

From: Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, KCC

From: Director of Director of Environment & Corporate Assets, DDC

To: Dover Joint Transportation Board

Subject: Dover Quality Bus Partnership

Date: 10 July 2014

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All in Dover

Summary:

This paper updates Members on progress with the Dover Quality Bus Partnership. The partnership comprises representatives of Kent County Council, Dover District Council and Stagecoach East Kent Ltd. Established in April 2009, the partners shared objective is to co-ordinate investment in infrastructure and services, to work towards providing a viable alternative to a car journey, to tackle congestion, to improve access to essential services and to support sustainable development. Since the launch 5 years ago, good progress has been made in respect of improving services and generating inward investment. In contrast to much of the country, outside of London, bus patronage in Dover and Kent has been increasing. This report highlights the importance of continuing to work effectively, in particular raising awareness and improving engagement to support the delivery of infrastructure improvements, in order to sustain progress towards our shared objectives.

Recommendation(s):

Members of the JTB are asked to support the work of the Dover QBP and to nominate a representative to attend quarterly QBP co-ordination meetings and to report back on progress and issues for consideration by future meetings of this board.

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1 Kent has been at the forefront of establishing Quality Bus Partnerships (QBPs) as a mechanism to kick-start and sustain ongoing improvements in the quality and frequency of public transport. QBPs are a key part of Kent's approach to coordinating work to improve public transport as a viable alternative to a car journey, to tackle congestion and pollution, to improve access to key services (employment, education, health services and essential food shopping) and to support sustainable development.
- 1.2 As a consequence of these agreements and the ongoing investment in bus stop infrastructure, concessionary fares schemes such as the Kent Freedom

Pass and smart card ticketing technology, Kent has benefited from a substantial investment in new buses and higher frequency services made by the principal bus operators. In contrast to much of the country, outside of London, bus patronage has grown by some 50% over the past 10 years.

- 1.3 The Dover QBP was established in April 2009 and comprises representatives of Kent County Council, Dover District Council and Stagecoach East Kent Ltd. The agreement, (attached as **Appendix 1** to this report), provides a framework under which the three parties work together on a voluntary basis. Established using legislation contained in the Transport Acts 2000 and 2008, co-ordination meetings are held quarterly. The agenda covers development planning issues, bus service network planning and proposed improvements to infrastructure and information provision.

2. Achievements to date

- 2.1 The Dover QBP was formed following a successful joint Kick-start bid to the Department for Transport to create the Dover – Deal Diamond. The Diamond included an £850,000 investment by Stagecoach in 8 new buses and an increase in service frequency between Canterbury, Sandwich, Dover and Deal. The vehicles were complemented by improved bus stop infrastructure and information along the routes as well as targeted marketing. Patronage increases have enabled these improvements to be sustained on a commercial basis.
- 2.2 The key indicators measuring the success of the Dover QBP are detailed in **Appendix 2** of this report. In summary, comparing 2009/10 with 2013/14 data:
 - the number of buses operating on time has increased from 94.6% to 95.7%;
 - the number of miles operated with low floor accessible buses has increased from 59% to 70%;
 - passenger journeys have increased from 3,332,526 to 3,674,429 which equates to a 10% growth;
 - complaints to Stagecoach have decreased from 173 to 154;
 - new or upgraded shelters have been provided at 25 stops;
 - enhancements, including raised kerb boarders, have been introduced at 79 stops;
 - stops with timetable information has been increased from 142 to 354 which equates to 63.2% of bus stops where passengers board;
 - service frequencies have been doubled between Dover and Deal (15/A), Dover and Canterbury (15A/B and 12) and Dover and Folkestone/ Hythe and New Romney (101/102) and
 - 14% of buses now meet Euro 5 emissions standards.
- 2.3 Improvements and contributions to public transport have been negotiated by Dover District Council with support from the QBP, to ensure new developments in the district are as sustainable as they can be.

