

**ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**2007/08 PROJECT  
- BUSES**

**FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



July 2008

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**Economic and Environmental Scrutiny Committee**

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council





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## Foreword

***Councillor Jonathan Garston, Chairman & Councillor Chris Walker, Vice Chairman - Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's Economic and Environmental Scrutiny Committee:***

The Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee decided that its in-depth Scrutiny Project should be on 'buses'. We chose this as our project as we felt that better bus services connecting the town are to the benefit of passengers, residents, businesses, the environment and the region.

The study also included consideration of other transport modes (where related to public transport) and included trains.

In this study, we wanted to be able to make strategic and operational recommendations as to how the Council (as the Highway Authority) and the bus operators (operational concerns) can improve bus services in the town.

We would like to thank all those who have been involved in the in-depth Scrutiny Project, those who took the time to attend meetings to give their evidence, and Members on the Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee, and of course the Project Team.

We would like to express our thanks to Brighton & Hove Council for the hospitality shown to us on our visit in January. We are particularly grateful for the input in the project from the main bus operators in the town, who are supportive of our main recommendations.

Councillor Jonathan Garston  
Chairman

Councillor Chris Walker  
Vice Chairman

July 2008



# 1. SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

## The scope of the scrutiny: objectives and outcomes

- 1.1 In the municipal year 2007/08, the Council's Economic and Environmental Scrutiny Committee agreed that the in-depth scrutiny project would be on buses<sup>1</sup>, to make recommendations on how to improve bus services in the town.
- 1.2 The project was chosen as it is felt that better bus services connecting the town are to the benefit of passengers, residents, businesses, the environment and the region. The study also included consideration of other transport modes (where related to public transport) and included trains.
- 1.3 The objectives agreed by the Committee in October 2007<sup>2</sup> were:
- clear understanding of issues and roles;
  - achieve better partnership with commercial sector;
  - understand commercial issues;
  - consider the policies/ practices of bus operators;
  - review of bus partnership agreement (to be provided at an early stage of the project);
  - contribute to Local Transport Plan - and look at how government proposals will assist in delivering the objectives of the LTP, (the Local Development Framework and Area Action Plans, the Corporate Priorities, the Sustainable Community Plan, the LAA and the work of partners including Renaissance Southend (links with plans & policies<sup>3</sup>);
  - consider concerns of public – including access, affordability, reliability, routes etc;
  - consider wider transport issues;
  - consider other ways of offering subsidies;
  - consider in detail relevant comparator information, and also Brighton & Hove<sup>4</sup>;
  - consider alternative ways of operating bus network and current arrangements overall;
  - consider the preferred bus network to serve existing and future requirements;

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<sup>1</sup> Economic and Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 14<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Minute 119 refers

<sup>2</sup> Economic and Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007 Minute 577 refers

<sup>3</sup> Comment - growth in jobs and housing planned for the town to inform the desire to seek improvements in bus services and link closely with the LDF, Masterplan and AAP and the RSL Regeneration Framework & key linkages with Corporate Plan etc

<sup>4</sup> i.e. operating in a similar environment such as Southend (and successfully)

- consider the links with the Council's existing community transport provisions, including social services.

1.4 The outcomes and recommendations envisaged were to make strategic and operational recommendations as to how the Council and bus operators can improve bus services in town (the Council – as Highway Authority; Bus operators – operational concerns).

### **Methodology/ Process**

1.5 The scrutiny study was carried out by the Economic and Environmental Scrutiny Committee supported by an officer Project Team comprising:

- Fiona Abbott, project coordinator
- Strategic support from Andrew Lewis, Corporate Director Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment and Steve Kearney, Head of Planning & Transport
- Paul Mathieson, Group Manager, Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment
- Roy Skinner, Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment
- Graeme Newman, Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment
- Navtej Tung, Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment
- Jo Bates, Administrative support

1.6 The following Members were attached to the Project Team in order to provide guidance and to act as a consultative body during the course of the study:

- Councillor Jonathan Garston, Chairman
- Councillor Chris Walker (Vice Chairman),
- Councillor Mel Day (until May 2008)
- Councillor Stephen Habermel (until November 2007)
- Councillor Steve Aylen (from November 2007 onwards)
- Councillor Mike Royston
- Councillor Ted Lewin
- Councillor Martin Terry also expressed an interest in being involved in the project, and was specifically invited to meetings of the project team.

