



Appendix 1

East Sussex County Council**Bus Strategy 2009****Pre Consultation Draft****1. INTRODUCTION**

The bus plays an important role in the economic vitality of East Sussex and the social wellbeing of its residents: a total of 17.8 million trips were made by bus in the county in 2007-08.

East Sussex County Council is committed to developing bus services to make bus travel an attractive and realistic alternative to the private car and to provide sustainable access to services, local facilities and employment opportunities for all residents.

2. POLICY

The County Council's Bus Strategy derives from the second Local Transport Plan (LTP2), which ends in 2011 and shall be an important part in the third Local Transport Plan.

The County's vision is to improve sustainable travel choices and access to services within and outside East Sussex with access to employment, education, healthcare and healthy, affordable food, particularly from rural areas and between communities.

The policies in the LTP2 may be summarised as:

- Improve access to services by providing greater travel choices – re-balance transport towards non-car modes, improve facilities for public transport and improve transport information so people know about the travel choices available.
- Improve road safety and reduce fear of crime in communities – improve personal security for users of public transport.
- Reduce congestion and improve the efficiency of the transport network – improve sustainable travel choices.

The first of these policies provides the overarching goals for the County Council's Accessibility Strategy which prioritises improved access to employment, education, healthcare and healthy affordable food, particularly from rural areas¹.

These three policies are in part reflected in the East Sussex Local Area Agreement (LAA) with the Department for Communities and Local Government, with the following targets agreed for 2010-11²:

To increase the proportion of the total population within 30 minutes access by bus for an arrival at a key centre between 7am-10am and for the return journey from that

¹ Local Transport Plan 2006-11 (LTP2), Appendix A, Accessibility Strategy

² East Sussex LAA 2008-2011, Refresh March 2009

centre between 4pm-7pm to 68% (*National Indicator 175, baseline figure = 67%, 2007-08*)

To reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries due to road accidents (2006/08 rolling average 389 +3.8% increase from baseline)

To reduce the proportion of children travelling to school by car to 33% (*National Indicator 198, baseline figure = 37%, 2006-07*).

The Bus Strategy has been developed within the context of the County Council's commitment to address unequal access to services and employment in supporting equality of opportunity and fair access³. It acknowledges the importance of improving accessibility for all residents throughout the County. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the effect of implementation of the Strategy and this will be monitored and regularly updated to ensure the promotion of equality of opportunity.

3. VISION and OBJECTIVES

Our vision is for all residents and visitors to have a high quality bus service with excellent access to local services and which offers an attractive alternative to the private car. The principle objectives of the Bus Strategy are:

- a. To increase the number of trips made by bus, year on year
- b. To work with partners to improve the attractiveness of the whole journey experience through provision of high quality accessible facilities at bus stops and interchanges together with the operation of well equipped low floor buses
- c. To improve service reliability and punctuality by identifying causes of delay to buses and developing solutions to these problems, including measures such as parking enforcement and bus priority
- d. To promote use of bus services by providing relevant, high quality passenger transport information both in advance of an intended journey and at the time of travel, using a range of media.
- e. To offer attractive bus services by working in partnership with bus operators to maximise service frequencies and hours of operation of commercial services as well as by supporting additional services to enhance access to local facilities
- f. To make public transport journeys as seamless as possible by facilitating integration between services and modes, including working in partnership with operators to ease interchange and widen the availability of multi-operator ticketing schemes
- g. To enhance personal security and safety and reduce the fear of crime for bus users by providing safe secure waiting environments, encouraging in-vehicle communications equipment and CCTV, and also addressing anti-social behaviour.
- h. To improve air quality in town centres and mitigate the impact of bus operations on climate change by working in partnership with bus operators to increase the proportion of buses with low emissions

These objectives will be delivered through the series of policies set out below.