- 2.4 Ticketing offers by Stagecoach and the County Councils' Kent Freedom Pass (KFP) have helped to build patronage and provide a viable alternative to a car based school run for 11-16 year olds. The County Council provided *pump priming* funding to equip public buses in Dover District with smart ticket machines. This scheme has supported both the KFP and the English National Concessionary Fares Scheme (ENCTS) run by the County Council. Kent has also maintained the supported bus network in Dover District, despite reductions in Government funding.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Over the longer term, the partners have a vision to deliver a *step change* bus based rapid transit system for Dover. Ultimately, Dover Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) will link the principle development sites at Whitfield and the Western Heights with park & ride, the rail station, Dover town centre and Dover Docks. The vision for Dover BRT is for high quality, high frequency services supported with cutting edge information and ticketing running along segregated bus lanes where possible. As was the case with Fastrack in Kent Thameside, the incremental service enhancements, already described above, are being used to grow the necessary patronage base for the BRT network. Some safeguarding of land and developer contributions have already been secured as part of the developments at Whitfield. This process will be continued as further development sites come forward.
- 3.2 Stagecoach is in the process of implementing a GPS bus location system, enabled by the County Councils' investment in ticket machines. This will allow buses to be tracked to assist with monitoring timeliness and congestion as well as to provide *real time* arrival information to passengers with smart phones. It is planned to launch this scheme during summer 2014.
- 3.3 Both Stagecoach and KCC are investing in smart ticketing technology. Stagecoach is progressively launching existing multi journey tickets such as Mega-riders in a smart card format and the County Council is currently piloting an *e-purse* smart card (along the lines of the London Oyster Card) with a view to a county wide roll out in 2015/16.
- 3.4 Some schemes identified in the QBP agreement (Appendix 1 - Section 8) have proved more difficult to deliver. Namely improvements to the public transport interchange and waiting facilities at Pencester Road, Dover and South Street Deal to accommodate additional buses and passenger growth and provision of clearways or piers at some bus stops. These are necessary to enable buses to reach the bus stop to give access for mobility impaired or disabled passengers in accordance with equalities legislation.

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

- 4.1 Good progress has been made by the Dover QBP partners towards achieving the aims of the agreement established in April 2009. Co-ordinated investment in infrastructure and services has enabled the partners to work towards providing a viable alternative to a car journey, to tackle congestion, to improve

access to essential services and to support sustainable development. The partnership has generated a significant level of inward investment to support travel in and around Dover District and patronage has been increasing.

- 4.2 That said, it has proved difficult to support these enhancements through commensurate infrastructure investment in some areas, particularly at interchanges and some bus stops. Support from this Board will be instrumental in ensuring the recent successes of the Dover QBP can be replicated in future years.
- 4.3 It is recommended that the JTB nominates a representative to attend quarterly QBP co-ordination meetings and to report back on progress and issues for consideration by future meetings of this board.

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**APPENDIX 1: THE DOVER QBP
AGREEMENT**



**DOVER
QUALITY
BUS PARTNERSHIP
AGREEMENT**

DOVER QUALITY BUS PARTNERSHIP

AGREEMENT

3 APRIL 2009

A Protocol between Kent County Council, Dover District Council and Stagecoach in East Kent

The partnership to achieve quality local bus services in the Dover District

1. Statement of Principles

Kent County Council, Dover District Council and Stagecoach in East Kent share the common objectives of:

- 1.1 Creating a public transport network acknowledged by local residents, visitors and the business community as an increasingly attractive alternative to private car use.
- 1.2 Seeking increased use of local bus services to assist in achieving a sustainable and self-sufficient transport system, capable of meeting the needs of the 21st century, enriching the quality of life in the Dover District, attracting investment, and enhancing work and leisure opportunities.

All three parties to this protocol acknowledge that these objectives require high quality reliable public transport that can only be delivered through working in partnership, with a commitment to co-ordinated investment and complementary initiatives.

2. Framework for Action

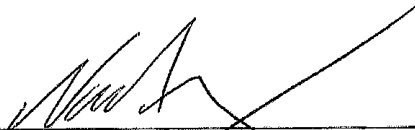
- 2.1 The bus network within Dover District has been identified as being appropriate for a joint commitment to invest and to upgrade facilities and operations, together with improved and imaginative marketing, which can contribute to the target growth.
- 2.2 The projected development and growth in Dover during the next decade will provide opportunities for the provision of high quality public transport services, enhancing the Dover District and encouraging sustainable transport options whenever possible.