1.7 The scrutiny project commenced on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007, when the Economic and Environmental Scrutiny Committee approved the project plan. An update report was agreed on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

1.8 The briefing material provided the necessary background information for the formal public evidence-giving sessions ('witness sessions') at which the Committee received oral, written and presentational evidence from a number of key stakeholders.



- 1.9 Prior to the commencement of the witness sessions, Members and the project team identified, devised and documented the questions which were to be asked of each witness.

### **Evidence Gathering**

- 1.10 The Committee<sup>5</sup> agreed who should be approached as possible 'witnesses' and invitations were sent out for the witness sessions, as follows:

- Bus operators
- Bus users' group
- Rail operators
- Executive Councillor
- Relevant local authority officers
- Renaissance Southend
- Local MPs

- 1.11 We also approached a number of 'written evidence givers' for their views, and letters were sent to the following:

- The voluntary sector
- Southend-on-Sea Access Group
- Rail Users' Group
- Residents' Associations
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Chamber of Commerce
- Business & Tourism Partnership
- Move Easy Group (Southend Hospital)
- Traders' Associations
- Essex County Council
- Castle Point Borough Council
- Rochford District Council
- Youth Council and a further meeting is planned with the Youth Council
- Castle Point Transport Museum
- Mr. R Delahoy – SiGNAL Training & Consultancy Services
- Chair of the Local Strategic Partnership

### **Stakeholders**

- 1.12 Through the witness sessions, the Committee received evidence from the following individuals and associated organisations, to whom the Council is grateful:-

#### **Witness Session 1 – held on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

##### **Representing bus operators:**

- (a) Mr. Kevin Hawkins - Arriva

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<sup>5</sup> Agreed 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007 (minute 577 refers), amended on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007 (minute 746 refers).

- (b) Mr. Duncan Cameron and Mr Steve Little – First Essex Buses
- (c) Mr. Bill Hiron – Stephensons of Essex Ltd

Southend Area Bus Users' Group - Mr Donald Fraser

**Witness Session 2 – held 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007**

- (a) Mr. Paul Mathieson and Mr. Roy Skinner – Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment
- (b) Mr. Theo Steel – 'One'
- (c) Mr. Mike Lambert and Mr. Giles Tofield – Renaissance Southend

**Witness Session 3 – held 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

- (a) Councillor Anna Waite – portfolio holder;
- (b) Mr. Ashley Curtis – Client Project Manager, SERT (South Essex Rapid Transit) and Mr. Tim Halford – Regional Development Manager, Cityspace Ltd;
- (c) Mr. James Francis – Development Executive, Clear Channel (Adshel);
- (d) Mr. David Amess – Member of Parliament.

**Special Scrutiny Committee – held 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008**

The Committee met with Mr. Bob Dorr and Mr. Steve Little (First) and Mr. Kevin Hawkins (Arriva) to discuss our emerging themes and recommendations. The Committee also had a presentation about community transport.

**Written evidence replies** – received from the following:

- ◆ Avro/ Viking Community Resource - 'On the Road' – views as service users;
- ◆ Castle Point Borough Council;
- ◆ Letter from Essex County Council;
- ◆ Leigh-on-Sea Town Council;
- ◆ Mr. Theo Steel;
- ◆ Mr. Grubb;
- ◆ Mr. Stuck (Montague Court Residents Association);
- ◆ Mr. Richard Delahoy;
- ◆ Essex Chamber of Commerce;
- ◆ West Leigh Residents' Association;
- ◆ Youth Council;
- ◆ Mr. Bill Norris;
- ◆ Access Group;
- ◆ Southend Business & Tourism Partnership

- 1.13 A copy of the questions posed to each witness / evidence giver is attached in the [Annex to the Report \(Documents 1 – 4\)](#). A summary of the written evidence givers responses is also attached in the [Annex to the Report \(Document 5\)](#).

