

**Cabinet Member & Partners Response to Environment & Economy Select Committee Review of Bus Services**

**Recommendations and final report**

**Date Recommendations of final report agreed by Environment & Economy Select Committee on 6 February 2024:**

(Circulated to Exec Member and external partners Friday 15 March 2024)

**Date responses should be made by:**

Cabinet and partners responses should be received by  
Friday 10 May 2024

**Recommendations:**

**Executive & Partner Response:**

**Annual Stakeholder Seminar hosted by SBC**

**RECOMMENDATION 1** - It is recommended that SBC Executive Portfolio Holder for Transport be invited to consider holding a yearly transport seminar for Stevenage bringing together the HCC transport unit and the public transport providers to hold them to account regarding the performance of their contracts with a view to champion local users' needs and bring a focus on improved performance.

*Response supported by AD Planning & Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Cabinet Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Economy, Skills & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:*

The PH for Transport will look to organise this with HCC as Transport Authority and bus operators noting the limited powers SBC holds in this area.

<p><b>Action: AD Planning &amp; Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Better real time information for buses on digital platforms and at physical bus stops</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 2</u></b> - It is recommended that (i) Arriva be strongly encouraged to update the real time information for bus services on their website and App, as bus users rely on this information to wait for bus services, if cancelled or delayed; and (ii) that real-time information also be included at bus stops, so passengers know when the next bus is due and also if a service is not running etc.</p> <p><b>Action: AD Planning &amp; Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed, Arriva Bus Company and HCC Transport Department</b></p>	<p><i>Response for SBC supported by AD Planning &amp; Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Skills &amp; Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p>The PH support the principle of this and the clear wider public/ user benefits of it. However, we understand the limitations of its functionality as explained by Arriva.</p> <p><i>Response from Matthew Lale, HCC Transport Unit &amp; Michael Jennings, Arriva Bus Company:</i></p> <p>A number of screens have recently been installed at bus stops in London Rd using BSIP funding to complement the new 907 service. Later phases of the BSIP programme sees the opportunity for further screens to be installed in the area. Passengers are also able to use the Intalink app to see real-time information on their phones for any bus stop in the county.</p> <p>The real-time information system can indicate if a bus is on time or running late, but it is not yet sufficiently advanced to indicate if a bus is not running at all. This is a priority area that we are working on in conjunction with our technology partners.</p> <p><i>See attached response from Arriva appended to the document.</i></p>
<p><b><u>Improved info screens at Bus Interchange for disabled /visually impaired passengers</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 3</u></b> - It is recommended that (i) to help wheelchair users and disabled and the visually impaired, that</p>	<p><i>Response supported by Head of Estates, Mark Sullivan and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Resources (interim) Cllr Jeannette Thomas:</i></p> <p>i. There are currently 24 screens at the Stevenage Bus Interchange. Officers have contacted our contractor who</p>

<p>some (a least two or three) of the information screens in the bus interchange be lowered and the contrast of those screens be adjusted to provide a good contrast to enable those users to be able to read the information more easily, and (ii) in addition, that a similar sign to the RNIB signage used near the ticket office at the railway station be installed at the bus interchange.</p> <p><b>Action: SBC Mark Sullivan, Head of Estates</b></p>	<p>manages the screens to investigate the possibility of having either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Some of the existing screens lowered.</li> <li>b) The cost of additional screens to be implemented at various points around the Bus Interchange</li> </ul> <p>The request of the contrast to be adjusted will also be investigated through the same contractor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. We will speak to the individuals at Stevenage Railway Station regarding the RNIB signage to investigate the potential addition of the RNIB signage and seek costs.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Improved communications between HCC Passenger Transport, Arriva and disability groups</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 4</u></b> - It is recommended that (i) The HCC Passenger Transport and Arriva need to engage in an open and ongoing conversation with disability groups like Herts Vision Loss to help refine and shape the services, as it appeared to Members that this was not currently the case; and (ii) the use of trusted apps for those with disabilities be championed by bus providers and transport authorities at HCC.</p> <p><b>Action: HCC Passenger Transport and Arriva Bus Company</b></p>	<p><i>Response from Matthew Lale, HCC Transport Unit &amp; Michael Jennings, Arriva Bus Company:</i></p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council have currently created a Sensory Strategy task group, working with internal and external stakeholders, including Adult Care Services, Highways, RNIB, Herts Vision Loss and other local groups. The aim of the task group is to identify issues disabled passengers face and look at practical solutions for improvement.</p> <p>We are in the early stages of gathering information from our Intalink Partners in regard to their accessibility guidelines and training practices. This information should also help to steer improvements made to accessibility awareness and training across the network.</p> <p><i>See attached response from Arriva appended to the document.</i></p>
<p><b><u>Refreshed Arriva Driver Training regarding the needs of visually impaired passengers</u></b></p>	<p><i>Response from Michael Jennings, Arriva Bus Company:</i></p> <p><i>See attached response from Arriva appended to the document.</i></p>

