

# Statement of intent form

## Section A: Contacts

### 1. What is your local authority name?

Essex County Council

### 2. Name and contact details of the reporting officer:

Helen Morris

Helen.morris@essex.gov.uk

## Section B: Funding Requirements

### 3. What do you intend to use your funding allocation for? Tick as many as applicable.

- ☒ A. Improve current supported bus services
- ☒ B. Restore lost bus services
- ☒ C. Support new bus services or extensions to current bus services
- ☐ D. Other

If you ticked A, please provide details of how much of, and how, your funding allocation will be used to improve current supported services:

We have two workstreams identified to improve current supported services. The first is to develop sustainable marketing, engagement and information strategies in partnership with our community groups in order to grow local services. We intend to invest £200,000 and this will be spread across 2020/21 and 2021/22. This will provide for two posts and a resourcing budget to develop an approach that can then be embedded in communities so that it continues once the funding ends. The second workstream is a re-design and refresh of our current supported services. This is likely to include the digitalisation of several of our existing demand responsive services as part of a wider re-vamp; ticketing incentives; the development of devolution deals for hyper local services and increases in

frequency for services where there is a potential for that to become self-sustaining. We intend to invest £262, 820 in this workstream. This investment will be spread over 2020/21 and 2021/22.

We had intended to progress these workstreams as rapidly as possible in 2020/21. However, service delivery during the covid 19 pandemic is likely to cause delay and we are not yet able to predict that with any confidence.

If you ticked B, please provide details of how much of, and how, your funding allocation will be used to restore lost services:

We have a long standing £5 per passenger journey value for money criteria. Where services are marginally over this level of taxpayer support we review them and seek to bring them below. Where they are significantly over, unless there are obviously changes that can be made to reduce cost or increase patronage, we will consult on withdrawal. We currently have 14 services (listed in annex A) which are over £6 per passenger journey in cost. Rather than consult on withdrawal now and lose these services, we intend to invest in supporting them for a further period beyond their current contracts and into 2021/22. We intend to invest £202,000 in this. This is not the full cost of these services, but the cost of bringing their existing support levels down to £5 per passenger journey for an additional six months. We would therefore support these services until end December 2021 rather than commence withdrawal. We will then use the resource identified in section A to seek to grow and re-develop these services so they become sustainable.

This investment will fall in 2021/22.

If you ticked C, please provide details of how much of, and how, your funding allocation will be used to support new services or extensions to current services:

We have identified a significant number of opportunities where we are in principle able to use s106 money to establish robust services with a good chance of becoming sustainable in the long run but where there are funding gaps which currently make delivery impossible. These are either geographic gaps – so we have funding for only part of a route; or timing gaps, so we have differing pots of funding coming on stream at different times in a way that doesn't enable us to deliver a holistic solution. We will therefore invest £300,000 in plugging these gaps to enable good new robust routes to meet the new demand from developments effectively and enable good sustainable travel options from the outset. This investment will be responsive to demand and is likely to fall across 2020/21 and 2021/22.

If you ticked D, please provide details of how much of, and how, your funding allocation will be used for other purposes:

**4. Provide details of the duration you will use the funding for, including whether this applies to all your responses to Question 3.**

Funding will be split between 2020/21 and 2021/22. This applies to all three categories.

The detail of the split is given in each section above, where it is known.

**5. Provide a statement on how your plans will meet the needs of local communities.**

This should include:

- how you have considered the needs of local residents;
- how you have consulted local MPs;
- how the views of local residents have influenced your funding decisions (proportionate to the quantum of funding you are to receive); and
- the extent to which your plans meets the aspirations of local MPs.

**Local Residents:** we regularly consult local residents as part of our stewardship of the local bus network. Whilst this is often on specific policy changes residents also offer views on broader issues. A summary is attached at annex B. We hold twice yearly meetings with our Parish councils across the county and engage with our community bus groups. We therefore have a good understanding of what matters to our residents and what they want to see from us in terms of network and services. The proposals here were developed to reflect those desires. We have consulted these groups on these specific proposals. They strongly support our proposals in B – to support at risk services and invest in growth. They are also keen to engage in re-design of some services. There was less support for the marketing and information proposal, but this was largely because they took the view that we should be doing this already. They saw it as a core function.

**Local MPs:** the letter at annex C outlining our proposals and seeking views was sent to all Essex MPs. Unfortunately, we only received one reply which is also attached. The proposals in that letter largely relate to the existing commercial network and we already have work underway jointly with Chelmsford City Council and the operators to develop a quality statutory partnership approach. These proposals would fit better with a future

Superbus fund bid (we are not in a position to bid this round but will be for future rounds) rather than this supported local bus fund. We intend to respond explaining this and engaging Vicky Ford in the joint work.

Did this involve consulting any of the following groups?

- ☒ A. Local bus users
- ☒ B. Local residents who do not use the bus
- ☒ C. Bus operator(s)
- ☒ D. All current local MP(s)
- ☒ E. Other (Please describe here):

We have consulted our Parish representative groups as part of our regular meetings. These tend to be bus users, but they do also represent wider community interests. Additionally, we have discussed these projects with the Rural Community Council for Essex who will support delivery of some of the engagement through their community agents.

Bus operators also submitted proposals, although not surprisingly these were focused on improvements to their existing commercial network and our view is those fit better elsewhere.

We consulted all local MPs.

**6. Confirm that you will be publishing information on your website, within one month of receipt of funding, on how your funding allocation will be used.**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

If no, why not?

**7. Confirm that you will be publishing information on your website as soon as possible after the end of the 2020-21 financial year on how your funding allocation was used.**

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

If no, why not?