- 1.14 In the course of the study the Scrutiny Committee made a visit to the Travel Centre in Southend and also visited Brighton & Hove Council.

## **2. BACKGROUND AND MAIN ISSUES FOR THE SCRUTINY**

- 2.1 The initial phase of the scrutiny exercise involved research into the main issues in relation to the subject matter of the project.
- 2.2 Data/evidence – information was provided to allow a comparison to be made with other Local Authorities. This was principally in the form of established BVPIs relating to public transport satisfaction, the quality of public transport information and bus patronage.
- 2.2.1 Evidence was presented on the current nature of the bus routes (weekday, evenings and Sundays) and the proposals/ policies presented in the various documents comprising the Local Transport Plan.
- 2.2.2 Various extracts of DfT publications and other reports were provided to inform the project and aid a greater understanding of the bus services and, in particular, national policies.
- 2.2.3 During the project, the Committee also received information about the telematics system – further information on this is detailed in paragraph 3.6 below.
- 2.3 Visit to Travel Centre – as part of the evidence gathering process the Committee had the opportunity to visit the Southend Travel Centre. This took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007, and the purpose of the visit was to help members understand how the network is planned, managed and works.
- 2.4 Visit to Brighton & Hove – as part of the project, the Committee decided that it would be useful to visit Brighton & Hove. The reason for the visit was because of its similarities with Southend – it is a seaside town; has a similar night time economy; it is a university town, etc.
- 2.4.1 The visit took place on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2008, and six Councillors and four officers attended. The purpose of the visit was to learn more about the way Brighton have improved services – further information on the visit and issues / learning points are detailed in paragraphs 3.5 below.
- 2.5 A key issue to emerge during the review was the use of the telematics system locally (this is the intelligent bus priority and RTPPI system) and in particular the lack of performance by the operators (by Arriva in particular) – further information on this is detailed in paragraph 3.6 below.

- 2.6 All of the above issues were explored in more detail through the next stage of the project.

### **3 ISSUES TO EMERGE DURING THE EVIDENCE GATHERING FROM STAKEHOLDERS**

- 3.1 The formal evidence-taking sessions with key witnesses informed the scrutiny process through their experience and knowledge working in the key sectors.
- 3.2 The questions for the witnesses were sent to them prior to their attendance at the Committee. Letters were also sent to other evidence givers, inviting them to comment on the questions posed by the Committee.
- 3.3 A detailed record of general comments and specific responses to questions posed by Members of the Committee was prepared. This record of evidence was forwarded to the representative in order to ensure that the recorded evidence was factually correct.
- 3.4 All the witness statements and other contributions were reviewed and key statements extracted. This information is extrapolated on the table which starts on page 17 below.
- 3.5 Key themes from visit to Brighton & Hove – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2008
- 3.5.1 The Committee met with Mr Paul Crowther, the Public Transport Manager at Brighton & Hove Council and Mr Roger French OBE DL, Managing Director, Brighton & Hove Bus & Coach Company Ltd. Members also briefly met with the Lead Councillor for Environment, Councillor Geoffrey Theobald OBE.
- 3.5.2 On the visit, Members learnt that the aim of Brighton & Hove City Council – and Brighton & Hove Bus Company – is to deliver a bus service that arrives when it is needed, where it is needed, reliably and consistently. They have invested much time, energy and money in technology for the local bus service, and are starting to see the benefits in increased passenger numbers and increased quality of the services.
- 3.5.3 Brighton & Hove City Council entered into a Quality Bus Partnership with the Brighton & Hove Bus Company, aiming to increase passenger numbers through the delivery of a quality bus service to the people who visit, live and work in Brighton and Hove<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> some 98% of bus services within the city are operated commercially. The City Council supports 4 routes – linking together sections of other routes.

