which could be achieved without the use of public funds.

The Council is able to influence the level and quality of service provided, however, through a quality partnership agreement, whereby investment in the road network, and the streetscene on the Council’s part is matched by agreed investment in improving the bus service by the operator.

When Medway Council was created in April 1998, the opening of the final phase of the Northern Relief Road was imminent. This was seen as diverting traffic away from the A2 spine through the Medway Towns themselves giving an opportunity to reallocate the roadspace which was made available for bus priority measures. Negotiations on a quality partnership were started with Arriva in this context.

In the event it became clear that the wholesale dedication of roadspace to bus services was not acceptable to the people of Medway and no agreement was reached on a partnership. Although the opening of the Relief Road did, indeed, cause traffic to be diverted away from the town centres, traffic is steadily growing back towards its previous levels and this window of opportunity has passed. This issue is considered further under the option of improving the infrastructure for buses in Medway.

Continuing discussions with the operators have shown a marked difference between the operator’s and the council’s aspirations in respect of a quality partnership and although there is consensus about the overall aims and objectives of an agreement, there remains a failure to agree on the detail.

The Council has established an Integrated Transport Partnership Board and Executive to involve operators, user groups, investors and others having an interest in the development of Medways’ transport system.
The Transport Act 2000 provides a legal basis for quality partnership agreements, although this does not extend to key features such as service frequencies and fares. This Act also introduces the concept of a quality contract. Where it has not been possible to reach agreement on a quality partnership, this enables a Council to apply to the Secretary of State for special dispensation to implement a quality contract. In effect this enables the local authority to ignore the commercial network and to franchise a network which it considers appropriate for the area. Clearly, the authority then needs to be able to meet the costs of the service it has specified, although there will be an opportunity to use the surplus gained at the busier times of the day to offset the costs of running services at less busy times. As at September 2002 no authority had been granted dispensation for a quality contract and it is not clear what criteria had to be fulfilled to enable a quality contract to be implemented.
Criteria

There is a need to establish clear criteria for transport to be provided by the council if the volume and costs of the transport are to be managed effectively. That is not to say that there should not be exceptions from the criteria where there is a sound reason from the point of view of the service in question, for example free school travel may be given where the walking route is considered to be hazardous. There should, however, be a clear record kept of the reasons for granting an exception.

Where appropriate, the criteria which are developed should be applied consistently across all directorates undertaking similar functions. For example, children living with foster parents are given taxi transport to and from school while a child living next door with his own family would, be given a public transport ticket for travel to school.
Integrated transport planning & procurement

Co-operation currently takes place between the D & E and E & L directorates in respect of school transport arrangements. For example, where contracted bus services are provided at school times, the services are planned to ensure that they can be used by children who are entitled to free school travel.

The tendering arrangements for the Medway Mobility bus service for the people who do not have access to conventional bus services has demonstrated that it is possible to achieve savings by planning and procuring services as a single entity rather than individual components.

The service operates by the vehicles running:-

0630 – 0800 Commuter services between Parkwood and Rainham station
0800 – 0900 Transport to Special Needs School
0900 – 1500 Medway Mobility service
1500 – 1630 Return from Special Needs School
1730 – 2000 Commuter services from Rainham station to Parkwood

When tendered as one entity, the overall cost reduced from £91,764 to £65,305 (a saving of 28.8%) for the two vehicles involved.

There are a number of advantages to the integration of transport procurement:-

- it enables effective use to be made of vehicles – there will be an awareness of the services which are being provided and the opportunities to meet a new transport need using these services
- it gives the best opportunity to combine transport needs and therefore achieve economies of scale
- it supports consistency of service to the clients of the different directorates
- it enables quality enhancements to be offered more widely – eg accessible vehicles required for special needs school transport can also be made available to users at other times of the day
- it supports the obligation under the Transport Act 1985 to take full account of a Council’s Education and Social Services activities when fulfilling its public transport activities, and is a concept strongly supported by the Audit Commission.

An integrated unit can also look at the opportunities to achieve savings by adjusting the ways in which services operate. For example, there is an overlap of 30 to 40 minutes each day between the times that children need to arrive at special schools and the times that journeys need to start to pick people up to go to day centres. If this overlap can be removed by timing adjustments, it would be possible for the vehicles used for the day care centres to be withdrawn as the school buses could simply make another run for the second group of passengers.

However, there is a need for a discipline in running a unit of this type. Clearly, the need for clarity of criteria and authorisation of exemptions is important if transport arrangements are being made on behalf of other parts of the authority. There is also a need to ensure that strict financial controls are in place to be able to monitor and report expenditure, savings and pressures on behalf of each of the participating partners.

Concerns have also been expressed that centralised units in other parts of the council have given poor service to the Directorates. Clearly this should not undermine the principle of centralisation or integration but care needs to be taken to ensure that the customers’ needs are fully recognised when planning a unit of this type.
There also needs to be a recognition that an action which results in the lowest cost to the council overall may not be the least cost for one particular directorate, and that the actions of one directorate may have a bearing on the cost for others. There will, therefore, be a need for an agreed protocol to deal with the cost sharing issues.

The benefits of integration will not be achieved overnight, but will come about progressively as contracts fall due for renewal and other changes are made to transport requirements. The existing workload will continue alongside the need to review services and implement changes. Brighton & Hove Council are anticipating a need for 2 additional staff for at least the first year of their integrated unit to enable the review work to be carried out alongside on-going service to their customers.

Kent County Council has been using a combined transport planning and procurement unit since 1998. They believe that they can identify savings of over 20% on education transport as a result of this combination. It is true to say that costs increased during the initial period of operation of this unit. Their Education Department saw this as a loss of the controls which they had previously applied, while the Transport procurers saw this as a result of a perceived easing of the eligibility criteria resulting in the need to transport increased numbers of people.

The budget situation is now under control. KCC carried out their own Best Value review of mainstream school transport last year, and there was no pressure to change the transport procurement arrangements at this time.

East Sussex County Council has recently implemented an integrated transport unit following on Best Value review.

Benefits they have identified from the merger include:-

- flexibility of resources
- improved utilisation of council vehicles
- improved planning of services
- single point of contact
- improved accountability
- economies of scale
- improved bidding and funding opportunities
- improvements in the level and quality of services at existing costs
- greater achievement of cross cutting priorities
- improved procurement arrangements
- improved management information
- a champion at senior level to drive initiatives through

**Procurement and contracting**

In summary, transport is currently procured in the following ways:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development &amp; Environment</th>
<th>Individual tenders are issued for contracted bus journeys, which may range from a single journey, or extension of a journey, to the complete service over a particular route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Leisure</td>
<td>Education &amp; Leisure determine eligibility for assisted travel to/from school or college.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mainstream children – season ticket are purchased on regular scheduled services – the agreements with Arriva are negotiated and renewed annually, those with ASD Transport and Nu-Venture have been the subject of competitive tender. Special Needs Transport – the School Transport Section marry together the identified transport needs to maximise the efficiency of vehicle use and then issue tenders to private contractors accordingly.

Health & Community

Day centre transport is often provided by the Council’s own vehicles and staff based at the day care centres themselves. The vehicle procurement has recently been the subject of an EU tendering exercise. Many taxi movements for foster children etc are arranged on an ad hoc basis and meter rate applies.