³ Equality of Opportunity and Diversity Policy Statement, ESCC, Updated July 2007

4. COMMERCIAL SERVICES

The majority of bus service mileage in East Sussex (around 75%) is provided commercially by bus operators who are responsible for decisions on timetables, fares and vehicle specifications. The commercial network receives no direct funding support from the County Council and is principally focused on the county's urban areas and key inter-urban links, as follows:

- Most local services in major centres:
Eastbourne
Hastings
- The coastal corridor:
Brighton - Newhaven - Eastbourne - Hastings - Rye - Dover
- Inland inter-urban links:
Brighton - Lewes - Uckfield - Crowborough - Tunbridge Wells
Eastbourne - Hailsham - Heathfield / Uckfield
East Grinstead – Forest Row – Groombridge – Tunbridge Wells
- Some local services in smaller towns:
Bexhill, Hailsham and Landport Estate in Lewes

The County Council is committed to partnership working with the operators of commercial bus services to maintain and improve the quality of service delivered to passengers, particularly through Quality Bus Partnerships in and around Hastings and Eastbourne.

The Council will work in partnership with operators to:

- Co-ordinate service changes, promote a stable network and effectively market bus use
- Increase the proportion of cleaner buses with low emissions and seek to develop “Clear Zones” in town centres where traffic congestion, pollution and noise are reduced using innovative transport technologies
- Encourage integration with other forms of public transport, particularly integrating timetables with rail services where possible
- Provide safe waiting and travelling environments that reassure users as to their personal security and safety
- Deal with anti-social behaviour to help reduce the fear of crime on public transport.

The County Council will also work with operators and with borough, district, parish and town councils, and neighbouring transport authorities, to develop improved passenger waiting and interchange facilities.

5. SUPPORTED SERVICES

The County Council has a duty under the Transport Acts of 1985 and 2000 to secure bus services in addition to the commercial network that it considers should be provided to meet local transport needs. The County Council will continue to monitor community needs and fund public transport services that contribute to the delivery of its transport, accessibility and wider policy objectives.

The County Council has identified a hierarchy of service categories that accord with the Accessibility Strategy, based on principal journey purpose of users, time

of day and day of the week. The hierarchy of service categories is summarised below and set out in more detail in Appendix 1:

- Priority #1 – school services for eligible children, as defined by statute and County Council policy
- Priority #2 – peak time services giving access to key centres, employment and further education
- Priority #3 – daytime services to key centres, hospitals and GP surgeries
- Priority #4 – evening and weekend services to key centres and hospitals.

This hierarchy forms the basis for decisions about the provision of supported bus services, subject to financial performance and the availability of funding. In the interests of delivering affordable, quality core services at the lowest possible council tax, each supported service is expected to cover at least 40% of the cost of provision from revenue including passenger fares income, concessionary fares reimbursement and any other sources.

The County Council will continue to secure supported services by competitive tendering on an individual contract basis as this best meets the needs of the community and provides best value. The County Council will invite operators to bid for contracts on either a fixed price or revenue guarantee basis as appropriate, recognising that fixed price contracts offer an incentive to operators to develop services and give budget stability whereas revenue guarantee contracts can encourage new suppliers, offer flexibility in responding to market changes and ease implementation of integrated ticketing initiatives.

In its specification for supported services, the County Council will strongly promote the introduction of newer accessible low floor buses with low emissions. It will also encourage operators to continue to raise the quality of overall service by incorporating quality criteria as well as price in its evaluation of tender submissions.

The County Council recognises that conventional local bus service solutions are not always appropriate and that in such instances, it will encourage the development of community based transport. Although primarily associated with rural areas, it is acknowledged that there is a need to encourage schemes in pockets of social deprivation and exclusion in urban communities where there are difficulties sustaining conventional bus services. The County Council's Community Transport Strategy sets out in more detail how the Council will work with local communities and operators to develop local schemes and share best practice.

The County Council will continue to bid for Government funding as and when available for enhancing urban and rural bus services, and will be vigilant in investigating other opportunities for external funding.

6. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

Research consistently shows that public transport users place reliability and punctuality among the most important attributes of their travel experience⁴. Current and forecast levels of traffic congestion can disrupt the reliable operation of bus services and reduce public confidence in the public transport system.

⁴ Omnibus Survey, Office of National Statistics, October 2005

Conversely, to be attractive to car users, bus services need to offer a level of reliability and journey time that are competitive with the car.