3.5.4 During the visit, we heard about the ‘cake’ model – or key ingredients on both sides for developing the service in the city. The City Council’s five ingredients (for the cake) are:

- Park & Ride;
- Bus priority of road space;
- Improve passenger waiting areas & accessibility;
- Real time information displays;
- Traffic regulation enforcement.

The bus companies’ five ingredients (for the cake) are:

- Frequency of service;
- The price;
- Investment in new buses;
- The staff;
- Effective sales message.

3.6 Telematics system – During the evidence gathering phase of the project, we became aware that the telematics system is not being used as often and widely as it should. Over the last 7 years, the telematics system has evolved and grown into a large system with multiple bus operators and depots involved. So far, the system has been operated and maintained centrally by Atkins/Siemens on behalf of Essex County Council, Southend and Thurrock working with the bus operators.

3.6.1 The Committee sought information on why the telematics system was not being used as fully as it should, and the Project Team received a detailed briefing note on the position.

3.6.2 In summary, the reason for the lack of performance by the operators (one in particular) is due to a combination of the following:-

- Lack of confidence in the system due to software and hardware faults causing problems with information displayed to drivers - these faults have largely now been rectified;
- Hardware modules require changing and updating which this can sometimes lead to units not being active;
- Changeover of bus fleet, which results in some buses having units removed and re-fitted<sup>7</sup>;
- Consequential lack of commitment by drivers that the system is reliable<sup>8</sup>;
- Lack of feedback on system performance by system managers at Chelmsford;

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<sup>7</sup> e.g. Arriva will take delivery of 14 newer buses in August and will require unit removal and refitting

<sup>8</sup> this is mainly due to the lack of a terminal at the Arriva depot, which prevents managers ensuring greater usage, reporting faults or tracking buses.

- Timetable data uploads can cause problems, which means that drivers do not log on correctly<sup>9</sup>.
- 3.6.3 Essex County Council have recently commissioned on behalf of the telematics partnership, a review of the performance of the contract, in an effort to improve the service. The outcome will be reported to Members. The bus operators are also aware of better technology on the telematics system and a presentation is promised to Members.
- 3.6.4 The Committee believes that the problems surrounding the use of the telematics system is now being addressed and should be monitored by the Working Party which it recommends should be established.
- 3.6.5 Members thought it would be useful to visit the CCTV control room, and also the Essex traffic control centre. This is an issue which needs to be explored further by the Working Party.
- 3.7 As well as receiving written contributions from a number of stakeholders including the Youth Council, some discussions have taken place with the Youth Council and also the Youth Mayor<sup>10</sup>. The Youth Council have undertaken their own survey on transport/ buses and have particular concerns about how child bus fares are applied in Southend compared with the rest of Essex. The information from the bus companies is less than clear and is one of the issues which need to be explored further by the Working Party.
- 3.8 A further issue to arise was the issue of concessionary fares, and in particular the new scheme which applies from April 2008. The issue of social inclusion / community transport, and to make an exception for disabled passengers to use their concessionary passes from 9.00 am needs to be explored further by the Working Party.
- 3.9 At a special meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, the Committee received an informative presentation on the links with the Council's existing community transport provisions, including social services.
- 3.10 During the project, Members were pleased to hear of successes locally and the contributions from the local MPs were also appreciated. The Committee was advised that:
- the bus service from Belfairs to Leigh station has been restarted on Tuesdays;
  - there is new bus service running from Hamlet Court Road to the Hospital every Thursday;
  - the improvements to Service 29 (Belfairs to Southend);

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<sup>9</sup> First have a later version of the on-board unit (IBIS plus) which automatically updates the data on the bus. Arriva have to load the data manually on each individual bus.

