

Recommendations of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. At its meeting on 7 September 2010 the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on Local Bus Services and the Community Interim Support Strategy. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an opportunity to inform the decisions to be taken by the Executive prior to the approval of a full public consultation.
2. In light of the report the Committee discussed in detail various issues, which included the following areas in summary:-
 - the number of other local authorities that restricted the time before which national concessionary pass holders may board a local bus service and travel without payment;
 - serious concerns relating to the accuracy of the information contained in the bus service evaluation toolkit and the use of this information as a basis for formal public consultation on poorer performing local bus services;
 - the importance of discussing opportunities with the third sector and major retailers to provide funding for some local bus services.
3. In addition the Committee discussed the importance of assessing viable alternatives to delivering bus services in instances where local bus services were removed and alternatives that could be delivered without cutting services completely.

RECOMMENDED to the Executive:-

1. **that it note the work being undertaken by the Transforming Transport team on the Council's support for local bus and community transport service provision**
2. **that it note a report setting out the results of the consultation will be prepared, along with definitive options, for consideration at the Executive meeting on 7 December.**
3. **that a document be prepared for public consultation between 1 October and 15 November setting out the following principles:**
 - (i) **to restrict the time before which national concessionary pass holders may board a local bus service and travel without payment;**
 - (ii) **to restrict the use of concessionary passes on dial-a-ride services and/or introduce charges for their use.**
4. **that the information contained in the Bus Service Evaluation Toolkit is inaccurate and insufficient on which to base a public consultation. The Executive should not agree to withdraw support from any of the identified poorer performing local bus services until more reliable data is made available on which to base this decision.**
5. **that major retailers in Central Bedfordshire should be contacted during the consultation period to assess whether they would be willing to support funding for relevant local routes.**
6. **That a report be provided to the Sustainable Communities OSC when the results of the consultation are reported that details options in relation to restricting the use of concessionary passes on dial-a-ride services and/or introducing charges for their use detailing the impact of these restrictions on current services and definitive alternative options for the delivery of these services.**