### Procurement methods

**Taxi procurement - Contracting out of the Taxi Service**

The Medway Council currently uses a variety of Taxi companies for the transportation of clients. The main users of the service are Education and Social Services. The total cost spent on this service is £1.9m (based on 2000/01 actual).

This sum is composed from expenditure from the following Directorates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>£1,751k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>£138k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>£15k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education**

The fundamental purpose for the Education expenditure is for Home to school transport for children with special education needs. The requirements for home to school transport comes from parents applications. Season tickets on timetabled bus or train services are usually provided for mainstream children and taxis will only be used if there is no public service available. Requests Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport come from the SEN team.

The Education Directorate sees this expenditure as money which is not available for front line teaching and is keen to minimise the costs incurred. For taxis, this expenditure is controlled by way of individual contracts for routes and or clients. These contracts come in two forms, 1) being school based contracts and 2) one off contracts.

**School based contracts**

Contracts are established for an individual school, or group of schools, requiring transport The school is liaised with in order to ascertain any special requirements of the children (requirements for escorts etc.)
The Schools Transport Officer then plots the addresses of pupils onto street maps (In the future
the GIS system would be far more effective). From this he establishes various “clusters” of
pupils these may be groups of one or two pupils through to 20. Account is taken of the
maximum desired travel time for the children concerned. Each cluster then would be the basis
of a contract, therefore each school is likely to have a number of contracts running for its
transport requirements.

Every Operator on the “approved list” would receive a copy of each proposed contract. The
lowest bidder then will be awarded the contract. These contracts would run for between two to
four years.

The approved list was inherited from KCC since then as new operators have applied so
adjustments to the list have been made.

An important task to be undertaken to ensure that the criminal record background of all drivers
and escorts is checked through the Criminal Records Bureau before they are allowed to assist
with the transport of schoolchildren.

**One off contracts**

When additional pupils appear in the market, or where it is not possible to group a pupil with
other pupils’ journeys, then the “Schools Transport Officer” examines the existing routes and
negotiates with the contractor for that pupil to be included this may involve a slight alteration of
the route.

The School Transport Officer invites those Taxi Operators who can provide the service in that
area, at least three operators would be invited to tender with the lowest bid being the successful
tender.

Currently Education has in excess of 300 contracts in place.

Categories of education incurring Taxi (including mini bus hire) costs based on actual costs
2000/01.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEN Transport</td>
<td>£1,580k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream home to school transport</td>
<td>£122k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Transport</td>
<td>£49k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£1,751k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly this system is exposed to and encourages competition however, there is a large quantity
of contracts in place and potentially greater advantage could be taken of private companies
enterprising spirit.

The quality of the GIS system should be increased in order that it can be utilised in the
demographical plotting of clients.
Social Services

The Social Services directorate is the second largest user with total Taxi and mini cab costs of £138k (based on 2000/01 actual)

The purpose of the taxi service within Social Services can be allocated to two groups these being.
Transporting foster children from foster homes to school and Miscellaneous transport.

Transport Foster Children from foster homes to school

Currently when children in foster care move foster parents then the child will still remain at their existing school and Medway pays for their transportation to that school if it exceeds the three mile rule. The current system does not seek contracts as happens in Education, due to the situation being fluid as children move from foster home to foster home. There therefore is not likely to be enough stability to establish conclusive routes for contracts to be established covering long enough periods of time.

Miscellaneous Social Services Transport

This is the all encompassing group that picks up transport issues not covered elsewhere, this could range from the transportation of asylum seekers through to the transportation of clients on training days. Again no contracts have been established as the Taxi usage is very ad hoc.

Others

Approximately £15,000 per annum is spent through the rest of the Authority on other miscellaneous usage of Taxis. Again this is not awarded via any competitive basis.

Summary

With the exception of Education, Medway does not have in place any systems for the encouragement of competition between Taxi operators despite the relative high usage of Taxis. We are currently therefore being charged the “metered rate”.

Education currently administer a large quantity of relatively small contracts, in some instances the invitation to Taxi Operators to bid is decided by the “School Transport Officer”.

The way forward

Elsewhere within this report we discuss the centralisation or creation of a Central Transport Unit. This unit would administer the transport needs of the Authority in a cross directorate manner.

It is proposed that the new centralised Transportation Unit should investigate the establishment of competitively won contracts covering Taxis and mini bus hire covering the whole spectrum of the Authority.

These contracts would by necessity need to be varying in their nature, and the approach taken would need to vary according to the needs of the people being transported. Additionally they
would need to be of a size that does not exclude all but the largest operators but large enough to encourage innovation, enterprise and allow the authority to reap the benefits of a vigorous competitive market.

The following are possible compositions of contracts which might be covered by the Integrated Transport Unit:

**Education**

Some larger contracts may be established in order to enable Operators to use greater commercial flexibility whereby the overall cost can then be reduced. These contracts would cover larger geographical areas by say breaking Medway into 10 areas. Contracts would then be established to either:

- Transport pupils from within each area to their respective schools.
- or
- Transport children to schools within each area

In this way contracts would be dramatically reduced.

These contracts would be geographically based, within these geographical areas we would specify the various pick ups and destinations along with various qualitative assurances. Each contract would then be awarded to the operator who can deliver the required level of service by the most competitive means. By not specifying the routes this would enable innovations within operators proposals.

**Social Services**

These contracts would be less specific than the “Education” contracts as the lack of certainty and consistency would dictate a much more “open ended” contract. They would however need to be distinct from “other general use” contract as mentioned below as the Social Security Taxis would need to undergo an enhanced Police check. These contracts could be based again upon geographical areas and specify the total annual mileage available, we would then specify the mileage rate that we are willing to pay and operators happy with that rate would then be placed on an “approved” list. Thereby all qualifying operators have the opportunity to benefit. The Taxi operators would be expected to provide escorts for the transporting of clients. Clearly the transporting of foster children to school has an increased regularity and volume of work than one off usage but there is no reason why the same “approved list” should not be used to establish longer agreements.

**Other General use**

These would be compiled on a similar basis to “Social Services” contracts.

**Potential Savings**

At this point it is clear that this is an area that material savings can be made at no detrimental effect on services, however before this can be quantified a comprehensive market testing exercise needs to be undertaken. This will then enable a decision to be made on a firm and measured proposal.
“Bus Transport”

Mainstream School Transport

Approximately 1850 season tickets have been issued under the terms of the negotiated agreement with Arriva at a cost of £424.97 per ticket. This represents a cost of £786,000 per annum. Arriva carry these children on timetabled services which are provided without further subsidy.

There are also arrangements in place with 2 other companies for the issue of season tickets on scheduled journeys which have been arrived at by competitive tender. These are:-

ASD Transport – ticket prices vary between £427.50 and £497.80 per annum.
Nu-Venture - ticket price £478 per annum (not the lowest price bid but there were concerns about the ability of the lowest price bidder to offer a reliable service).

In addition, where a bus service is provided under contract to Medway Council, the needs of entitled schoolchildren are taken into account when designing the timetable and children travel on these services. There is an internal recharge between the Directorates for entitled children travelling on supported services.