<sup>10</sup> The project coordinator attended a meeting of the Youth Council on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008

- Service 9 has improved frequency;
- the success of the X30 service, which continues with larger vehicles and ever increasing passenger numbers;
- the new service 6 running from the travel centre to Garons (Sundays);
- the improved rider ship levels in the last year;
- alerted to the fact officers and the portfolio holder have had continuing discussions with the operators;
- that parking wardens will travel on some bus routes, mainly along London Road, to stop cars congesting the bus stops;
- that timetables are available in a selection of outlets across the town (and on the website), and a sign placed in the Council's Contact Centre indicating availability.





## Analysis of Key Findings

	<b>Issues Raised</b>	<b>Witness evidence Bus operators:</b>	<b>Witness evidence SBC &amp; MP's</b>	<b>Witness evidence - Evidence from others/ written replies</b>
1	<a href="#">Routes</a>	The bus operators' general opinion is that the bus network is stable and generally meets the needs of Southend	<p>The opinion is that the current route network serves parts of the town well and at certain times, but needs improvement to provide better links, especially for work and school trips (Witness Session 2);</p> <p>Concerns of the lack of services at evenings and Sundays (Witness Sessions 1 and 3).</p>	<p>The routes do not meet the needs of the users, as they cover mainly the major roads, and avoid N-S links (Witness Session 1 and Written Responses);</p> <p>Lack of service at evenings and Sundays (Witness session 1 and Written responses);</p> <p>Leigh is a constant example where the bus service is insufficient (Written responses).</p>
2	<a href="#">Accessibility</a>	Mixture of success of operators using low floor / DDA compliant buses – improvements planned but a number remain non compliant (Witness Session 1).	Concern for the elderly and disabled, as some bus operators. e.g. Service 7 to the Hospital uses double decker buses which prove difficult for visitors/ patients for hospital/ difficult to board and non DDA compliant. The elderly are very reliant on the buses as the travel mode of choice, and so affects their quality of life (Witness session 3).	Concern of provision for elderly and disabled users, as buses are not DDA compliant, or require long distances for these groups to walk to gain access (Written responses); The use of old buses adds to this, and also inconveniences those with babies;
3	<a href="#">Telematics</a>	The use of telematics by bus	SBC has made a significant	Problems concerning telematics

		<p>operators has been a frustrating issue within Southend and Essex (Witness Session 1, special meeting);</p> <p>Need for more investment in bus priority measures if to increase investment by bus operators (Witness Session 1)</p>	<p>contribution to telematics and bus priority, and there is disappointment that the bus operators have not fully utilised this (Witness Session 3 and Telematics note);</p> <p>Concerns over the lack of investment made or desired to be made by the bus operators to come in line with the telematics, and the constant use of buses without the equipment on board (Telematics note);</p> <p>Some problems seen with use of the telematics equipment, and updating of information (Witness Session 2 and Telematics note).</p>	<p>include not having correct information, not working, or in enough locations, however when the telematics do work, they are deemed positive (Witness session 1 and Written responses);</p> <p>Deemed a need for bus priority measures on the road.</p>
4	Customer satisfaction	<p>Customer satisfaction has improved year on year, but in areas where improvements are needed, the bus operators have asked for help (Witness Session 1)</p>	<p>BVPI figures show customer satisfaction is good (Witness Session 2);</p> <p>Where complaints have been made they are for late or cancelled buses, but it is not high, however it is accepted that there will always be complaints, but rarely calls for congratulations (Witness session 3).</p>	<p>Complaints for late or cancelled buses (Written Responses);</p> <p>Concern of some drivers - many are good, but some are bad, or lack understanding of some passengers' needs, especially the disabled (Written responses);</p> <p>Some good comments for helpful bus drivers (Written Responses).</p>
5	Cost of fares	<p>Operators feel the fare in Southend</p>	<p>Positive about existing fare structure,</p>	<p>Mixture of views on the cost of fares.</p>

