

Eastern Area Committee – 22 March 2022

Public Consultation on Local Bus Services – Update

1. Background

At its meeting in December 2021, Eastern Area Committee members agreed to award £10,000 to the undertaking of public consultation on local bus services. This followed a presentation to committee in September 2022 on local bus provision. It was intended that the results of the consultation be used to influence KCC and local bus companies when they are reviewing and developing local bus services.

The application for funds noted that *“Discussions with SBC officers suggest that there are resource challenges for the project to be supported in the short term, even if project delivery is contracted out, but that there could be the possibility of the project being supported through the new Active Travel Coordinator post or alternatively project managed by a town or parish council in the area and that these options should be explored further”*.

2. Discussion

The Active Travel Officer began in post on 28 February 2022. The remit for the postholder’s work was set out in an application for Special Projects funding, approved in October 2022. This remit includes the completion of member priority projects, which to that point had been unresourced, as well as wider strategy work relating to walking and cycling.

The objectives set out in the Special Projects application have been detailed in a work programme, which has been discussed and priorities agreed with the relevant Cabinet Members and Deputies.

This work programme is sizable given the role is fixed term for 18 months and demonstrates no scope for the addition of the bus service consultation work, without the removal of an identified work priority set out in the application for funds.

3. Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that the alternative delivery option set out in the Area Committee funding application - i.e. project management by a town or parish council – is now explored.