<p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 5</u></b> - It is recommended that Arriva should revisit their driver training regarding courtesy and care towards disabled passengers. This should be looked at based on the evidence submitted by Herts Vision Loss, who reported that their members were, on occasion, not given sufficient time to be seated when boarding or were dismissed or ignored by some drivers when asking for assistance or information about the bus route etc.</p> <p><b>Action: Arriva Bus Company</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Introduce audio announcements for bus stops.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 6</u></b> - It is recommended that HCC Passenger Transport and Arriva advance the roll out of audio announcement on buses as well as visual displays screens, which need to be retrofitted to all existing fleet and be provided as standard on any new fleet stock.</p> <p><b>Action: HCC Passenger Transport and Arriva Bus Company</b></p>	<p><i>Response from Matthew Lale, HCC Passenger Transport &amp; Michael Jennings, Arriva Bus Company:</i></p> <p>This is a responsibility of the bus operators to fit on bus audio announcements.</p> <p><i>See attached response from Arriva appended to the document.</i></p>
<p><b><u>Introduction of Electric Vehicles in Stevenage</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 7</u></b>- It is recommended that (i) In the first instance, bus companies should be encouraged to consider electric vehicles or other alternatives to move away from fossil fuels; and (ii) during the long transition to EV electric replacement buses and considering the variable supply of hydrogen, that HCC and Arriva be invited to consider using a more environmentally friendly Biodiesel which produces 90% less carbon than conventional diesel.</p> <p><b>Action: HCC Passenger Transport and Arriva Bus Company</b></p>	<p><i>Response from Matthew Lale, HCC Passenger Transport &amp; Michael Jennings, Arriva Bus Company:</i></p> <p>I think this is a reasonable request, given we are in a transitional stage between diesel and the practical implementation of electric or hydrogen vehicles, but this would need to be agreed by Arriva and other operators who invest in vehicle replacements. It is not something Hertfordshire County Council can control.</p> <p><i>See attached response from Arriva appended to the document.</i></p>

<p><b><u>SBC Planning &amp; HCC Highways consideration of road layout in new developments and impact on buses</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 8</u></b> - It is recommended that regarding new housing developments, that SBC Planning and Development Officers should consult with Bus Companies regarding their views to help avoid any unintended consequences to buses using routes into new housing developments and that HCC Highways Officers should be invited to consult with bus companies regarding the introduction of traffic calming measures such as speed bumps, narrowed roads or chicanes that can make bus journeys slower and therefore not run to optimum journey times. If there are to be any changes made to road schemes for traffic calming these should consider such measures as bus gates.</p> <p><b>Action: AD Planning &amp; Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed HCC Highways/Passenger Transport</b></p>	<p><i>Response supported by Response supported by AD Planning &amp; Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Economy, Skills and Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p>SBC Planning regularly and consistently consults with HCC Passenger Transport who are best placed to advise on impacts and opportunities from new developments.</p> <p><i>Response for HCC Highways/ Mathew Lale, HCC Passenger Transport:</i></p> <p>This is agreed. However, we would ask for Hertfordshire County Council bus network planning officers to be involved as they have a more strategic view of the bus network and how the development fits in within the wider town. Note some operators may not have a large presence in some of the development areas to advise.</p>
<p><b><u>Improvements to Bus Interchange to assist passenger experience and onward pedestrian routes.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 9</u></b>- It is recommended that regarding the new bus station interchange:</p> <p>(i) SBC, fully consider the use of the Bus Station in its new location, and the user experience. In respect of the pedestrian access from the Bus Station through to the shops, the existing signage be reviewed to ensure that it is clear which way to walk to the shops to encourage pedestrians to use the designed route to the pedestrianised Town Centre along the front of the Leisure Centre, rather than to the side of Daneshill House/Registry Office, which should be discouraged as it was equidistance to the</p>	<p><i>Response supported by Response supported by AD Planning &amp; Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Cabinet Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Economy, Skills &amp; Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe and Head of Estates, Mark Sullivan and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Resources, Cllr Jeannette Thomas:</i></p> <p>(i) Planning &amp; Regulatory: The new bus interchange was designed to be better located to the railway station and although slightly further from the Town Square, pedestrian routes along the old London Road and other key access points were improved. Pedestrian access to the rear of the Westgate centre is also scheduled for improvements. A further shuttle bus would not bring people much closer given the pedestrian nature of the town centre.</p>

