

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 30 September 2014

Review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car Stage Two – Bus Services

Report of: Tessa Mallett, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its first meeting of the 2014-15 Municipal Year the Committee agreed to carry out a review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, with the main purpose of looking at ways of easing congestion in Maidstone town centre.
- 1.2 A Working Group was appointed to develop and scope the review topic. The scoping document is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 1.3 Stage one of this review – Walking and Cycling was carried out at the meeting on 22 July 2014.
- 1.4 The draft reports for stages one and two (Bus Services) of the review will be presented to the committee at their meeting of 18 November 2014.
- 1.5 Stage three of this review – Rail Services, will take place at the committee's meeting of 18 November 2014.
- 1.6 The full draft report for all three stages of the review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, will be presented to the committee at their meeting of 17 February 2014.
- 1.7 In preparation for the review of bus services the working group consulted with all Borough Councillors and Parish Councils asking for the following information:
 - Any bus service issues you may have in your constituency, and;
 - Any bus user groups you are aware of in your constituency.

Responses were received from ten Parish Councils and are attached at **Appendix B**.

The responses received were used as the basis for the questions put to the witnesses, who kindly agreed to attend meetings with the working group and the committee for this review.

The responses demonstrated the parishes who responded were not aware of any bus user groups in their parish.

1.8 On 16 September the Working Group met with and interviewed:

- Shane Hymers, Public Transport Policy and Strategy Manager for Kent County Council;
- Dan Bruce, Local Transport Planner (Mid Kent) Kent County Council, and;
- Norman Kemp, NuVenture Coaches Ltd.

The list of questions put to these witnesses is attached at **Appendix C**. Notes from this meeting and the witnesses' responses to these questions will be provided to the committee as a briefing note and verbal update at the meeting of 30 September 2014.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The committee are advised to review the evidence gathered by the working group to date (Appendix B and C) in preparation for interviewing a further three witnesses at their meeting of 30 September 2014.

2.2 These three witnesses, who work in or have an interest in the bus service industry serving the Maidstone Borough, are:

- Matthew Arnold, Commercial Director, Arriva Buses;
- Norman Kemp, Nu Venture Coaches Ltd., and;
- Mike Fitzgerald, Chair East of Maidstone Bus Group.

2.3 For consistency of evidence gathering, the committee may wish to focus its questioning on the same areas covered with the witnesses on 16 September 2014 (attached at Appendix C).

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

3.1 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

3.2 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following priorities:

- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy' and 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live'.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications.

5. Relevant Documents

5.1 Appendix A – Review scoping document

Appendix B – Feedback received from borough and parish councillors

Appendix C – Questions sent to interviewees to help prepare for the meeting

6. Background Documents

6.1 None