		is good, especially in comparison to other areas within Essex (Witness Session 1)	which reflects competition (Witness Session 3);  Some concern of the price of fares for school children (Witness session 3).	Concern expressed that 13 year olds are deemed Adults (Written Responses);  Better promotion needs to be given for family fares, and special promotional fares such as Saver fares;  Fares can be a barrier to those on low incomes.
6	Funding & investment	The low fares within Southend make it difficult to fund new buses;  Concern of the use of free bus passes, many buses can now be full but be running at a loss;  Lack of subsidy from SBC mean some routes are unviable.	SBC has made contributions to funding Concessionary fares. (Witness session 3);  Large funding and investment has been made on bus stops, equipment, and infrastructure (Witness Session 3).	Need for funding for public transport at the airport when new railway station is built to improve community accessibility (Written responses);  Concern that SBC was unable to find money and let routes become cancelled when operators claimed they were unviable (Written responses).
7	Information	None	SBC has made plenty of information available at bus stops and stations;  Bus timetable available at various locations for a small cost of 50p. (Session 2);  Need for better joined-up thinking in	Crime, vandalism and safety are not a major issue;  Concerns that bus drivers pull away before letting people sit, or drive erratically, and therefore there could be safety problems if someone fell

			providing information for visitors and those new to the town and this should extend beyond the internet (Witness Session 3).	over; Passengers feel vulnerable when in waiting areas not well lit, and when the route is serviced infrequently, or in the evenings.
8	Crime & Safety	CCTV available on buses;  Crime on buses within Essex is extremely low (Witness Session 1).	Crime and vandalism isn't a major issue, but reassuring the public is difficult (Witness session 3).	Crime, vandalism and safety are not a major issue;  Concerns that bus drivers pull away before letting people seat, or drive erratically, and therefore there could be safety problems if someone fell over;  Passengers feel vulnerable when in waiting areas not well lit, and when the route is serviced infrequently, or in the evenings.
9	Frequency	None	Frequency and routes need to be considered to improve accessibility.	Frequency, flexibility, and reliability of buses must be improved (Written Responses);  Concern that buses in the evenings and Sundays are not frequent at all, making accessibility difficult. Southend is a tourist town, and therefore has an economy that runs beyond 9-5, and many workers in

				the tourism and service industry who work unsociable hours. Also, sites such as Cliffs Pavilion are not serviced by buses in the evening, and force people to use cars, or pay for taxis (Written responses)
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The issue of encouraging use of alternative fuels is also included in the above.



## 4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Committee undertook a thorough review, in line with the objectives of the study, including a significant and wide-ranging input from stakeholders, which gave it a comprehensive understanding of the issues and concerns of stakeholders and residents.

4.2 The final stage of the scrutiny study was to develop its recommendations. In developing its recommendation, the Committee was mindful of the need to have regard to any resource implications (both in terms of staffing, revenue and capital funding).

4.3 The key points from the evidence covered the following areas:

- Routes
- Accessibility
- Telematics
- Customer satisfaction
- Cost & fares
- Funding & investment
- Information
- Crime & safety
- Frequency

The project team agreed that the issue of encouraging use of alternative fuels is included in the above.

4.4 The Committee met with the two main bus operators on 22<sup>nd</sup> May to discuss the emerging themes and recommendations from the study. The Committee also received a presentation on community transport. The themes identified were as follows:

- Quality Bus Partnership & improved dialogue
- Council & operator investment
- Community transport & social inclusion
- The Brighton & Hove 'cake' model
- New technology
- Vision for the future

4.5 The meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May was very productive and the representatives from Arriva and First were able to agree with many of the comments made at the meeting, in terms of:

- reliability;
- punctuality;
- bus priorities;
- technology – both companies understood the concerns regarding the telematics system and this is now being addressed and an understanding of the importance of the system has been recognised, with progress being made.

