

Bus and Passenger Transport Strategy - Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Where do I find the bus consultation?

A1: For a full list of all the bus services under review, the proposed change (if any) and the reason see the reference document at www.essex.gov.uk/busreview

A copy is also available at your local library.

Q2: Where is the consultation questionnaire?

A2:

- <http://surveys.essexinsight.org.uk> and follow links to the Getting around in Essex consultation.
- Paper copies are available at your local library
- Call 0845 743 0430 or email contact@essex.gov.uk and they will post a copy to you

Q3: How long does the consultation last?

A3: It finishes on 21 October 2015.

Q4: How do I get paper copies of information

A4: Call 0845 743 0430; email contact@essex.gov.uk or from your local library.

Q5: My bus is really important to me are you going to cut it?

A5: There are over 200 bus services which are paid for by taxpayers. Each of these services has been reviewed, some remain unchanged, some have had minor timetable or route changes and some services will be provided differently. A few have been discontinued, primarily where there is very low usage or where another route is available.

We want to grow the network, but we also want to find better value ways of delivering those services that taxpayers help fund. We already have a £5 per passenger journey cap at which we review the value of a service and that will continue. Bus services funded by tax payers will always be under pressure because they are non-statutory and the Council will always, quite rightly, have to fund the services it is legally required to provide (its statutory services) first.

Bus services will no longer be provided when the journey is provided commercially or the cost per passenger journey exceeds the maximum subsidy level.

For a full list of all the services, the proposed change (if any) and the reason see the reference document at www.essex.gov.uk/busreview

A copy is also available at your local library.

Q6: If I have questions about the proposed changes, where can I get more information?

A6: A reference document supports the consultation. This is available at www.essex.gov.uk/busreview. A copy can be viewed at your local library i.

Q7: What happens after the consultation finishes?

A7: We will review all the responses we have and review the proposed changes. The services will be tendered at the end of the year. The majority of changes to services will be from April 2016, when the current contracts expire.

Q8: How will I know which is a commercial service?

A8: Most services are commercial (around 85% of the network). Essex County Council pays for mainly evening services, Sunday services and rural services (around 15% of the network).

For a full list of services under contract to Essex County Council click [here](http://www.essex.gov.uk/busreview) www.essex.gov.uk/busreview.

If your services are not listed then they will be provided commercially.

Q9: Why are you consulting on bus services again?

A9: In the last consultation we said we would give you the opportunity to comment on specific service proposals.

The consultation lists individual bus services and the proposed changes, if applicable plus the reasons for the change. It asks residents if the changes to each service still meets their travel needs. It also sets out a proposed revised policy for assessing bus service provision in the future.

Q10: How much money are ECC looking to save on buses?

A10: There is no specific target, but there is an intention to reduce the cost to the tax payer. Most of these savings will be made by moving the better performing services so they are provided commercially, by discontinuing very low use and duplicate services, by reducing frequency for some services and by re-designing routes to maximise service while minimising cost (for example by adjusting timetables so one bus can be used instead of two).

We will always look for ways to deliver services more cost effectively for the tax payer.

The final cost of the network – and what level of provision can be met within the budget – won't be certain until procurement is completed in February.

Q11: Equality and Diversity Questions – why are they included?

A11: Our Equality Impact Assessment has highlighted some groups who may be affected by changes to our strategy. Questions are asked to ensure we have identified any specific issues for equality groups. It is not compulsory to answer these questions but it would be helpful in our analysis of the results.

Q12: Are concessionary passes affected (are you taking away my bus pass)?

A12: There are no proposed changes to the concessionary pass scheme.

Q13: Are you changing the start times of the concessionary fares?

A13: No - currently a pass holder can travel for free in Essex from 09.00 Monday to Friday and all day at weekends and Bank Holidays anywhere in Essex. It also allows free travel after 9:30 anywhere in England or at any time on buses in London. Full information about the concessionary bus pass can be found at www.canigetapass.org.uk

Q14: My child has free transport to school – will this be affected?

A14: Children who are entitled to free transport to school will still have their transport provided. In the longer term the way in which it is provided for some groups of children may possibly change (e.g. from a dedicated school bus to a public local bus). However, only students travelling on services included in this review are likely to be affected at present.

Q15: My child uses a local bus service to get to school – will this be affected?

A15: Most buses are commercial. Essex County Council supports a small number of school day only services and these are included in the review. In the Uttlesford district many of these services will be provided commercially from April 2016. For a full list of services and more details on the proposed commercialisation of school services click [here](#) go to www.essex.gov.uk/busreview.

If your child is entitled to free school transport then transport will be provided, though this may be in a different way or a different provider compared to the current service.

Q16: Community Transport - will my Community Transport be affected by this review?

A16: Community Transport has an important role to play in delivering services. We are considering its contribution, where it might grow and how, and how to get best value as part of these local reviews. We are not proposing any changes at present.

Q17: Park and Ride Services – are they part of the review?

A17: There are no specific proposals on the Chelmsford Park and Ride schemes or the Colchester Park and Ride scheme. However, you are invited to submit views on these services and how they might grow. Before any changes occur to the Park and Ride services a separate consultation will be carried out with its users.

Q18: How do I get a timetable?

A18: Travel information is provided by Traveline

www.traveline.info

0871 200 22 33

Commercial service operators provide their own information. Leaflets for bus services run under contract to Essex County Council are produced by the information team.

Q19: What is happening on Real time information?

A19: Real time information based on actual bus location is due to roll out later this year. We will ensure that passengers are fully advised when this happens. It will give people greater certainty about bus arrival times.

Q20: Why are many of the rural services being replaced by Demand Responsive Transport?

A20: Many of the rural services are close to or exceeding the maximum subsidy level. In addition, in previous consultation residents from rural communities told us they would like improved access to key services, including healthcare centres and shopping.

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) is a better way of delivering services in areas with a small, spread out population and increases transport opportunities and offers better value to money for the tax payer. It will mean that people have to change the way they use a service, but experience elsewhere in Essex has shown that DRT can become an extremely valued community asset if it's well used and supported.