It is clear, therefore, that the Arriva price is in line with the prices of other operators in the area.

There are a number of advantages to using the timetabled network for schoolchildren’s travel to and from school, which include:-

- the services are also open to fare paying passengers in addition to those who are entitled to free school travel
- there are a choice of travel opportunities and users do not have to depend on the one journey to get to school and home again
- the vehicles involved are used to enhance services during the day – for example the buses which Nu Venture run between Hoo and Chatham using the buses committed to taking children to Hoo School.

The working group has concluded that there is a need to market test the season ticket agreement with Arriva. This is reinforced by the fact that this volume of business is considered to fall under EU tendering regulations. However, there are risks in this strategy. The prices of other existing operators in this area are not guaranteed to be lower than the negotiated rate with Arriva. An alternative method of operation may mean the loss of services during the daytime and subsidy needs to be found for these, thus eroding any saving which may be made on the cost of the school tickets. The competitive tendering process will also weaken the Council’s case in seeking to negotiate service enhancements on a quality partnership basis. On the other hand, the volume of work which can be offered may attract a new operator to set up in the area and encourage competition for services.

EU tendering will also be extended to the contracts for local bus services.

The statutory obligation to provide free home to school transport for those deemed eligible under the Transport Act 1944 limits the extent to which the Council can control costs by controlling numbers. During the review, concerns were expressed that up to 40% of children were claiming tickets and then not using them. This was imposing an unnecessary cost on the
council. The sample survey undertaken reveals that the number of people who do not use their tickets is between 4 and 5%.

**Own fleet operation**

Setting up an integrated transport procurement unit gives the opportunity to review whether or not the council should acquire and operate its own fleet of vehicles to meet its transport needs. The Council is legally allowed to operate its own vehicles, although if it is to provide timetabled bus services, this can only be done in support of vehicles which are provided for Education purposes.

Several councils, including Kent County Council, now operate their own buses. The conclusion generally is that they do not directly save money in doing so as the costs of providing and maintaining the vehicle and employing the driver are much the same, but they do act to moderating effect on the market providing an alternative option if market prices increase substantially.

Market impacts are certainly a concern in Medway, primarily in the “big bus” sector where one particular operator – Arriva – is dominant. However, to start running “big buses” the council would need to invest heavily in the vehicles themselves (typically £120,000 + for a new double-decker bus) and the maintenance facilities to satisfy the requirements of the licensing authority – the Traffic Commissioner.

The implementation plan will consider own fleet operation in depth when looking at the appropriate model for the integrated procurement unit.
Public Transport Infrastructure

Background

Appendix 9 has outlined the impact which congestion and uncertainty can have on trying to run a reliable bus service. This has illustrated the scale of efficiency improvements which need to be made if the bus operators are going to be able to reinvest in significant improvements to services.

The ideal situation would be to totally segregate bus services from other traffic. The constrained network existing in Medway does not allow this to happen. However, changes need to be made to the road network to assist bus movements. The blockages to bus movements need to be understood. Some of these may be minor in nature, eg the delay caused to a service pulling back into the traffic stream from a bus stop lay by, but because they occur frequently, they will combine to make significant delays during the day. Every possible means of assisting bus services, traffic light priorities, enforced parking controls, closure of bus stop lay-bys, buses only turns etc needs to be explored if we are to give the bus operators the opportunity to reinvest in service improvements. These measures need to be planned on a corridor basis so that an apparent priority measure at one point does not cause a delay to services elsewhere on the network.

A preliminary consultant’s study has shown that there is a case for a light rapid transit system in Medway. The reliability and attractiveness of any modern system depends greatly on the extent to which segregation from other road traffic can be achieved. This is illustrated by the contrast between the networks in Manchester and Sheffield.

The Manchester system was created from two “heavy rail” lines which were linked across the city centre. The linking route is on the surface, largely segregated from other traffic, and with priority measures where it crosses roads carrying general traffic. The Manchester system has attracted growing numbers of passengers since it was opened.

In Sheffield, a new system has been built on main roads from the City Centre. The trams share roadspace with other traffic and shares delays as a result. Initially, passenger number fell well below expectations, and it is only with strong marketing by a new operator that passenger growth has been encouraged.

In Medway the LRT system will depend largely on the use of streets, supported by priority measures. the priority measures used by trams can largely also be used by buses. There is no reason, therefore, why the priority network cannot be developed in readiness to trams and used by buses in the short term (it may also be that it will be shared by buses and trams in the longer term).

Bus priority measures can often be seen as “anti-car”. However, the demand for travel continues to grow and it is the increased volumes of traffic, a large part of which is car use, which is causing congestion on the road network. This situation will worsen as traffic levels increase further as the option of building significant new road capacity is largely unavailable. Public transport does offer a more efficient means of using highway capacity, and increasing the proportion of users who use public transport will help to maximise the travel opportunities for everybody. To achieve this, it is important that users have an effective choice of how they travel, and improvements to the public transport network will give this choice.
Appendix 13

Review of Subsidised bus services

Medway Council inherited a number of contracts for bus services from Kent County Council on its creation in 1998. Since that time, the contracts have been retendered at least once, some service improvements have been made – eg the diversion of an existing route to serve the Johnson Avenue area of Gillingham which did not previously have a bus service - , some previously unsubsidised services now require subsidy and some service reductions have taken place because of budget pressures. However, the underlying philosophy has been that the Council should maintain the contracts which previously existed. This gives little clarity on how to respond if notice is given of curtailment of services provided without subsidy when the budget is already fully committed, or, indeed, it does not help to prioritise the requests which are received for additional services if circumstances should allow them to be considered.

The cost per passenger journey is an accepted indicator of the value of contracted bus services. It is simple and easily calculated. It recognises the number of people actually using the services, not all of whom may actually pay a fare on that journey, and allows comparisons between contracts with different volumes of service. It is possible to use this indicator as a cut-off; eg the council will not support any journeys where the cost per passenger journey exceeds £2.50; or to enable a ranking of the contracts so that it is clear which offers the greatest or the least benefit to the council.

This measure has been used as a national best value performance indicator (BVPI 94).

In 2001/2 the cost per passenger journey of contracts in which Medway are involved ranged between 5p (upgrade of Chatham to Sittingbourne service) and £4.89 (early Saturday morning journeys between Chatham and Earl Estate). Details of all contracts are shown in Schedule 1.

Factors which can be taken into account when considering the value of a contracted service include:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Readily available information as a measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Contract price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Passenger journey numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target groups</td>
<td>Pensioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Journeys made with concessionary permits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and young people</td>
<td>Half fares issued (NB survey or other information will need to be collected for services running in the morning peak if half fares are not available and where young people do not qualify for half fares)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey purpose</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of journeys travelling between 0600 and 0900 and between 1600 and 1900 or journeys to a specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Work</td>
<td>Availability of alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School (entitled children for whom the council is obliged to provide transport)</td>
<td>Alternative services within 800 metres of origin/destination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel permits on issue</td>
<td>GIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School (children not entitled to free school travel)</td>
<td>Alternative service within 30 minutes of journey time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improving safety and security on public transport

There is a feeling that travelling by bus is unsafe, and this is deterring people from using the bus services.

