

# Appendix E – Minimum Service Level Options

## Introduction

The Leader of the Council sought advice and review from the Passenger Transport Team of a proposed bus service route, which would aim to provide a minimum service level for communities which would be adversely impacted by any withdrawal of the existing three supported bus services.

## Options

Officers have sought very high-level proposals from existing bus operators with indicative costs of service proposals.

**Option One** - First Essex have considered a potential route that connects Stanford-le-Hope to Basildon via Fobbing, at an annual cost of £25k. This would run three days a week, between 9am and 2pm. A proposed timetable prepared by First Essex is included as an addendum. If this was the preferred consideration, the only area that would benefit is Fobbing. This would leave many other areas such as Orsett, East Tilbury Village, West Tilbury, and Horndon-on-the-Hill without any provision. The indicative annual cost is approximately £25k, based on a charge of £160 per day, with the operator also retaining all revenues. This option could potentially be implemented without needing to go out to open tender in the first instance, due to its projected costs being within the threshold of requiring only one written quote.

**Option Two** - An Ensign Bus proposed route option includes Chadwell St Mary, West Tilbury, East Tilbury, Horndon-on-the-Hill, Stanford-Le-H. It is mooted that this proposal, based on a single bus operating three days per week could cost circa £100k per annum. Officers have drafted an indicative timetable which could support this level of provision. Were this to be considered as the preferred option, it would not provide the desired link to Grays, which is the final destination of choice of most users identified within the consultation and user study, and it also does not offer a turnaround point for the bus or any layover areas for breaks, which is a practical consideration to make any route workable. Realistically, this route would either need to continue to Civic Square in Tilbury, or Grays bus station to access these layover facilities. The indicative annual cost has been suggested as £100k, however officers have not been able to evidence this cost. Further details on the procurement considerations are given further in this note.

**Option Three** - The existing Saturday timetable for the 374 offers a template for a single bus three-day service with an indicative cost of around £198k per annum. Such a service would cover Grays, Chadwell St Mary, West Tilbury, East Tilbury Linford, Horndon on the Hill, Stanford Le Hope, Corringham, Fobbing and Basildon. Officers have drafted an indicative timetable, and is given as an addendum. This would support each of those communities identified as being at risk of not having any provision but would not provide a direct link to Orsett Hospital, which does benefit from other connecting services. The route also offers turnaround points and layover areas. This option is projected to have an annual cost of £198k, based on projected costs linked to delivery of the existing Saturday 374 service. This option could be implemented using the existing contract, but would expire in March 2024. It would give officers the time to explore and implement option two.

All three options are based on one bus service which is perceived to be the minimum level of offer for these small rural communities for a three-days a week operation.

There are two areas which are not considered by these three proposals - Bulphan and Orsett, however each is already supported by alternative bus provision. Bulphan is served by an Essex County Council funded bus which links to Brentwood. Orsett is served by a commercial service – the 200 bus provided by First Essex.

## **Procurement Advice**

A discussion has been broached with the council's procurement department regarding their advice on undertaking exploratory engagement with the bus industry on the potential viability for operators to deliver these routes within the parameters sought by the council, in particular for option two.

Officers are advised that to ensure a fair and transparent approach, local providers - including the existing operator, can be invited to express an interest in providing a service via the Council's e-tendering portal, particularly for option 2. If more than one operator is able to provide the service and if the total contract value exceeds the UK threshold of £213,477 per annum (inclusive of VAT), then, in compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015, an open competitive tender process can be run via the portal. This will enable both local and national providers to submit a bid and will take between 6-9 months to complete. It should also be noted that due to the Government Intervention and Best Value Inspection, an expenditure control process has been put in place and, before any tender exercise can commence, a Stage 1 governance form will need to be approved by the Strategic Panel. Within the bus industry, it can be expected that a further period of up to three months may be required for the operator to mobilise for service delivery following the completion of the award of contract.

If the current operator is the only one to express an interest, then the council will be able to vary the existing contract to operate until March 2024.