<p>route in front on the leisure centre, but was less safe, as it is on a main road;</p> <p>(ii) Officers and Partners should consider means of assisting older and disabled users to move from the Bus Station into the town, such as a shuttle bus*, and if an opportunity arises in the future to enhance the provision of mobility services that consideration be given to locating these at the Bus Interchange.</p> <p>(iii) that the provision of WiFi be considered at the Bus Interchange to help passengers access the Arriva App; and</p> <p>(iv) that Officers and Partners consider all available options to ensure that there is a safe and comfortable user experience at the Bus Station.</p> <p><b>Action: AD Planning &amp; Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed (SBC Facilities) Mark Sullivan, Head of Estates</b></p>	<p>(iii) Estates: Officers are discussing with SBC IT the possibility of adding a public Wi-Fi service into the Bus Interchange and a brief is being put together. The cost associated will depend on several factors. Speed, reliability and level of support required (i.e. 24x7 compared to standard work hours, etc) In terms of risks, as provider of the service, if we are collecting user information then there will be some data protection concerns to consider regarding controls, responsible person for the data and considerations in regard to misuse.</p> <p>(iv) Estates: SBC are continually reviewing the environment at the Bus Interchange to ensure it remains a safe and comfortable environment for those who are using the Interchange. We are monitoring the service using feedback from the on-site team who provide updates on how the service could be improved.</p>
<p><b><u>Town Centre Regeneration new Leisure Facility Bus Service</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RECOMMENDATION 10</u></b> – It is recommended that as part of the regeneration of the town centre strategically placed bus stops near public infrastructure will need to be provided, for example there should be a bus stop provided at the new leisure centre when this is built at the town centre gardens, St Georges Way site, as well as consideration of a new bus route to service any new stops.</p> <p><b>Action: AD Planning &amp; Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed, AD Regeneration, Dave Wells</b></p>	<p><i>Response supported by AD Planning &amp; Regulatory Zayd Al-Jawed and Cabinet Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Enterprise &amp; Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe, AD Regeneration, Dave Wells and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Leader Cllr Richard Henry:</i></p> <p>This will be considered as part of any new planning application for a leisure centre.</p>

<p><b><u>Spine Route running North to South through Stevenage</u></b></p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 11</b> – It is recommended that Arriva and HCC be encouraged to consider the provision of a spine route running from the north to the south of the town.</p> <p><b>Action: HCC Passenger Transport and Arriva Bus Company</b></p>	<p><i>Response from Matthew Lale, HCC Passenger Transport &amp; Michael Jennings, Arriva Bus Company:</i></p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council would be happy to look at developing a route with Arriva, subject to external funding, that meets this aspiration. Just to note some routes already exist, for example Bragbury End and Roebuck to the town centre and Lister Hospital.</p> <p><i>See attached response from Arriva appended to the document.</i></p>
<p><b><u>SBC lobby HCC re new funding models for bus travel in Hertfordshire</u></b></p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 12</b> – It is recommended that SBC via the Executive Portfolio Holder for Enterprise and Transport lobby HCC to consider different funding models for the provision of bus travel for Hertfordshire as it was felt that it was right to challenge the funding model which was not currently delivering a service that was fit for purpose.</p> <p><b>Action: AD Planning &amp; Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed</b></p>	<p><i>Response supported Planning &amp; Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawed and Executive Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Economy, Enterprise &amp; Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:</i></p> <p>We have and will continue to lobby for better, more frequent and reliable business for Stevenage.</p>
<p><b><u>New EV Circular Bus Route around Stevenage</u></b></p> <p><b>RECOMMENDATION 13</b> - It is recommended that consideration should be given to a circular bus route between Roaring Meg, Leisure Park, Old Town and the Town Centre, and that officers of the Council review this to identify any funding opportunities, if possible as an electric bus service.</p> <p><b>Action: HCC Passenger Transport and Arriva Bus Company</b></p>	<p><i>Response from Matthew Lale, HCC Passenger Transport &amp; Michael Jennings, Arriva Bus Company:</i></p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council would support a service of this kind if external funding becomes available but just to note that a number of bus already undertake this task. An electric bus would be a high-profile demonstration project, but the cost of electric vehicles is very high and the infrastructure for vehicles of this size are not developed enough around the county.</p> <p><i>See attached response from Arriva appended to the document.</i></p>