

Appendix 1 – The Reformulated Supported Bus Network Outcomes

1.1. Introduction

This appendix sets out how the services in the proposed reformulated supported bus network ('RSBN'), as agreed by Cabinet in December 2014, has developed whilst maintaining consistency with the new Public Transport Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

The report in December 2015 described how the County Council and bus operators had worked proactively over a number of years to develop a bus network in East Sussex that can flourish without being dependent upon public funding. The commissioning strategy process continues to build on this approach.

The benefit for service users has been that bus operators have risen to the challenge of closing the funding gap by taking over a number of services previously supported by the County Council on a commercial basis. The negotiations with operators throughout the course of the commissioning process have centred on solutions to reduce the impact of funding reductions on service users. This has led to new ways of addressing service needs through the use of information gained from service monitoring, user feedback and pro-active engagement with local communities.

Many of the mitigation measures described have resulted from negotiations with the successful tenderers of the contracted bus services awarded after Cabinet's decision. This enabled revisions to the proposed RSBN to be implemented from the introduction of the new RSBN in April 2015. Discussions with the operators of contracted and commercial bus operators, to identify further improvements for service users and better value for council tax payers, are ongoing as an integral part of the strategy.

1.2. The Reformulated Supported Bus Network

The RSBN offers peak time access to education and employment, and reduced daytime services to key centres on Mondays to Saturdays. In summary the main characteristics of the RSBN are:

- supported peak time services are largely unchanged;
- supported off-peak daytime services that previously operated hourly or better will continue operate Monday to Saturday but with a reduced frequency (generally 2 hourly);
- supported off peak daytime services that previously operated less than hourly will generally be reduced to a service that operates 2 days a week (on most services around 2 hourly);
- financial support for evening and Sunday services has been withdrawn;
- funding will be provided for 3 day a week Dial a Ride services..

It was anticipated that the changes described above would have had the following impact on passengers:

a) No significant change for the vast majority of passengers using the network at peak times (between 8-9am and 5-6pm), apart from the customers of the 355 Taxi Rider service. This remains to be the situation having implemented the RSBN.

b) Off peak (between 9am and 5pm) daytime passengers on a number of supported services will experience a change in the frequency of their service compared to that which existed before the RSBN:

- Financial support for 7 evening and Sunday services was withdrawn. The average number of daily passengers on these 7 services was 468. As of February 2016 only 3

of these services have been withdrawn, affecting what was a daily average of about 185 passengers. The 4 services still running are:

- service 28 (Hastings-Ore-Conquest Hospital) as the Hastings Parking Board agreed to fund the service for one year from the parking surplus;
 - service 126 (Seaford-Eastbourne) as Cuckmere Buses has received kick-start financial contribution for marketing the service from the South Downs National Park local sustainable transport fund. This will allow the operator to run a Sunday service 126 without further funding;
 - service 252 (Heathfield-Tunbridge Wells) as Stagecoach agreed to provide the Saturday journeys within the same price of the Monday to Friday contract;
 - service 344 (Hastings-Rye) as the Hastings Parking Board agreed to fund Stagecoach to run service 101 on Sundays for one year from the parking surplus;
- 7 supported off peak daytime services were expected to operate 2 days a week, on most services around 2 hourly, 4 of which would run on Monday to Friday school days/peak times too. The average daily passengers on these services, excluding scholars, was 217. As of February 2016 there are only 2 services which have been reduced to 2 days a week, affecting what was a daily average of 19 passengers. The 5 services still running are:
 - service 166 (Lewes-Haywards Heath) as Compass agreed to run the off-peak service on Mondays to Fridays within the same contract price;
 - service 226 (Rotherfield-Crowborough) which runs on 3 days a week as a result of the section 106 development contribution;
 - service 256 (Wadhurst-Tunbridge Wells) as Autocar submitted the lowest acceptable tender and this also undertook to provide the Monday to Friday off-peak service within the same price;
 - service 318 (Heathfield-Hurst Green) as Sussex Bus agreed to extend their commercial service 31 (Haywards Heath-Uckfield-Heathfield) to Hurst Green on Mondays to Fridays for the same price as the lowest tender received for a 2 day a week off-peak service;
 - service 824 (Village Rider) as Compass agreed to run an hourly service for the main part of the day as part of taking it on commercially;
- 2 supported off peak daytime services were expected to operate 3 days a week, on around a 2 hourly frequency. The average number of daily passengers on these 2 services was 22. As of February 2016 a third service (service 226 Rotherfield-Crowborough) also operates 3 days a week having been expected to run on 2 days. This improvement results from a Section 106 development contribution.
- 13 supported off-peak daytime services were expected to operate with generally a 2 hourly frequency on weekdays. The average number of daily daytime passengers on these 13 services was 1354. As of February 2016 there are 7 services which have been reduced to a 2 hourly frequency, affecting what was a daily average of 664 passengers. The 6 services which have been retained at a higher frequency are:
 - service 7 (Hastings) following negotiations with the contractor, Stagecoach, an improved frequency was introduced in November 2015 without additional cost to ESCC;
 - service 24 (Hastings) as Stagecoach subsequently agreed to take on commercially and retained the hourly frequency;
 - service 95 (Bexhill-Conquest Hospital) as Renown agreed to run hourly at no additional contract cost;
 - service 121 (Lewes-Newick) as Compass agreed to run an hourly service for the main part of the day as part of taking it on commercially;
 - service 129 (Lewes-Winterbourne) as Compass agreed to provide an hourly

- frequency on this contracted service from September 2015, by integrating it more efficiently with their new commercial service 128;
- service 312 (Rye Harbour-Rye-Tenterden) as Renown agreed to run an improved service, including an hourly frequency for Rye Harbour, at no additional contract cost.