- 4.6 The Committee believes that, in partnership, we will make a difference to improve services in the town - to the benefit of passengers, residents, businesses, the environment and the region. The Council has made significant investment in infrastructure (e.g. A13 improvements / investment as a lever / also other contract negotiations) and there is a role for the operators in terms of publicising services etc.
- 4.7 The Council has also shown ongoing commitment to improving the A13 passenger corridor by committing £2m of capital to the project and is maintaining funding for improved infrastructure. The Council is also working with developers in that new residential/ employment sites must include contribution towards public transport provision.
- 4.8 Our Vision:
- 4.8.1 To **take forward** the following issues identified in the project:
- i. The 'cake model' as described in 3.5.4 above, should be formed and progressed, stating our key objectives, and the role of the operator and the role of the Local Authority. Also need to gather evidence from other authorities where more than one operator operates;
  - ii. Inspectors (to help monitor punctuality);
  - iii. Parking attendants use buses as part of their enforcement work;
  - iv. Issue of when/ how child bus fares are applied;
  - v. Disabled concessionary passes;
  - vi. Communications;
  - vii. Park and Ride sites need to be investigated (and explore local sites as well);
  - viii. Need to keep options open on bus priority measures and that they need to be where suitable;
  - ix. In dialogue with the operators, to explore the 'branding' of Southend bus services;
  - x. In dialogue with the operators, to undertake a thorough review of the route network and also frequencies in Southend;
  - xi. That both the Council and the operators use their best endeavors to move forward on the use of the information systems, to help achieve better service reliability. Quarterly updates to be provided to the Working Party;
  - xii. There is a need to continue to improve passenger waiting areas and accessibility at bus stops<sup>11</sup>. Advertising shelters are provided as part of a contract to provide and maintain shelters at no cost to the Council (revenue comes from the advertising panel), this being re tendered to seek maximum benefit to customers in the form of new shelters in better locations;
  - xiii. To help develop a better understanding of issues regarding use of technology etc, there is a need to visit CCTV control room and also the Essex control centre;

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<sup>11</sup> e.g. signposting, toilets, cycle racks/ parking, advertising.



- xiv. There is a need for appropriate traffic regulation enforcement including enabling parking attendants to travel on some routes;
- xv. There is a need for all partners to continue to be 'customer focussed' and to understand how important public transport is in terms of accessibility to jobs and housing, social inclusion and economic regeneration. The Council has already been successful in getting new and improved services, has discussed new/ alternative routes and is readdressing SERT routes;
- xvi. The Council, in its community leadership role, to encourage partnership with operators, and also to take forward residents' views concerning the need for good public transport links as part of the regeneration of the town;
- xvii. That continued planned investment is crucial in infrastructure, vehicles, publicity etc, which has been proven in other areas to encourage greater public transport patronage;
- xviii. To continue to explore, with operators and neighbouring authorities, opportunities presented in the Transport Bill<sup>12</sup>;
- xix. The possibility of offering the bus operators some form of 'incentive' to encourage them to use alternative fuels needs to be explored further;
- xx. In discussion with relevant officers, need to explore the community transport role across the borough and the further work identified<sup>13</sup>. To explore the potential of a fully integrated fleet managed via Passenger Transport, so as to help fill gaps in existing Community Transport provision.

4.8.2 The Committee believes that the best way forward and to build on the relationships established with the bus operators is to set up a Working Party involving the main bus operators in the town.

4.8.3 The proposed Terms of Reference of the Working Party are set out below:

#### Membership

7 Members of the Council

The following non-voting members:

One representative from First

One representative from Arriva

One representative from Stephenson's

One representative of the Rail Operators

One representative from Southend Area Bus Users Group

The Chairman shall be the Executive Councillor for Transport and Planning or his/her nominee.

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<sup>12</sup> to promote for greater dialogue and joint working - e.g. a Quality Bus Partnership / Contract (this includes issues of quality / service / standard numbers / technology / information / security / increasing quality of service);

<sup>13</sup> i.e. better understanding on demand, volume / location / time.

Substitutes: Permitted in accordance with Standing Order 31.

Proportionality: By convention political proportionality shall apply.

Quorum: 3

Terms of Reference: to recommend to the Cabinet the best means by which the recommendations & outcomes from the buses in depth scrutiny project, conducted by the Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee may be implemented (including the production of a Summary Action Plan).