The government’s transport statistics for 2001 identify bus travel as being among the safest form of land-based transport both in terms of fatalities and serious injuries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
<th>Serious injuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per billion passenger kms</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average 1991 – 2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus &amp; coach</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor cycle</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedal cycle</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Medway there is about 1 injury (of any magnitude and cause) for every 103,000 journeys made by bus.

Unlike other forms of public transport, the driver of a bus is inside the vehicle, accessible to his passengers, and can be aware of what is happening on board (with the possible exception of the upper deck on fully loaded double deck buses).

How is it, therefore, that a safe mode of travel is seen to be unsafe? Two clear reasons have been identified:-

a. school buses and the behaviour of children on the buses
b. the whole journey experience – walking to the bus stop, waiting for a bus, the bus journey itself, walking away from the bus to the destination.

School buses

Safety fears arise because of the behaviour of the children themselves and this is worsened because of the fact that the buses are often heavily loaded. Legally, bus operators may carry 3 children to 2 seats up to the end of the term when they reach their 16th birthday. In practice, this flexibility is not used when planning the capacity to be provided. However, children often choose to stand at the front of the bus or with their friends when there may be empty seats elsewhere on the vehicle.

Other passengers dislike sharing buses with school children although often this is because the children are high-spirited, particularly at the end of the school day rather than behaving in a dangerous way.

Waiting at a bus stop or interchange, schoolchildren have the same duty as any other highway user to behave in an appropriate manner. The influence of the school on the journey to or from home is now much diminished.

On board the bus, the driver’s main responsibility is for the safe progress of the bus along the roads. He does have a responsibility for what is happening inside the vehicle, but equally PSV Regulations place a responsibility on any passenger to behave in an appropriate way and certainly to avoid any behaviour which will endanger other passengers or the vehicle.
Despite the theoretical responsibilities, it is clear that the current arrangements cause concerns and that improvements need to be made. These improvements might include:

a. the Council’s road safety education activities in schools should give greater emphasis travel by public transport and the need for appropriate standards of behaviour
b. the “rights and expectations” leaflets issued to children who receive free transport to and from school should be redesigned, strengthened and issued to all pupils
c. the existing inter-agency links between the schools, education directorate, transport operators and police should be strengthened to deal effectively with behavioural issues waiting for and travelling on bus.
d. greater use can be made of CCTV to monitor behaviour, with appropriate follow up action. The Council should ensure that its CCTV network includes those locations where problems persist. Greater use should also be made of CCTV on the vehicles themselves, again with effective follow-up action.
e. adjust school start and finish times to avoid children from different schools waiting at a stop at the same time – if this can be planned in a way which enables each bus to make two journeys in the peak rather than one, this can bring cost savings. If this cannot be achieved, it is likely to increase the cost of providing school transport as additional buses will need to be acquired to carry the children concerned.
f. increase supervision on the buses themselves. The option of “bus monitors” or volunteers raises issues of responsibility and authority. They are unlikely to be unable to exercise the control which is needed, particularly where several schools are involved.

The return of the conductor has also been considered. Certainly this would bring an additional member of staff on to the journeys. However, with front entrance buses, there is a danger that the conductors would simply spend their time talking to the driver and pay little attention to what is happening inside the bus. There would, therefore, be a need to train and prepare the staff carefully for the role they were to undertake. The ability to deal with misbehaving schoolchildren, would be a skill which would have to be learnt to be effective.

Morning school buses leave the depot around 0715. In the afternoon buses return to the depot about 1645. Overall, this covers a period of 9½ hours, but the actual time that the school buses are “on the road” is about 3½ hours. However, there is an expectation of a “day’s pay” for committing yourself to work for a day, say 7½ hours. Where it is not possible to use these people for services between the school peaks the traditional approach for the transport industry has been to use “split shifts” – ie working in the morning and evening peak with a long unpaid break between these times. This can be unpopular, but where there are a range of shifts to be worked, it is possible to offer a reasonable balance.

If conductors were allocated primarily to school runs, it would not be possible to offer this variety, but there would be some flexibility in how these people were used between school times. One alternative approach may be that the staff work 9½ hours over 4 days a week, but this would require a 20% increase in the number of staff to be cover Monday to Friday. The main benefit from this arrangement would be the ability to provide conductors on a greater number of journeys between the peaks.

The minimum cost for providing a conductor would be approximately £10,875 per annum. This assumes: -

a. they work permanently on “split shifts” and receive pay for the daily minimum period.
b. they receive 4 weeks paid leave a year (to be taken in school holidays)
There are 25 buses dedicated to bespoke school journeys in this area. Providing conductors for these (assuming a 10% spare allowance to cover absences) would, therefore, cost a minimum of £310,000 per annum.

In practice, however, these terms are unlikely to be attractive, particularly when there is low unemployment. It would, therefore, be difficult to recruit staff on this basis. If the split shift arrangement did not attract staff, the 4 day week arrangement would cost £455,000 per annum or the employment of two people for each bus each day, would cost £620,000 per annum. The second and third options do, of course, give greater opportunity to use the conductors outside school times.

In addition to the above costs, the ticket machine system which Arriva use at present is not capable of being used by a roving conductor as it needs a 24 volt power supply. If the conductors are to be given fare collection duties there would be a need to invest in new portable ticket machines at a cost of £1,250 per unit – a minimum of £31,250.

However, in return, the reintroduction of conductors will bring journey time savings for the bus operators, and make a contribution towards the increased efficiency of bus use they are seeking in order to be able to offer service improvements. However, if the conductors are to be used on bus services provided specifically for schools, they will not be able to bring benefits to the regular services simultaneously on regular routes, although this is the time of day when there is the maximum need to reduce journey times.

At the time that conductor operation of services was being curtailed in the 1970s, 5 to 10% was added to the journey times to allow for the time taken by the driver to collect fares. It is unlikely, however, that this allowance could be removed in full in the current environment as the impact of traffic delays has grown in relation to the delays caused by the issuing of tickets on the bus.

Taking the example of the Chatham to Earl Estate corridor, the core service offers 6 buses an hour between 0700 and 1800 6 days a week Monday to Saturday. With a 5% reduction in journey times, the estimated cost of providing conductors on the service would be £135,720, reducing to £124,410 if a 10% reduction can be achieved. However, the bus company is looking for a saving of 17% in the journey times before it is able to make a worthwhile efficiency saving, ie save a bus and reinvest accordingly. The saving achieved is expected to be about £80,000. Clearly, spending £124,000 to save £80,000 does not represent a sound business case, and would absorb the funds that the company has to reinvest in service improvements.

The key issue in respect of the provision of conductors is who pays? Clearly the council feels strongly that it is the bus companies who should be paying. However, it can be seen that it will add significantly to the costs of providing a service, and there is no commitment on the bus company to continue to provide any service if it is no longer viable for them to do so. If there is need, therefore, for the Council to fund the service, the costs involved will reflect the specification set. If we ask for conductors we will need to be prepared to meet the costs accordingly. Many of the journeys provided specifically for schools carry children who enjoy free transport using season tickets issued on behalf of the Council. Elsewhere in the report the need to submit these movements to European tendering is identified. Again, this means that the cost of the provision of conductors on school buses is more likely to fall on the council rather than be borne by the bus companies.
The Whole Journey Experience

It has already been identified that bus travel in itself is one of the safest forms of road transport, and that the concerns that users have about safety reflect the experiences making their way to the bus stop, waiting for a bus to arrive – particularly if it is not running to schedule – and making their way from the bus stop to the destination.