As part of its management of the road network, the County Council will seek to rebalance the transport system towards buses and invest in measures that encourage modal shift. It will work with bus operators to identify locations where buses are subject to delay and seek to deliver improvements in journey time reliability through:

- Enforcement of parking restrictions in conjunction with borough and district councils
- Delivery of bus priority measures at junctions and re-allocation of road space for bus lanes
- Introduction of more effective traffic control in main urban centres.

The County Council will, in partnership with the operators, monitor the punctuality of services and put in place Punctuality Improvement Plans (PIPs).

The County Council will seek to co-ordinate road works in order to minimise delays and maintain punctuality of bus services through its Network Management Strategy.

The County Council will also seek to ensure, as part of its Road Safety Strategy, that any traffic calming measures are “bus-friendly”.

7. FACILITIES FOR PASSENGERS

It is acknowledged that individual travel decisions are influenced by perceptions of the whole journey experience from origin to destination. This extends to the facilities and waiting environment at bus stops and interchange points as well as time spent in-vehicle. The County Council therefore recognises the need for bus stops, stations and interchanges to be of a high standard.

The County Council will continue to monitor bus stop infrastructure across the county in respect of provision of shelters, level boarding kerbs and passenger information. The County Council is committed to improving the standard of provision of bus stop infrastructure and will work with borough, district and parish councils and with commercial bus operators to achieve this. Opportunities to improve the waiting environment at town centre bus stops and interchanges with other passenger transport services will also be investigated.

Where opportunities arise, the County Council will work with neighbouring authorities to achieve a step change in passenger transport to improve accessibility, increase bus patronage and reduce congestion and pollution. It will work with neighbouring transport authorities to improve bus infrastructure, ticketing, branding, information, facilities and services across the sub-region.

8. INFORMATION PROVISION

The wide availability of good quality information about bus services is essential to the delivery of the Bus Strategy so that residents and visitors can find out about all of the travel opportunities that are on offer to them. The provision of information about where they can travel to, the time it will take, the frequency of service and how much it will cost contributes to improving accessibility to key services as well as promoting the bus as an alternative to the private car.

The County Council is committed to the availability of relevant, high quality information both in advance of an intended journey and at the time of travel. It will work with bus operators to make a progressive improvement in the range, quantity and quality of information available to passengers. This will include conventional printed material, both at-stop and portable, the Traveline website and telephone information service, and also intelligent transport systems.

We are working bus operators across the county to provide passengers with alternative ways to access bus times, such as electronic signs at stops and internet or text updates on mobile phones. This has already been introduced successfully on the A259 corridor between Brighton and Seaford.

As part of its Community Transport Strategy, the County Council will seek to promote the range of community transport services that are provided across the county.

9. CONCESSIONARY FARES

Free travel on local bus services for elderly and disabled people is important in promoting social inclusion and access to services.

The County Council is committed to working with the transport concession authorities in East Sussex (the borough and district councils) to deliver the National Concessionary Travel Scheme, through the existing Sussex Countycard scheme. The County Council will work with partners to standardise the times that the concession is available across different districts

For those residents without access to local bus services there is a need to consider targeted extensions to the concessionary travel scheme to wider community based transport services, to enable these residents to access health and shopping facilities affordably.

10. FARES AND TICKETING

The commercially operated bus services in East Sussex are provided by a number of separate operators, each with their own range of fares and tickets available on their respective commercial services. While these represent operators' best assessments of their markets, the lack of ticket integration between operators can act as a barrier to public transport use.

The County Council has worked with operators to develop the multi-operator Freedom and Pathfinder ticketing schemes for school children and students. These tickets offer unlimited travel on most bus services in East Sussex. The County Council will work with operators to widen the availability and promotion of such multi-operator integrated ticketing schemes and of the Plus-Bus integrated rail and bus ticket.

The County Council will work with operators to implement ticketing systems that make use of Smartcard technology and meet contemporary best practice, in order to offer an attractive range of tickets to users and capture market data.

11. COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY TRANSPORT

The County Council recognises the commercial difficulties involved in providing conventional bus services in circumstances of low, dispersed or diffuse demand and the instability that this can cause to the bus network. The County Council will seek to integrate resources used on such services with other operations to

spread costs and ensure efficiency of utilisation, for example by using a vehicle on schools transport at peak times and on a marginal supported service during the day.

There are some cases where a conventional bus service solution is not sustainable and offers a relatively low quality of service for the passenger. In these circumstances the County Council will encourage community based transport and will develop innovative approaches to public transport in rural areas.

The County Council will continue to work with key stakeholders including Action in Rural Sussex and the Rural Transport Partnership to identify potential demand responsive and community transport schemes that could contribute towards rural regeneration and social inclusion.

Although primarily associated with rural areas, there are also pockets of social deprivation and exclusion in urban communities where there are difficulties sustaining conventional bus services. The County Council will therefore encourage the development of community based transport schemes in these areas as well.

12. INTERNAL CO-ORDINATION

The County Council is committed to delivering affordable, quality core services at the lowest possible council tax⁵. It is therefore determined to ensure that expenditure is directed as far as possible to front line services that have a direct and positive impact on residents' lives.

The County Council has integrated its Passenger Transport, Schools Transport and Social Services Transport Teams to form the new Passenger Services Group. The Group will build on existing work to achieve Best Value through the co-ordinated provision of transport to meet the needs of the public, school children and social services clients.

The County Council will ensure that the interpretation and implementation of wider policies in relation to land use planning, development control and parking are consistent with the objectives of the Bus Strategy.

13. ACTION PLAN

The Bus Strategy will be implemented by means of the Bus Strategy Action Plan. This defines the tasks and actions required to deliver the Strategy objectives, the respective responsibilities of the County Council and partners to undertake these tasks, the timescales for delivery, and the targets by which achievement will be measured.

The Action Plan is set out in Appendix 2.

14. MONITORING and MANAGEMENT

It is essential that the progress against the adopted Bus Strategy objectives and actions is properly monitored and managed to ensure its effectiveness in contributing towards the delivery of the Council's policy objectives.

⁵ East Sussex CC Council Plan 2008-09 Policy Steer 2.1

A management board involving councillors and officers of the Council and representatives of bus operators, quality bus partnerships and users will be established to provide governance. The management board will appoint a project team to take the actions forward and report progress regularly back to the board who will formally report to the relevant Council committee.

APPENDIX 1 SUPPORTED BUS SERVICE HIERARCHY

Priority #1	School Services
Description	Free or subsidised home to school transport for eligible children as defined by statute and the Council's policies.
Rationale	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discharges statutory duty imposed by the Education Act 1996 and the Education & Inspections Act 2006 2. Provides school travel considered necessary by the Council 3. Contributes to Sustainable School Travel Strategy objective of reducing car use
Priority #2	Peak Services
Description	Provision of peak time services to key centres and places of employment.
Definitions	<p>Peak is defined as arrivals between 0700-1000 and departures between 1600-1900 on Monday to Friday.</p> <p>Key centres in East Sussex are Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Eastbourne, Hailsham, Hastings, Heathfield, Langney, Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven, Rye, Seaford, St Leonards and Uckfield.</p> <p>Key centres outside the county are Ashford, Brighton, Burgess Hill, Crawley, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Tunbridge Wells.</p>
Rationale	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides access to key centres by 0900 2. Provides access to employment 3. Contributes to provision of access to further education
Priority #3	Daytime Services
Description	Provision of daytime services to key centres, hospitals and GP surgeries.
Definitions	<p>Daytime is defined as 1000-1600 on Monday to Friday and 1000-1800 on Saturday.</p> <p>Key centres are defined as in #2 above.</p>
Rationale	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourages greater use of public transport 2. Maintains essential transport in rural areas 3. Provides access to healthy affordable food 4. Provides access to GP surgeries 5. Provides access to hospitals
Priority #4	Off-Peak Services
Description	Provision of off peak services to key centres and hospitals.
Definitions	<p>Off peak is defined as Monday to Saturday evenings after 1800 and all day on Sundays.</p> <p>Key centres are defined as in #2 above.</p>
Rationale	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourages greater use of public transport 2. Maintains and enhances accessibility for residents and visitors