Status of meetings: Private<sup>14</sup>.

Reports to: the Cabinet.

## 5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Cabinet consider the in-depth scrutiny report on buses and agrees the conclusions arising from the study:

1. That a Working Party be established to take forward the items identified in section 4.8 of the report. The terms of reference of the Working Party as set out in section 4.8.3 of the report will be agreed by Council.
2. That the Corporate Director Enterprise Tourism & the Environment be asked to progress the recommendations in the report and report back to scrutiny on a quarterly basis, against the summary Action Plan.

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<sup>14</sup> Discussions must have regard to the requirements of the 'Competition Act'

## 6 LIST OF INFORMATION INCLUDED IN THE ANNEX TO REPORT

- Document 1** Notes from witness session No.1 held 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007
- Document 2** Notes from witness session No.2 held 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007
- Document 3** Notes from witness session No.3 held 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008
- Document 4** Notes from special Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008
- Document 5** Questions to written evidence givers and summary of responses

## 7. CONTACT DETAILS

For further information relating to this report, or general enquiries about scrutiny, please contact:

**By post:**

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Copies of previous scrutiny studies can be found on [www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk) and click on the 'council & democracy' section of the website.



## **LIST OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Reports**

1. In-depth Scrutiny Project – Buses – Report of Corporate Director Support Services – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007
2. In-depth Scrutiny Project – Buses – update report - Report of Corporate Director Support Services – 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

### **Witness sessions**

3. Notes from witness session No:1 held 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
4. Notes from witness session No:2 held 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007.
5. Notes from witness session No:3 held 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

### **Minutes**

6. Agreement to selected topic – Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 14<sup>th</sup> June 2007 (minute 119 refers)
7. Extract from Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 18<sup>th</sup> October 2007 (minute 577 refers)
8. Extract from Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007 (minute 746 refers)
9. Minutes from Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (Witness session 1) (minutes 979 - 982)
10. Minutes from Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (Witness session 2) (minutes 983 - 986)
11. Minutes from Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008 (Witness session 3) (minutes 987 - 989)
12. Minutes from special Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008 (minutes 73 - 78)

### **Project Team meetings**

13. Meetings of the Member Project Teams were held on the following dates – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2007; 19<sup>th</sup> November 2007; 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008; 17<sup>th</sup> April 2008 and 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The notes are available on request.

### **Other information**

14. Power point presentations:

- Witness session 2 – Mr. Paul Mathieson, Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment;
  - Witness session 3 – Mr. Ashley Curtis (South Essex Rapid Transit) and Mr. Tim Halford – (Cityspace Ltd); Mr. James Francis – Clear Channel (Adshel);
  - Project Team meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2008 – Ms Fiona Abbott;
  - Special Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2008 – Fiona Abbott; Mr. Paul Mathieson (Enterprise, Tourism & the Environment) and Mr. Nick Corrigan (Support Services).
15. Briefing note on Telematics – current position (January 2008)
  16. Briefing notes on visit to Brighton & Hove (25<sup>th</sup> January 2008)
  17. 'Effective questioning in health scrutiny' [www.cfps.org.uk](http://www.cfps.org.uk)
  18. '10 questions to ask if you are assessing evidence' [www.cfps.org.uk](http://www.cfps.org.uk)
  19. BVPI information:
    - BVPI 102 thousand of passenger journeys per year by authority;
    - BVPI 103 satisfaction with transport information 2003/04 compared to 2006/07;
    - BVPI 104 satisfaction with bus services 2003/04 compared to 2006/07.
  20. Passenger Transport Strategy from LTP2.
  21. Equality Impact assessment for public transport policy (buses).
  22. Proposed core and secondary core bus network (taken out of LTP2).
  23. Review of Bus Services – Rochford District Council (2007)
  24. Buses in Bradford (June 2006) [www.bradford.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/scrutiny)
  25. An e-government case study - Brighton & Hove City Council: meeting local transport needs more effectively (May 2003) [www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge](http://www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge)

In-depth Scrutiny Project  
July 2008