The main areas of concern, therefore, lie outside the bus and the Council is in a better position than the bus operators to improve the feeling of personal security on the streets. This has already been reflected in the Council’s Community Safety Strategy, but this needs to be strengthened to ensure that particular attention is paid to locations where public transport users feel vulnerable.
Community Transport

The term “community transport” can cover a wide variety of types of service, examples of which are summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social car scheme</td>
<td>Car sharing arrangement for individual ad hoc journeys. Volunteer drivers use their own private cars, and are paid only expenses. Needs a co-ordinator to run the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postbus</td>
<td>Use of a passenger carrying vehicle on journeys required for postal purposes. Can be very economical as only the additional costs involved with carrying the passengers are charged to the service (the Cooling postbus service costs the council £1,850 per annum) but also very inflexible and where there are conflicts between postal needs and passenger needs the post will take priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community bus</td>
<td>Minibus driven by unpaid volunteer drivers (expenses are payable). There are some exemptions from operator and driver licensing requirements for services organised on this basis provided no profit is taken. Can provide timetabled services or excursions/hires to help support the operation of the services. An enthusiastic organiser is essential and the availability and commitment of ample volunteer drivers is a key determining factor in deciding what level of service can be achieved. An active community bus can be used to promote a strong community spirit which in turn can be used to raise funds to support the continued operation of the bus. The Meopham Community Bus claims annual operating costs of around £2,000 but this makes no provision for the need to find £32,000 every 3 to 5 years to replace the vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 19 permits</td>
<td>Relaxed licensing obligations are available for several nominated “community” organisations providing that their services are only offered to those associated with the organisation and it operates on a not for profit basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport provided by other organisations</td>
<td>Many other community based organisations, eg Age Concern, will offer transport for their clients and may be encouraged to offer services to others providing that they see it as worthwhile to do so – eg through assisting with the purchase of a new vehicle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dial A Ride</td>
<td>Minibus service operating on telephone request to the control centre. In urban areas primarily offered for people with disabilities, but other categories are sometimes served eg “Women Safe” services. In sparsely populated rural areas can be used to provide services for the general public. Drivers may be paid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and it may be possible to find job creation grants to assist with the cost of their salaries. Brighton & Hove Council, for example, have an accessible “Easylink” service of this type which uses buses required for special needs school journeys which would otherwise be idle during the day. £200k per annum is budgeted to support the operation of these services. Bristol spends £300k per annum supporting dial a ride services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demand Responsive Transport</th>
<th>A recent concept which develops the dial a ride concept as a more general, flexible, transport system which reacts to specific requests.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxicard</td>
<td>As an alternative to bespoke transport provision, the taxicard system enables discounts to be given on the cost of taxi travel with a council (or other organisation) making good the difference. This does enable an existing resource to be used more effectively rather than having to set up an alternative form of service. To be successful the taxi network would need to be properly equipped to meet the needs of people with disabilities – awareness training for drivers, selection of most suitable vehicle type for a particular individual etc - but investment in these features will have spin off benefits for all users of the taxi service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokerage</td>
<td>There are many vehicles in the community - eg with schools, scout groups, Age Concern etc – many of which have been funded from public funds in some shape or form and many of which are not in constant use. Brokerage is the employment of a co-ordinator who can put those needing a vehicle in touch with those who have one available. Action may also be needed to overcome the barriers in sharing – eg the need for enhanced insurance cover, but this can be a means of making more productive use of the transport resource.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responsive nature of community services and the use of low capacity vehicles often mean that the costs of providing the transport are rarely covered by the income received from customers, despite the cost saving measures which are allowed. Some form of external funding is likely to be needed, therefore. Services of this type can gain access to a wider range of funding sources – eg charity status or lottery grants, but thought needs to be given to the on-going sources of income if these arrangements only last for a fixed period.

True community transport depends on active co-operation from the community, particularly in respect of co-ordinators and volunteer drivers. This does not exist currently and will need to be developed if community transport is to play a stronger role in transport in this area.

Community transport should, therefore, be seen as a medium to long term objective. The key to this issue is understanding the need for transport, and then identifying the most appropriate way this can be delivered rather than setting up a system for its own sake.
Concessionary fares for young people

Consultations have shown that there is a widespread view that the cost of bus travel in Medway is too expensive. This applies particularly to young people especially when they have to pay full fare when travelling to school. It is felt that this is:-

- discouraging the use of buses for travel to and from school, thereby adding to traffic congestion in the area and around schools in particular.
- preventing young people from travelling where they want to go in the evenings

In the latter context, some progress has been made in that a cap has been put on fares in the evenings - £1 single; £1.80 return – and 16 and 17 year olds holding a Citizens’ Card can continue to travel at half fare in the evenings and at weekends rather than have to pay full fare. No subsidy is paid for these fares reductions. However, it does not apply in some areas, notably the Hoo Peninsula where subsidised services are provided because the council is unable to afford the additional subsidy cost involved.

The bus companies charge full fare for children at times when they are travelling to school because of the fact that the maximum number of the people are travelling in the morning peak because school and work start times are similar. This sets the number of buses and drivers which the bus companies need to provide, some of which will only be used at peak times because the demand at off peak time is lower. Therefore, the peak services set the costs of providing the services and provide the opportunity to generate the income to offset these costs.

A significant proportion of those travelling at these times are children. The immediate effect of halving fares for this part of the market will be a 50% reduction in relevant income. This will, therefore, require a doubling of the number of fare payers to bring the income back to its current level.

Certainly, cheaper fares will encourage more people to travel but experience suggests that it is unlikely to achieve a 100% generation of additional trips. Half-fare for pensioners at off-peak times, for example, generates an additional 25% use, and the introduction of 20p fares for this group has seen use rise by 40%.

The situation at peak times is further complicated because the bus companies manage the capacity they provide to reflect the numbers travelling at peak times. The companies could not, therefore, accommodate a doubling of passengers at these times without providing additional resources. This will, of course, increase their costs in providing the service and the revenue they need to meet these costs.

The bus companies in Medway, therefore, do not see a business case for offering half fares to children travelling before 0900. However, there are ways in which the Council could help to support their introduction.

a. traffic priority measures to improve the efficiency of running bus services and generate savings which could be re-invested as fares reductions
b. staggering school hours to enable two peak journeys to be provided by each bus rather than the one which is achieved at present – likely to be strongly resisted on Educational grounds
c. development of the urban economy to build a greater use of buses at off-peak times to bring in income to help offset the peak costs of provision – medium term subject to the success of the Chatham Vision project.
d. subsidising fares for young people through a formal concessionary fares scheme.
Section 93 of the Transport Act 1985 gives councils the power to offer concessionary bus fares to children under 16, or those 16 and 17 year olds undergoing full time education. Under these arrangements, there is an obligation on the Council to reimburse bus operators for the value of the concession given (taking account of any additional revenue generated) plus any additional costs incurred in providing the service.

