

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	10 December 2013
Title:	Procurement of Bus Service for Church Crookham development - Fleet Area Bus Contract
Reference:	5443
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report sets out proposals to procure a bus service under the Dynamic Purchasing System. The resulting contract will be of up to 1 year 10 months duration with an estimated value of £245,000, all of which will be funded from developer contributions attached to the Queens Acre Development in Church Crookham near Fleet.

1.2. The report proposes a plan of action to ensure that a bus service between the Queens Acre development, Fleet Town Centre, Fleet Railway Station, Calthorpe Park, Calthorpe Park School and Pondtail is provided to support access to work, education, retail, leisure and health for the widest section of the community, thereby supporting quality of life as well as achieving value for money. This service will reflect the current financial situation and will be supported by the developer's contribution associated with the Queens Acre development. It is proposed that the service be established early in the life of the development to support the establishment of long term travel choices from the outset.

2. Contextual information

2.1. This decision was deferred from the previous Decision Day, held on 5 November 2013, to take into account late information and to ensure that comprehensive consultation took place.

2.2. The current 77 service was put in place for an emergency six-nine months cover when the previous commercial service was withdrawn so that discussions could take place with the local Transport Contribution Steering Group to establish its requirements.

- 2.3. The Queens Acre development on the former QEII Barracks in Church Crookham includes funding for a new bus service or changes to the local bus network which it is intended to use through this proposal.
- 2.4. A full tender for the revised service was issued to comply with current procurement legislation.
- 2.5. The service proposals were put to the local Transport Contribution Steering Group which confirmed its support. The local Member, Cllr Bennison has been consulted but favours an alternative approach until more houses are built. Details of the proposal were also provided to Church Crookham Parish Council and Fleet Town Council but, by the time of finalising this report, no formal response had been received.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The cost for the current service 77 is £93,121 per annum and was for an initial 6 month period. In order to establish a cost for the revised service it has been tendered through the Dynamic Purchasing System and it was noted that the cost had increased by approximately 25%. This is due to the addition of a Saturday service, the longer operating day to provide early morning and early evening direct commuter journeys as requested by the Steering Group as well as the BSOG fuel tax changes from January 2014 which add to operator costs. The current service 77 is to be extended until January 2014 when the proposed new service 78/79 will be put in place. The cost of the proposed bus service is £130,664 per annum which can be met from the developer contributions that are available.

4. Performance

- 4.1. The developer funding is being used so that a bus service can be provided as new residents move in when use is too low to make a commercial service viable. The alternative of waiting until the development is further built out means that early residents do not have a public transport option and choose other means of transport which makes the commercial bus service less successful when it arrives.
- 4.2. Use of the new service will be monitored after nine months of operation and again before new tenders are issued in 2015. The route can be adapted as further development takes place.
- 4.3. The proposed bus service will meet the needs of the new development and in the time available between these journeys, the vehicle required can continue to provide a bus service between the Queens Acre development, Fleet Town Centre, Fleet Railway Station and Calthorpe Park, Calthorpe Park School and Pondtail. The existing passengers will help support the new service at no additional cost thereby continuing to support access to work, education, retail, leisure and health for the widest section of the community. This will support quality of life as well as achieving value for money. This service will reflect the current financial situation and will use the developer's contribution associated with the Queens Acre development to financially support it.

5. Consultation

- 5.1. The initial proposal for a service was presented a meeting of the Transport Strategy Group in March 2013 and to local parish councils at the same time. Following discussions with the Group, a detailed timetable was presented to the June meeting of the Group and it is this timetable which has been tendered.
- 5.2. A site meeting was held in November with Cllr Bennison who was concerned at the cost of providing a bus service at this early stage of the development and felt that the needs of residents could be met by diverting journeys on the nearby 72 service supplemented by a Taxishare until area bus tenders were renewed in 2015. District Cllrs Simon Amber, Tony Clarke, Jenny Radley and James Radley also favoured this approach. The 72 is subsidised on this section of route from Aldershot to Fleet and Elvetham Heath and then continues as a commercial service to Reading. The 72 route has suffered some reliability issues of late and the cost and practicality of adding a diversion has not been explored.
- 5.3. Cllr Glen, as Chairman of the Transport Contributions Steering Group, and Cllr Wheale, as County Council representative on the Group, have both confirmed that they support the timetable developed through discussions with the Group as they felt this would provide a distinct service adaptable to the needs of new residents, for which developer funding had been provided, as well as meeting existing travel needs in Calthorpe Park and Pondtail (at no additional cost) which would otherwise require a separate service.
- 5.4. Fleet Town Council is currently consulting with its members, and though replies have yet to be received at the time of this report's publication, any comments will be reported at the Decision Day meeting. Likewise, Church Crookham Parish Council discussed the proposal on the 25th November. While no update has yet been received, any report of their deliberations will also be shared at the Decision Day meeting.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. As this report shows, there are local concerns that the introduction of the new service at this early stage of the development has the risk of depleting the developer funding available with little immediate benefit. However, the transport issues affect the wider area and for a new development such as this, where funding has been provided, it is important to have a bus service in place at the beginning of occupation to support the establishment of longer term travel habits from the outset of the development.
- 6.2. The issues here are finely balanced but it is considered appropriate to use the funding provided to introduce the new bus service from January 2014 to establish travel behaviour and choices from the outset. In recognition of the concerns raised over limited benefits being derived while funds are depleted, it is proposed that the performance and patronage of the new service should

be closely monitored. It is further proposed that the service be reviewed after nine months' operation, when there will have been sufficient opportunity for it to become established. This will provide a further opportunity to revise the timetable or suspend the service based on the levels and trends in passenger use if required.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. That approval to procure and spend be given for the provision of a public bus service in the Queens Acre, Fleet, Calthorpe Park, and Pondtail areas, by way of a contract of up to 1 year 10 months duration, with an estimated value of £245,000, all of which will be funded from developer contributions attached to the Queens Acre Development in Church Crookham.
- 7.2 That the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment be given delegated authority to agree any variations to the items referred to at paragraph 7.1 above, in consultation with the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment.
- 7.3 That the performance and patronage levels on the proposed bus service be reviewed in September 2014, and any appropriate measures to amend the arrangements be considered.

Rpt/5443/SK

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Procurement of Local Bus Service following Commercial Deregistration in Fleet Area – Service 71 Fleet, Calthorpe Park and Pondtail</u>	<u>4694</u>	<u>5th March 2013</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1 The proposals in this report have been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Council's equality objectives. An assessment of the impacts in this service area can be found at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-impact-assessments/cx-pu-eqimpact-envi.htm> under 'Safe and Efficient Transport Systems in Hampshire'

It is considered that the issues covered by this report will not have impacts requiring further specific actions by the Council above those already established in its existing policies and working procedures.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. It is considered that the decision will have no impact on crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How what does is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Delivering an effective public transport system within available funding levels provides an alternative to the use of the private car.

- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

An effective public transport alternative matches provision to need and minimises carbon emissions.