## Appendix 1 – First Bus Fobbing variant timetable

<b>Days</b>		<b>MWF</b>	<b>MWF</b>	<b>MWF</b>
Basildon, Bus Station		0940	1040	1315
Basildon Hospital, Main Entrance		0945	1045	1320
Fobbing Church		0952	1052	1327
Corringham, Town Centre		0958	1058	1333
Stanford-Le-Hope, The Green		1005	1105	1340
<b>Days</b>	<b>MWF</b>	<b>MWF</b>	<b>MWF</b>	<b>MWF</b>
Stanford-Le-Hope, The Green	0910	1010	1110	1345
Corringham, Town Centre	0917	1017	1117	1352
Fobbing Church	0923	1023	1123	1358
Basildon Hospital, Main Entrance	0930	1030	1130	1405
Basildon, Bus Station	0935	1035	1135	1410

## Appendix 2 – Ensign Bus proposed route – Indicative timetable

Chadwell, Cross Keys	07:00	10:00	13:00	16:00
Coalhouse Fort	07:11	10:11	13:11	16:11
East Tilbury Coronation Avenue	07:17	10:17	13:17	16:17
Linford, Shops	07:22	10:22	13:22	16:22
Horndon on the Hill	07:31	10:31	13:31	16:31
Stanford le Hope, Victoria Rd	07:37	10:37	13:37	16:37
Corringham, Gordon Rd	07:44	10:44	13:44	16:44
Fobbing, Church	07:50	10:50	13:50	16:50
Basildon Hospital	07:57	10:57	13:57	16:57
Basildon Bus Station	08:02	11:02	14:02	17:02
Basildon Bus Station	08:30	11:30	14:30	17:30
Basildon Hospital	08:35	11:35	14:35	17:35
Fobbing, Church	08:42	11:42	14:42	17:42
Corringham, Gordon Rd	08:48	11:48	14:48	17:48
Stanford le Hope, Victoria Rd	08:55	11:55	14:55	17:55
Horndon on the Hill	09:03	12:03	15:03	18:03
Linford, Shops	09:10	12:10	15:10	18:10
East Tilbury, Coronation Ave	09:15	12:15	15:15	18:15
Coalhouse Fort	09:21	12:21	15:21	18:21
Chadwell, Cross Keys	09:32	12:32	15:32	18:32

### Appendix 3 – 11/374 Variant – Indicative timetable

Grays Bus Station	07:00	10:35	14:10	17:45
Hathaway Rd, Shops	07:05	10:40	14:15	17:50
Socketts Heath, The Oak	07:09	10:44	14:19	17:54
Grays, Palmers College	07:11	10:46	14:21	17:56
Chadwell, Cross Keys	07:16	10:51	14:26	18:01
Coalhouse Fort	07:27	11:02	14:37	18:12
East Tilbury, Gloucester Ave	07:31	11:06	14:41	18:16
Linford, Shops	07:37	11:12	14:47	18:22
Stanford le Hope Railway Station	07:45	11:20	14:55	18:30
Horndon on the Hill, South Hill Crescent	07:53	11:28	15:03	18:38
Corringham, Gordon Rd	08:08	11:43	15:18	18:53
Fobbing, Church	08:13	11:48	15:23	18:58
Basildon Hospital	08:20	11:55	15:30	19:05
Basildon Bus Station	08:25	12:00	15:35	19:10
Basildon Bus Station	09:00	12:30	16:05	
Basildon Hospital	09:05	12:35	16:10	
Fobbing, Church	09:12	12:42	16:17	
Corringham, Gordon Rd	09:18	12:48	16:23	
Horndon on the Hill, South Hill Crescent	09:33	13:03	16:38	
Stanford le Hope, Railway Station	09:40	13:10	16:45	
Linford, Shops	09:47	13:17	16:52	
East Tilbury, Coronation Ave	09:51	13:21	16:56	
Coalhouse Fort	09:57	13:27	17:02	
Chadwell, Cross Keys	10:08	13:38	17:13	
Grays, Palmers College	10:11	13:41	17:16	
Socketts Heath, The Oak	10:14	13:44	17:19	
Hathaway Rd, Shops	10:18	13:48	17:23	
Grays Bus Station	10:23	13:53	17:28	