Indeed, there is an opportunity for a monitored trial of the impact of subsidy for half fares in the morning peak period under the Government’s Civilising Cities programme. This will start in September affecting two schools in Medway and will be monitored by the University of Westminster. The results of this trial will enable a more accurate assessment of the benefits and costs of a concession throughout the Medway area to be made, and will demonstrate whether or not people will actually change their travel arrangements if the fare structure is changed.
Improving information

Background

Concerns about the quality of public transport information have been expressed strongly in stakeholder and other consultations. The Transport Act 2000 places an obligation on local authorities to prepare and publish an information strategy in this area. It also provides the opportunity to recoup costs from the operators if the council needs to supply information because the operators do not produce information to the agreed standards themselves.

A draft strategy is set out in the following pages
MEDWAY COUNCIL

PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION STRATEGY - DRAFT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Medway Council is keen to encourage greater use of public transport services and has a Strategic Plan objective to increase public transport’s modal share from 12% to 20% over five years.

1.2 Information is a key element in encouraging people to use public transport, both in terms of making people aware of the services which are available to make the journey they need to make, but also in giving them confidence and reassurance that the journey is progressing satisfactorily. This is particularly important where users need to change between services and/or modes of travel.

1.3 Both Councils and operators benefit from the effective provision of information about public transport services. Councils can benefit from the reduced pressure on the road networks, including air quality improvements, while the operators benefit from the revenue which the passenger pays to travel.

1.4 The Transport Act 2000 gives a requirement on Councils and operators to work together more closely on the distribution of information, to the mutual benefit of all concerned, and this strategy results from that opportunity.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Satisfaction surveys carried out by Medway Council show:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>satisfied with public transport information</th>
<th>Medway</th>
<th>Highest English Unitary</th>
<th>Lowest English Unitary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All residents</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>71% (Nottingham)</td>
<td>25% (Windsor &amp; Maidenhead)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among those seeing information</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>80% (Nottingham)</td>
<td>33% (Torbay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among those not seeing the information</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>64% (Isle of Wight)</td>
<td>19% (Peterborough)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Information about bus services is currently available through:-

a printed timetable leaflets available through bus company offices, libraries, visitor information centre and Medway Council’s Chatham local office or by post from the bus companies or Medway Council

b Medway Council publishes a map of the routes within the Medway area and arranges for details of the services in Medway to be included in the Kent public transport map and guide
c Display cases are provided at the roadside at which contain extracts from the printed timetable leaflets. These cases come in a variety of sizes from a variety of origins – Arriva, Medway Council, cases included in the specification for the advertising shelters provided by Adshel etc. It is a labour intensive process producing displays by cut and paste and the bus operators and Council are finding it difficult to maintain these displays. These displays can also be prone to vandalism.

d Information is available by telephone. Medway Council and the bus operators are participating in the National Traveline service – 0870 608 2 608 – the Council through the provision of service and gazetteer information; the operators through meeting the costs of handling the calls.

e New bus stop signs are progressively being installed throughout the Medway area showing the name of the location being served by the bus stop. This name is also being carried to the database supporting the telephone enquiry service to assist with location identification.

f Timetables for Arriva, Nu Venture and commuter coach services are now available on the respective companies websites. Medway Council’s site has a listing of the services which are available together with links to the sites offering detailed timetable information where these are available.

2.3 With funding from the Government’s Rural Challenge Fund, Medway Council has been able to introduce real time information displays at 26 locations in Medway. The buses using this system also include a “next stop” display inside the vehicle. It is expected that this system will be expanded to enable real time information to be provided on a more widespread basis.

2.4 Bus deregulation enables any licensed operator to run where and when they choose if they are prepared to do so without subsidy. Approximately 85% of services in Medway are provided in this way. If no operator is prepared to provide a service on this basis, but there is seen to be a social need, councils may provide a subsidised service. In this case, tenders must usually be sought. Therefore, one of the effects of deregulation has been the increased number of operators providing services.

2.5 This can lead to a variety of operators on a particular service. In some cases operators are actively competing with one another, such as the Chatham to Hoo corridor which is served by Arriva and Nu Venture (and a third – ASD Coaches under contract in the evenings). The passenger will want a single source of information about the service, but individual operators may take the view that it is not in their commercial interests to publicise a competitor’s services.

2.6 Operators providing local bus services in Medway are:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Contracted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arriva Medway Towns</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASD Coaches</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalkwell Coaches</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citibus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farleigh Coaches</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Commercial vs. Contracted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
<th>Contracted</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nu Venture</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Mail</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tims Travel</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>TT Travel</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

In addition, timetabled commuter coach services are run by:-

- Chalkwell Coaches
- Clarke’s of London
- Kings Ferry
- London Link
- North Kent Express
- Tim’s Travel
- National Express/Eurolines

and National Express/Eurolines run regular coach services from Hempstead Valley.

2.7 The Council, however, does have a comprehensive view of the full range of services which is being provided. It receives copies of the registration document detailing each operator’s timetables. The Council is, therefore, in a position to ensure that comprehensive information is made available. Indeed, there is a duty under the Transport Act 1985 not to “inhibit competition” meaning that equal prominence must be given to the services provided by all operators.

2.8 It is clear, therefore, that information cannot be left solely to the operators, and there is a role for the Council and operators to build on the existing partnership arrangements work together to ensure that the information needs of existing and potential passengers are met.

### Strategy objectives

3.1 The objectives of this strategy are:-

i. to increase use of bus services
ii. to improve public confidence in public transport to support improved modal choice
iii. to help promote social inclusion
iv. to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of Medway Council, the bus operators and other relevant partners
v. to promote integration between services
vi. to ensure that a lack of information is not a barrier to public transport use.
### Printed information

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<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Operator contribution</th>
<th>Council contribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
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</table>
| a. Every service should appear in a printed timetable leaflet which includes:-  
(minimum font size 12)  
- service number  
- start date (to be issued at least 7 days in advance of start date)  
- detailed timetable (or frequency guide/alternative style if agreed)  
- map showing streets served  
- operator(s) name & telephone number  
- telephone number for timetable information  
- details of where to contact with comments or complaints  
- contact details for Bus Appeals Body  
- identification of council subsidy  
- summary of changes requiring leaflet to be reissued.  
Each leaflet should be issued free of charge to the user | a. produce and distribute timetable leaflets for commercial services and other services which are provided only by the one company  
b. include timetable information for other operator’s services by agreement with the operator/council where those services complement the core service provided by the operator  
c. where appropriate, produce and distribute comprehensive timetables showing the operator’s complete service between two points where several services run together or a summary of all services to a particular destination, eg secondary schools  
d. produce and display notices on buses advising of timetable changes, at least 7 days in advance of the change.  
e. produce and distribute leaflets summarising major service changes  
f. produce and distribute information about Christmas, New Year and other holiday changes to services  
| a. comprehensive timetables where a range of operators provide the service and/or connections between modes or services are important  
b. production of area maps on a regular basis, including inclusion of information relating to Medway services in the Kent public transport map & guide  
c. support the provision of the timetable in other formats to support people with particular needs – eg large print, other language  
d. periodically publish information about bus services in Medway Matters and issue press releases if needed  
e. arrange for relevant “other operator” information to be included in information published on major service changes  
f. arrange for relevant “other operator” information to be included in information published on holiday period services  
g. publish periodically a guide to services for people with mobility difficulties |
| 2 a. distribution outlets for timetable leaflets should be agreed, and identified as such, with a stock of current leaflets being maintained at all times | a. Pentagon bus station, and other public offices run by bus companies  
b. other agreed outlets/agencies  
c. on-bus where vehicles are dedicated to the services they provide | a. Military Road Local Office  
b. Main office receptions  
c. Visitor Information Centre  
d. Libraries  
e. arrange distribution of timetable information through third party outlets – eg Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre |
## 4.2 Roadside Infrastructure