DOVER QUALITY BUS PARTNERSHIP

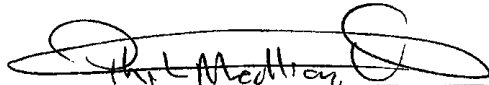
Signed this 3rd day of APRIL 2009



Keith Ferrin, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste
Kent County Council



Nadeem Aziz, Chief Executive
Dover District Council



Phil Medlicott, Managing Director
Stagecoach in East Kent

3. Agreements of this Protocol

The three parties to this protocol agree to:

- 3.1 Work together to implement a substantial improvement to bus operating infrastructure, including stops, shelters, passenger information, accessibility
- 3.2 Work together and introduce innovations such as alternative environmentally friendly fuels, market sensitive fares including innovative ticketing (recognising that the level of fares in Dover District is below the UK average) and improved information, including where appropriate "real time" systems, to ensure that the aims, measures and targets of the protocol are delivered
- 3.3 Seek to deliver, through market research and similar consultative measures, opportunities for the introduction of new or revised local bus services, which would increase the use of public transport
- 3.4 Seek to identify through market surveys and public attitude studies the means to increase the quality and availability of public transport services in the Dover District
- 3.5 Seek to co-ordinate the development of the public transport network with land use planning to maximise the opportunities for local bus and rail services
- 3.6 Seek to co-ordinate the public transport network with other forms of transport to achieve maximum travel opportunities for the Dover District
- 3.7 Seek to implement a Punctuality Improvement Partnership
- 3.8 Work with Dover Town Council, Deal Town Council, Sandwich Town Council and Parish Councils within the District of Dover, and with other representative organisations, to exchange information and assist in the improvement of infrastructure and local transport information
- 3.9 The KCC Sustainable Transport Team will undertake the responsibility of organising and administering the meetings of the Partnership

4. Dover District Council and Kent County Council will:

- 4.1 Plan and progressively introduce, where possible, a series of bus priority and other measures, to improve the timing, punctuality and reliability of local bus services
- 4.2 Support new or improved public transport infrastructure and/or services where appropriate from both existing and new developments, to provide an accessible local bus service network for journeys to and from the present town centre, commercial locations and residential areas of the District
- 4.3 Seek funding for public transport facilities in support of investment and other measures taken by Stagecoach in East Kent to improve local bus services

- 4.4 Secure, implement and maintain suitable attractive and appropriate arrangements for the provision of information and roadside furniture (stops and shelters) to a standard agreed between the partners; Kent County Council to be responsible for damaged bus stop posts & hardstanding, and Dover District Council to be responsible for maintenance of its shelters
- 4.5 Assist in identifying new market opportunities for local bus services and support new initiatives to encourage greater use of public transport, including Green Travel Plans for employers and education establishments
- 4.6 Give advance notice of roadworks affecting bus services and make every reasonable endeavour to safeguard bus access in cases of road closures or diversions
- 4.7 Provide any other relevant infrastructure to improve bus access to stops (Kent County Council); and provide resources for bus stop clearways and parking enforcement (Dover District Council).

5. Stagecoach in East Kent will:

- 5.1 Work and consult with both Dover District Council and Kent County Council over the design, planning and implementation of a viable and sustainable network of local bus services, establishing appropriate co-ordination with other public transport services
- 5.2 Work with both Kent County Council and Dover District Council to provide input into the Local Transport Plan so that the benefits of improvements introduced through this protocol can be measured in terms of patronage figures
- 5.3 Introduce where commercially feasible improved local bus services in line with the introduction of priority measures, automatic vehicle location systems and other new features which contribute to more efficient public transport operation
- 5.4 Seek to maintain all services in the Dover District area with minimum lost mileage and to a professional standard. As a minimum standard Stagecoach in East Kent will aim to achieve standards of operation set by the Traffic Commissioner in accordance with NI 178
- 5.5 Invest where commercially feasible in new and fully accessible vehicles, as well as presenting existing vehicles in an attractive manner, using environmentally friendly fuels
- 5.6 Consult with Kent County Council and Dover District Council on any significant proposed fare changes
- 5.7 Continue to develop higher standards of training and education amongst staff, including an understanding of passenger transport operation and customer care
- 5.8 Provide adequate management and supervision of services to uphold standards as well as being able to deal with emergencies and other unforeseen circumstances quickly and efficiently

- 5.9 Be responsible for timetable displays, timetable display cases and bus stop flags at bus stops served only by Stagecoach routes. Bus stops on routes served by KCC-tendered services will be maintained by the appointed Roadside Infrastructure Unit contractor.
- 5.10 When services are disrupted by road works, ensure that the public are adequately informed of alternative arrangements by means of information on stops and buses and via Traveline.

Important Note:

This is a Voluntary Partnership Agreement in accordance with the provisions of the Transport Act 2000 and the Local Transport Act 2008. As such it is an agreement in which each of the parties is a voluntary partner.

Therefore, nothing in this agreement is designed or should be concluded as being legally binding on any of the parties, or in any manner being restrictive to the commercial or operational activities of Stagecoach in East Kent or any other organisation.