As a result of bus operators agreeing to take on a number of services commercially, it was reported in December 2014 that 90 of the 101 supported bus services would continue to have a service. Support was withdrawn from 2 Saturday services and 7 evening and Sunday services that do not meet the strategic priorities set out in the Strategic Commissioning Strategy and from 2 Taxi Rider services with a high per passenger subsidy.

Between the Cabinet decision and the implementation of the RSBN in April 2015, further positive engagement with bus operators and other partners resulted in the retention of 1 additional Saturday service and 3 additional Sunday services. The services lost have been 1 Saturday service, 3 evening services and 2 Taxi Rider services. The RSBN outcome from April 2015 was 95 of the 101 supported bus services continued to have a service.

Further information on the services changed is in Table 1.

1.3. Impact of Commercialisation

It was reported in December 2014 that positive discussions between County Council officers and a number of bus operators would lead to 23 services subsidised by the County Council being operated on a commercial basis from April 2015. Between the Cabinet decision and the implementation of the RSBN in April 2015 and after, ongoing engagement with bus operators has resulted in 5 more services being taken on commercially.

One of these newly commercialised services was service 318, which Sussex Bus agreed to take on by extending their commercial service 31 (Haywards Heath-Uckfield-Heathfield) to cover Etchingam and Hurst Green too. During and after the RSBN public consultation significant concerns had been expressed by the local community about the reduction of the off-peak service 318 to 3 days a week. Sussex Bus was successful in the tender process for a contract to run the 318 school service. Informed by engagement with local Members and consultees, officers were able to put forward a successful proposal to Sussex Bus to expand their service so to run across the day on Mondays to Saturdays. As well as avoiding a reduction in service, the resulting service incorporated the improved bus and rail connections at Etchingam Station requested by the local community. This was achieved within the cost of funding a 2 day week daytime service.

Another of the newly commercialised services is 267/268/269 to Heathfield Community College, which Seaford & District started running in September 2015. Seaford & District are a new operator of local bus services, having first stepped in to take on Ringmer Community College services 141/142 after Renown decided to give up their commercial operation in June 2015. Seaford & District also took over the commercial operation of service 261 between East Grinstead and Uckfield in September 2015, though not the new section of route introduced by Compass in April 2015 between Uckfield and Lewes. Although these have been the only instances of commercial market failure since the introduction of the RSBN, it is fortunate that Seaford & District have been willing to take on the services.

A list of those services that have been commercialised can be found in Table 2. Engagement with the bus operators will continue as County Council officers look to further reduce the impacts of any reduced levels of funding.

Table 2: Newly Commercialised Services*Note # denotes developments since the report to Cabinet and Scrutiny in December 2014*

Service	Route	Commercialisation	Operator
20,21, 22	Ore-Hollington	Full evenings service & Sundays daytime from April 2015	Stagecoach
24	Hastings-Church Rd-Silverhill	Full service from April 2015 #	Stagecoach
26	Hastings-Conquest Hospital	Full Sundays service from April 2015	Stagecoach
28,29	Lewes-Tunbridge Wells	Evenings service from April 2015	Brighton & Hove
95	Bexhill-Conquest Hospital	Peaks and schools journeys from April 2015	Renown
121	Lewes-Newick	Full service apart from 2 journeys (plus Uckfield-Chailey School bus from April 2015 #)	Compass
123	Lewes-Newhaven	Full service excluding 1 school bus from April 15	Compass
125	Barcombe-Lewes-Alfriston	Lewes-Alfriston section (plus Barcombe-Lewes on Monday to Fridays from April 2015 and Saturdays too from Sept 2015 #)	Compass
126	Seaford-Alfriston-Eastbourne	Alfriston-Eastbourne section on Mondays to Saturdays from April 2015	Compass
126	Seaford-Alfriston-Eastbourne	Sunday service from April 2015 #	Cuckmere Buses
127	Lewes-Landport Estate	Full service on an hourly frequency (improved to up to 30 mins from Sept 2015 #)	Compass
128	Lewes-Nevill Estate	Full service on an hourly frequency (improved to up to 30 mins from Sept 2015 #)	Compass
141,142	Eastbourne-Ringmer College	Full service (Seaford & District from June 15 #)	Renown
143	Lewes-Ringmer-Eastbourne	Full service from April 2015	Compass
252	Heathfield-Tunbridge Wells	2 early evening Sat journeys from April 2015 #	Stagecoach
253	Burwash-Uplands College	Full service from April 2015	Hams
254	Tun Wells-Uplands College	Full service from April 2015	Hams
256	Tun Wells-Uplands College	Full service from April 2015	Hams
258	Kilndown-Uplands College	Full service from April 2015	Hams
261	Uckfield-East Grinstead	Mondays to Fridays from April 15 (Seaford & District from Sept 2015 including Saturdays #)	Compass
267,268 269	Hailsham/Boreham Street-Heathfield College	Full service from Sept 2015 #	Seaford & District
318	Hurst Green-Heathfield (and Uckfield on Saturdays)	Full service from April 2015 #	Sussex Bus
320	Bexhill-Claverham College	Full service from April 2015	Renown
326	Rye Local	Full service from April 2015	Rye CT
340	Hastings-Tenterden	Full service from April 2015	Stagecoach
341	Hastings-Tenterden	Full service from April 2015	Stagecoach
344	Hastings-Rye-Northiam	Hastings-Rye on Mon-Sat from April 2015	Stagecoach
345	Fairlight-Rye school service	Full service	Stagecoach