| 1 | A bus stop sign should be provided at all bus stops (except in rural areas if there is no habitation or significant public footpath in the vicinity). On sections of route where “Hail & Ride” applies, signs should be provided regularly to advise of this | a. installation, maintenance and replacement of bus stop signs (except where services are provided wholly under contract to Medway Council) | a. provision of named bus stop signs  
 b. establish and maintain database of stop names  
 c. shelters at agreed bus stops through agreement with advertising contractors or through other means  
 d. use of lamp columns, signs or other supports for the mounting of bus stop signs |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Bus stops should be marked by a plate which includes as a minimum:- standard bus stop sign  
 name of location  
 individual stop identifier where one of a number of stops serving a location  
 telephone number for timetable information  
 raised kerb availability  
 supplementary information where required | a. as above | a. as above |
| 3 | Target that 65% of bus stops should have a current printed timetable displayed for all services which pass this stop. Information to be updated 2 days before a service change and within 7 days of damage or removal | a. provide and update display timetable cases where stop is served by only one operator (except where service is provided under contract to Medway Council, in which case the contract provides for Medway Council to provide the timetable cases) | a. include the provision of timetable display cases in the agreement for the provision of shelters  
 b. provide and update timetable display cases on sections of route which are only served by contracted services, or where operators are unable to agree on the provision of comprehensive information.  
 c. use existing presence of staff on street to update information displays and report damage. |
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<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Operator contribution</th>
<th>Council contribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Roadside Infrastructure (continued)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Improve the presentation of information displayed at the roadside to:-&lt;br&gt;a. improve legibility&lt;br&gt;b. become stop specific&lt;br&gt;c. offer consecutive listing of departures</td>
<td>a. apply consistent standards for the displays they produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Realtime information brings benefits of customer confidence by presenting an up to date picture of how the service is running. The tracking equipment can also trigger traffic light priorities. Target - to double the number of stops offering realtime information to 50 by March 2004</td>
<td>a. Commitment to provide buses with working tracking equipment and ticket machine interface to the routes which serve the stops concerned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>4.3 Telephone Information</strong> | | |
| 1 | Bus timetable information is to be available by telephone using the National Traveline number – 0870 608 2 608 | To meet a share the costs of operating this service | a. to supply the National Traveline service with details of bus routes and times&lt;br&gt;b. to support the operation of this service through the provision of bus stop and gazetteer information.&lt;br&gt;c. equip first point of contact staff to handle enquiries about bus services locally without reference to the national service. |
| 2 | The National Traveline service is working to add fares information. Any systems developed to enable this to happen will also enable fares information also to be made available through other channels locally. | a. agree a specification for the data to be passed to the Council about the fares charged&lt;br&gt;b. provide details of the fares chargeable in sufficient time to enable the database to be updated at lease 1 week before the start date for the new fares. | a. Maintain a database of fares information once the appropriate software and protocols have been developed to service the National Traveline service |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Operator contribution</th>
<th>Council contribution</th>
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<tr>
<td>4.4 New technologies</td>
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</table>
| 1 | Develop the use of the internet for circulation of scheduled public transport information, including a journey planner option, to enable point to point and connecting journey enquiries to be made | a. offer own websites  
b. develop links with other relevant sites | a. provide a platform to enable users to have access to comprehensive information without having to approach operators individually  
b. ensure the Council web site has access to a journey planner service. |
| 2 | Repeat real time information displays on the website | a. ensure that properly equipped vehicles are provided on the services offering real time information | provide necessary interface |
| 3 | Repeat real time information displays in offices, schools, supermarkets etc | a. ensure that properly equipped vehicles are provided on the services offering real time information | provide necessary displays and interface |
| 4 | Develop additional ways of distributing information about public transport services as new technologies develop | As required by the system(s) | As required by the system(s) |
| 5 | Improve integration between bus and rail based information systems at stations | a. necessary adjustments to their own systems  
b. implement sharing of information between operators to ensure that connections are maintained when services are disrupted. | a. co-ordination of systems |
| 4.5 Supporting systems | | |
| 1 | It is desired that all information about public transport services, and certainly all information which is made available by the Council, should be comprehensive, and include the services of all relevant operators | a. to act recognising the interests of the public transport sector as a whole and to minimise the occasions when actions are constrained because of direct competition between bus companies | a. ensure comprehensive information for users  
b. not to inhibit competition between bus operators |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Operator contribution</th>
<th>Council contribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.6  Support systems (continued)</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2 | To support the operation of many of these initiatives, it is necessary to have an accurate database of the services which are due to run. Medway Council employs KCC as its agent to manage because the large degree of overlap with its own needs offers a cost effective solution | a. support the operation of the electronic timetable database through the prompt submission of information about the timetables to be operated, preferably in an agreed electronic format | a. continue to maintain the database to feed other systems of information distribution.  
b. provide the software necessary to expand the range of services available |

| **4.7 Vehicle Destination Displays** | | |
| 1 | All buses should clearly show the service number and destination on the front of the vehicle. This information should be capable of illumination unless agreed otherwise. | a. ensure that the correct information is available on the buses and maintained in a clean and legible manner | a. maintain contractual requirement for this information to be displayed on supported services and take enforcement action if this is not done |
| 2 | Where vehicles are equipped to show service number and/or destination at the side or rear of the bus, this information should always be correctly displayed. | a. ensure that drivers display the correct information | a. maintain contractual requirement for this information to be displayed on supported services and take enforcement action if this is not done |
| 3 | New vehicles should display this information in accordance with the recommendations of the Disability Discrimination Act | a. include provision for destination information to be displayed in accordance with the DDA specification on all new vehicles purchased. | a. maintain contractual requirement for this information to be displayed on supported services and take enforcement action if this is not done |
NEXT STEPS

1. This draft strategy should be circulated to operators, user groups, neighbouring authorities and others with an interest in public transport information for their input.

2. Enhancing these services will increase the costs overall, particularly in respect of the provision of information at the roadside. Sources of funding will need to be identified, and cost-sharing arrangements will need to be agreed with the operators to enable the implementation of this strategy.
Alternative fuels

Buses in Medway are increasingly using Euro 3 (City) diesel fuel which brings significant improvements in emissions compared with previous types of diesel fuel.

One bus carrying 50 people will produce fewer emissions per person than 50 cars each carrying one person.

The use of alternative fuels for bus services increases the cost. For Canterbury Park & Ride, the tender price with alternative fuels was double the cost of the provision of new buses powered with diesel buses to the latest standards.