6. Aims and Measures of the Quality Bus Partnership

All three parties to the protocol agree to work together using the following aims and measures of the Quality Bus Partnership:

(M1) Percentage increase in number of passenger journeys since 2008

The very large increase in the number of passenger journeys since 2008 has been due to a number of factors, principal among them being the significant improvement in the level of service offered and the introduction of concessionary fares, which was first introduced county-wide in 2006 and England-wide in 2008. However, there are serious funding issues relating to the latter of these factors which are still to be resolved. The target figures predict a modest growth in passenger journeys on the very high baseline in 2008.

Target is 7.5% increase during the first three years

(M2) Percentage increase in number of multi-journey ticket sales since 2008

The very successful marketing undertaken by the operator has generated a significant growth in the sale of multi-journey tickets, especially the day explorer ticket and the weekly Megarider ticket. The expected growth in passenger numbers would also be expected to increase these sales further.

Target is 9% increase during the first three years

(M3) Increase in passengers expressing satisfaction with service provided since 2008

Bus passenger satisfaction rates would be expected to grow alongside the planned improvements that the QBP seeks to implement during the next three years. The parties to the agreement will seek to arrange a passenger satisfaction survey at an appropriate time.

7. Targets for Next Three Years

All three parties to the protocol agree to work together towards achieving the following targets for each of the next three years:

(T1) Percentage of services operating on time

Poor punctuality is due to many factors, including the increasing number of vehicles on the road and inconsiderate parking and loading at bus stops. We need to focus on better enforcement of illegal parking at bus stops and more rigorous monitoring of why and when delays happen, so that problems causing late running can be resolved.

Target is to build up to 95% within the first three years, as determined by NI 178 of not less than 1 minute early and not more than 5 minutes late

(T2) Number of stops with raised kerbs and bus stop clearways

Raised kerbs give better access at bus stops, especially for passengers with limited mobility and for parents with children in buggies. The standard measurement for raised kerbs should be 160mm, which meets the requirements of the highway authority and of the bus operator, especially with the increase in the number of low-floor buses which can be prevented from accessing the bus stop parallel to the pavement if the raised kerb is higher than this. The provision of more bus stop clearways is paramount, and these will continue to be introduced at all urban bus stops as soon as resources permit.

KCC is committed to providing a high level of bus stop improvement measures through its Integrated Transport programme, which should enable the trunk route stops between Dover and Folkestone, and many of the Dover town stops, to be completed. The rolling target for improved bus stops reflects this.

Target of new stops with raised kerbs and bus stop clearways is 50 in year 1, 100 in year 2, and 150 in year 3

(T3) Number of departure stops with timetable information

The provision of clear and accurate timetable information at the majority of bus stops is an essential part of public transport provision, and the operator has commenced a considerable improvement in the provision of timetable information in the Dover area. The completion of this project should enhance the attractiveness of local bus services, and increase patronage.

Target is 142 stops in year 1, 182 stops in year 2, and 222 stops in year 3

(T4) Bus stops with new or replacement shelters

The provision of shelters at all principal pick-up stops is an important facility for encouraging an increase in bus passengers. Combined with the elements of roadside infrastructure described above, a bus shelter provides essential protection from inclement weather, especially for the elderly, for those who are less mobile, and for parents with young children. There is a high level of bus shelter provision in Dover District at present, and where resources and physical limitations permit Dover District Council will increase their provision.

(T5) Projected dates for conversion of local routes to low-floor access vehicles

*Routes 12/711 in April 2009
Routes 14 and 89 as soon as funding permits*

(T6) Percentage of drivers with NVQ Level 2 in Road Passenger Transport

The investment provided by the operator in its workforce reflects their commitment to a reliable, customer oriented service, and is to be welcomed and encouraged

Target is 40% in year 1, 50% in year 2, and 60% in year 3

8. Additional Improvements to the Bus Network

All three parties to the agreement will work towards the following additional improvements to the bus network insofar as the provision of funding permits:

- 8.1 Stagecoach in East Kent and Kent County Council to ensure that service quality and reliability is maintained
- 8.2 Kent County Council to ensure that service performance of financially supported services continues to be monitored
- 8.3 Dover District Council to encourage developer contributions for public transport infrastructure, information and services
- 8.4 Kent County Council and Dover District Council to review the proposal for interchange improvements in South Street, Deal to reinforce the improved image of bus travel that the Diamond initiative has brought; and to improve accessibility by construction of a build-out with raised kerbs. The bus stops would need to meet the KCC bus stop hierarchy standards
- 8.5 Kent County Council and Dover District Council to improve the busy stops in Queen Street, Deal in accordance with the KCC bus stop hierarchy standards
- 8.6 Kent County Council to carry out an audit of all remaining bus stops as part of the Roadside Infrastructure Unit contract
- 8.7 Kent County Council and Dover District Council to ensure that the Pencester Road, Dover bus hub is upgraded, primarily funded through developer contributions, other funding through Dover's Growth Point status, and the KCC Integrated Transport programme 2006-11
- 8.8 Dover District Council will ensure that the requirements of public transport are considered in any proposals arising from the Dover Transportation Study which has been developed as part of the Council's regeneration plans and Local Development Framework
- 8.9 Kent County Council and Stagecoach in East Kent (SEK) to explore inter-availability of certain SEK tickets on non-SEK services
- 8.10 Kent County Council to investigate revisions to road layout in the Melbourne Avenue area in Dover, to enable low-floor buses to operate on routes 88 & 89
- 8.11 Dover District Council to consider the provision of a Park & Ride facility in the context of the Whitfield development plans
- 8.12 To agree a programme for the introduction of real time information to key stops across the area

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 This agreement sets out some benchmark aims, measures and targets which form the basis of a Quality Bus Partnership for Dover. Provided there is commitment from all three parties to the protocol, the bus passenger network in the Dover area should enjoy significant new initiatives, improvements and investment in the immediate future.
 - 9.2 This agreement will then set in place the foundations necessary for further developments envisaged in association with regeneration plans for the Whitfield and Western Heights areas of Dover, which could see the expansion of the existing bus network to incorporate a new Dover Express Service linking these areas, and new Park and Ride terminals, with the town centre, High Speed rail station and the Dover Community Hospital.
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APPENDIX 2: DOVER QBP WORKING TARGETS & REPORTS

Part 1 – Working Targets

| | | 09-10 | 10-11 | 11-12 | 12-13 | 13-14 | 14-15 |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | | ACTUAL | ACTUAL | ACTUAL | ACTUAL | ACTUAL | TARGET |
| T1 (SEK) | % of buses operating on time | 94.6 | 95.1 | 94.3 | 95.5 | 95.7 | 95.7 |
| T2 (SEK) | % of scheduled miles operated | 99.5 | 99.5 | 99.9 | 99.8 | 99.9 | 99.9 |
| T3 (SEK) | % of miles operated with low-floor access buses | 59.0 | 68.5 | 68 | 70 | 70 | 70 |
| T4 (SEK) | % increase in passenger journeys (to increase by 0% pa) | 3, 332,526 2.5% | 3,407,647 2.2% | 3,505,272 2.8% | 3,535,542 0.8% | 3,674,429 3.9% | +2% |
| T5 (SEK) | Complaints (to reduce by 5% p.a.) | 173 | 158 | 132 | 142 | 154 | 145 |
| T6 (DDC) | Investment in new or upgraded shelters | 2 | 17 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| T7 (KCC) | Improved accessibility at stops (cumulative) | 50 | 50 | 72 | 72 | 79 | 90 |
| T8 (SEK) | Stops with timetable information (cumulative) | 142 | 240 | 273 | 282 | 354 | 375 |

Part 2 – Working Reports

| | | 09-10 | 10-11 | 11-12 | 12-13 | 13-14 |
|-----------|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | ACTUAL | ACTUAL | ACTUAL | ACTUAL | ACTUAL |
| R1 | Average Fleet Age (years) | 8.0 | 8.7 | 9.9 | 10.2 | 9.7 |
| R2 | PCNs issued on clearways | 33 | 22 | 58 | 59 | -- |
| R3 | Journey times (minutes) | | | | | |
| | Dover – Deal | 41 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 41 |
| | Dover – Folkestone | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 |
| | Dover – Whitfield (Tesco's) | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| R4 | Frequency between Dover and: (bph) | 10-11 actual | 11-12 actual | 12-13 actual | 13-14 actual | 14-15 actual |
| | Deal (15/A) | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | Ramsgate (87/88/A) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Aylesham (89) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Canterbury (direct) (15/A/B) | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| | Canterbury (via Whitfield) (12) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Folkestone (101/102) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | Hythe (101/102) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | New Romney (101/102) | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| R5 | Euro Emissions | Euro 1 | Euro 2 | Euro 3 | Euro 4 | Euro 5 |
| | % of buses | 17% | 32% | 37% | 0% | 14% |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| | meeting EU emissions standards | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|