**APPENDIX 2
DRAFT ACTION PLAN**

Scheme	Bus Strategy objective(s) served	Actions and Targets				Responsibility / Partners
		Immediate 2009-2010	Short Term 2010-2011	Medium Term 2011-2013	Longer Term 2013-2016	
Supported Services Design Review	objectives (a) & (f)	Eastbourne and Wealden Areas Main Review, July 2009		Hastings and Rother Areas Main Review, July 2011	Eastbourne and Wealden Areas Main Review, July 2015	ESCC / Bus operators
Punctuality Improvement Plans	objectives (a), (c) & (e)	Hastings (in co-operation with the Hastings Quality Bus Partnership)	Eastbourne (in co-operation with the Eastbourne Quality Bus Partnership)			ESCC, District & Borough Councils, & Bus operators
Traffic Management	objectives (a), (c) & (h)	Development of Civil Parking Strategy Refinement of the Peacehaven A259 Quality Bus Corridor	Eastbourne, Seaside – Whitley Rd (Quality Bus Corridor Phase 1) Eastbourne, bus gate at Sovereign Harbour	Eastbourne, Kings Drive (Quality Bus Corridor Phases 2 & 3) Hastings, Kings Road Corridor (Phase 3)	Peacehaven A259 (Quality Bus Corridor Phase 2) Hastings, bus priority at junctions (indicative schemes)	ESCC
Real Time Passenger Information	objectives (a) & (d)	Development of county-wide Real Time Passenger Information Strategy.				ESCC & Bus operators
Passenger Facilities (including roadside publicity)	objectives (a), (b), (d) & (g)	County-wide audit of existing infrastructure. Prepare Improvement Strategy, commencing implementation in Lewes and Wealden Areas (phased improvements in Hastings).	Complete County-wide implementation of improvement strategy	Hastings Bus Stop Improvements (Phase 6 implementation)	Hastings Bus Stop Improvements (Phase 7 implementation)	ESCC/ District & Borough Councils, Parish & Town Councils,
Community Transport	objective (e)	Adoption of Community Transport (CT) Strategy Production of CT operations database Identification of first pilot schemes	Implementation of pilot CT schemes	Monitoring of pilot CT schemes Review of cost and policy effectiveness of pilot schemes	Roll out of CT scheme support	ESCC/ District & Borough Councils, Parish & Town Councils, Primary Care Trusts, CT operators
Marketing and publicity	objectives (a) & (d)	Agree co-ordinated service change dates with bus operators Introduce "Travelchoice" promotion of sustainable ways of travelling	Marketing strategy Develop "Travelchoice" promotion of sustainable ways of travelling	Further develop "Travelchoice" promotion of sustainable ways of travelling	Further develop "Travelchoice" promotion of sustainable ways of travelling	ESCC & Bus operators
Concessionary Fares	objective (a)	Respond to Dept of Transport on review of scheme administration		Amend scheme administration, if required		District & Borough Councils/ ESCC, CT operators
Anti-social behaviour	objectives (a) & (g)	Specify CCTV equipment on all new school bus contracts using vehicles with 17 or more seats.	Specify CCTV equipment on all new ESCC local bus contracts.			Police, Bus operators / ESCC, District & Borough Councils
Integrated Ticketing	objectives (a) & (f)	Extend "Pathfinder" discount ticket scheme for students aged 16-19 until July 2010	Extend availability of integrated ticketing. Improved marketing	Further extend availability of integrated ticketing.		ESCC, Bus operators, Train operating companies
Integration with other public transport	objectives (a) & (f)		Newhaven Station interchange. Improve bus information at rail stns		Rye Station Approach Transport interchange	ESCC, Bus operators, Train operating companies
Vehicle specification	objectives (a), (b) & (h)	Specify low floor wheelchair accessible buses on all contracts for daytime services			Prepare requirement for all buses to be wheelchair accessible from January 2017	Bus operators / ESCC
Driver training	objectives (a) & (b)	Include driver training arrangements in assessment of tenders	Agree strategy for improving driver training, inc disability awareness.			Bus operators / ESCC