With the exception of electric power, alternative fuels do not, in themselves, attract additional users to public transport services or additional revenue to the operators. The benefits are external to the bus, particularly in terms of air quality and the extent to which this can be influenced will depend on the proportion of buses among other vehicles.

There is a dilemma, therefore. Does the Council specify alternative fuels on contracted bus services and run fewer services because of the increased costs or does the Council maximise the number of services which can be provided within the budget available? In the latter case, the operation of the buses may not be to the best environmental standards but it is more sustainable than the alternative of increased use of the private car.
Comparison

VISIT TO BRIGHTON

Notes of Meetings with Brighton & Hove Council and Brighton & Hove Bus Company.

1. A visit to Brighton took place on 8 February 2002. Three Councillors - Hunter, Jefferies and Munton; one member from each of Medway’s main political groups, were accompanied by Geoff Walters, Public Transport Manager and Duncan Bruce, Senior Policy Officer.

2. The first meeting took place with Sheila Holden, Assistant Director and Paul Crowther, Principal Public Transport Officer with Brighton & Hove Council. The meeting took the form of an informal discussion.

3. Points emerging from this discussion included:
   - Brighton & Hove Council is labour controlled
   - The Council had recently taken responsibility for parking enforcement
     - prime objectives of the enforcement regime
     - to keep main traffic routes (including key bus routes) free flowing
     - to protect access to bus stops and raised kerbs
     - contractors are employed for parking enforcement
     - regime aims to be firm but fair – tow-aways are authorised by council officers, not the contractor
     - residents are delighted with the new arrangements
   - Construction of new Brighton by pass has given the opportunity to take roadspace from the car in the urban area
   - Park & Ride has proved controversial because of the need for the parking areas to be built in open countryside
   - The layout of the coastline, hills, and crossing points of the railway concentrates bus movements on 3 key routes into the town centre
     - bus priority measures on these routes bring significant benefits
     - one corridor is used by over 2550 buses a day
     - aim for consistency of journey times as much as minimising times
     - Police show little interest in enforcing bus priority measures and encourage self enforcing traffic schemes; therefore Council is interested in taking over responsibility for bus lane enforcement
   - Bold decisions are needed if the Council is to achieve visible service improvements from the bus companies
   - The Council has been actively providing improved bus stops to assist easy access to buses. Research has been undertaken with the University
of London to find the optimum designs to achieve easy approaches to stops with level access facilities

- Despite the high proportion of commuters living in the area there is a net increase in the population of 4,000 a day. This reflects a vibrant off-peak economy and helps to ensure higher use of the bus services at between the peaks

- Two major universities exist on the outer edge of the town. These are well served by bus and help to generate demand in two directions on the routes concerned improving the viability of the services.

- A night bus service is provided without subsidy from the Council (but with underwriting from night clubs, the universities or breweries). The fares charged on the night buses are higher than those charged during the daytime but compare well with the cost of taking taxis.

- The large estates built as council housing are typically 3 miles from the town centre which is an ideal distance for attracting high levels of bus use

- There is little interest in rapid transit
  - concentrating on bus based systems
  - likely to be worsening air quality which triggers any change towards an electrically powered system
  - wish to see the heavy rail network improved
  - there is pressure to look at alternative systems, particularly form developers

- Having one main bus company helps to implement improvements, although when the process started there were two, largely co-operative companies in the area

- The bus company in Brighton is progressive, innovative and keen to develop the market.

- With an active bus company it is possible to take steps to increase passenger numbers through informal arrangements, a formal quality partnership is not essential

- £1 flat fare introduced throughout the area by the major bus company was a commercial decision replacing a previous zonal system. It was geared to simplifying cash handling arrangements. However, it has brought fares down on the outer periphery where there is potential for growth in the non deprived areas. It has been necessary to introduce 30 specified zones for short distance trips. The £1 has been retained but in these areas it can be used for a return trip rather than single.

- Children’s fares are not subsidised. With an I/D card, under 16s can travel at half fare at school times and a flat fare of 30p at other times. 16 to 18 year olds travel at half fare. Half fare travel has historically been available for children at peak times in this area.
• Key source of information about bus services is the “Bus Times” booklet which is produced twice a year. 80,000 copies are distributed. The Council pays £6,000 per annum for the inclusion of information about contracted services in this publication.

• The £1.5m of the real time system have been shared 50:50 between the Council and the bus company. The bus company’s aim has been in investing has been to improve reliability through integration with the UTC system.

• Integration with the Social Services and Education transport activities has been recommended and has been estimated to offer the potential for 5% savings. However, its implementation has stalled because of concerns about how overspends should be handled. If and when this is implemented, the immediate need will be for additional resources to undertake the review and integration while existing staff are involved with the day to day running of the services.

• 2% of the bus network is subsidised, costing £768,000 per annum, (including £200,000 spent supporting dial a ride services which are run using the buses needed to take special needs children to and from school.

• The Public Transport team includes 3.7 people – 1 manager, 1 contract monitoring officer, 1 publicity and marketing officer and 0.7 of a clerical officer.

4 The second meeting was with Roger French, Managing Director of the Brighton & Hove bus company. Again the meeting was informal. Points arising during these discussions were:-

• Brighton & Hove is now part of the Go-Ahead group of companies, however, the local management is given flexibility on how to run its business rather than have policies imposed centrally

• The company’s fares policy for young people is seen as investing in the long term and maintaining custom for the services. Half fares for children travelling to and from school have been offered historically, but the company is perpetuating discounts for young people after they leave school to encourage loyalty to the bus service and discourage the temptation to invest in a car

• 85% of 14 to 15 year olds have signed up to the Bus ID scheme

• Despite the availability of reduced fares for the journey to school, more children use the bus to travel home because this trip does not coincide with parents’ journeys to work

• Service developments depend on trust between the bus company and the Council, not formal, legally-enforceable contracts. He sees the bus companies as delivering:-
- frequent buses (75% of customers have a bus every 10 minutes, the aim is for 80%)
- fare – simplicity ➔ easy communication/“sellability”
- quality buses
- customer care
- aggressive selling and promotion

He sees the local authorities as delivering:

- bus priority measures – avoid congestion
- enforcement and engineering measures to build out abuse
- Park & Ride
- bus stop infrastructure (including raised kerbs and parking protection parking)
- real time information/traffic light priority

- Brighton & Hove is experiencing a shortage of drivers – rates of pay have been increased by 21% over the last two years to encourage recruitment and retention of staff

- Parking enforcement which improves traffic flows and eases access to bus stops can help to improve driver morale and assist staff retention. Flat fares also help in this respect by simplifying the cash handling

- Encourages close working with traders/chambers of commerce to show that customers can come by means other than the car

- Local identity is important to highlight that the services are serving local centres.

- A number of high frequency “metro” services have been established and carry colour coded route “branding”.

- Main times requiring council subsidy are winter Sunday mornings

- Strong believer in promotion. The Bus Times information book is supplemented by an “in flight” style magazine promoting attractions which can be reached by bus and featuring people, both passengers and staff

- The drop in revenue arising when the £1 flat fare was first implemented has now been reversed and revenue is now higher. Short distance journeys were lost initially but have been restored through using the local zones. The challenge is to know how to change the fares when the need arises to sustain revenue, but still maintain the simplicity of the £1 flat fare.