

Surrey Future Bus Network Review Consultation

Section 1: Route Investment Opportunities

1. Consider the following proposals. Do you think these are the right things to invest in? Please select one of the options below.

We are investing over £50m to improve bus services and supporting infrastructure across Surrey which supports our Greener Futures agenda. The aim of this investment is to grow bus patronage and improve our environment by:

- Increasing the number of zero emission buses,
- Helping buses to arrive on time through more bus priority measures such as bus friendly traffic management, bus lanes and bus stop clearways, and
- Expanding our Real Time Passenger Information displays and improving information available online.



Strongly agree

2. Consider the following proposals. Do you agree? Please select one of the options below.

We would like to invest in areas of Surrey that offer the best opportunity to grow bus patronage and therefore the locations where we are proposing for investment to be prioritised are:

- The east of Surrey, focusing on Reigate, Redhill, and access to Gatwick Airport
- Guildford and Woking, including the surrounding areas where routes start or terminate at the town centres
- The Blackwater Valley, including access to Frimley Park Hospital
- Links to Heathrow Airport and Kingston Upon Thames in London, as well as Sunbury, West Byfleet, Weybridge and Chertsey



Strongly agree

3. Do you think improvements in these locations will encourage you to use bus services more? Please select one of the options below.

Yes

4. Is there another area of Surrey where you would like to see investment in buses?

The proposal to invest in Woking and the surrounding areas with improved bus infrastructure is welcome and feeds into WBC's aims in terms of promoting less polluting means of travel.

In order to lower the Borough's carbon emissions it is important for Woking that people are able and encouraged to commute into their local Town or Village Centre by bike, bus, or on foot. This objective will not only lower carbon emissions but will encourage active travel for good health/wellbeing, reduce car dependency, and has potential to reduce pressure on the strategic road network (SRN) where people are able to access rail/bus services to make longer trips.

Improving bus links into Town/Village centres contributes towards enhancing thriving local neighbourhoods as people have better access to their local centre and can benefit from local services and events. This removes car dependency in local areas and creates more sustainable neighbourhoods. Improving bus access to bigger centres such as Byfleet and Woking Town Centre should be considered for further improvements.

To support local communities the proposed bus improvements should consider the accessibility of the service for all members of society irrespective of age or background. This means ensuring bus services are flexible, reliable and reflect the needs of the areas they visit. For example, many Town/Village centres in Woking feature communal green spaces and independent shops/businesses (which may be inaccessible for some residents). These uses are considered vital in ensuring local centres are attractive and distinguishable places for visitors and residents. Improving the bus network in these places will ensure residents can connect to and support their local area.

Older and less mobile residents would benefit if an existing service could occasionally be diverted through Horsell Village. This would enable people to visit independent shops in Horsell and could provide a commuter service, taking vehicles off the road. Similarly, Pyrford residents would benefit from services to local centres.

More regular and smaller buses that operate on a continuous loop around village centres and the Town Centre would also be supported.

Improve access to local centres for Pyrford residents via services.

Section 2: Maintaining or Changing Bus Services

We have looked in detail at the whole bus network, considering where to invest and where to manage the increased cost of running bus services. As a result of rising fuel and maintenance costs, driver competition, and reduced patronage pressures, bus operators are telling us they need more financial support to keep some bus routes running in their current form, from being reduced, and in some cases from being withdrawn altogether. This is a national problem. In Surrey, we have worked with all bus operators to identify where financial pressures are strongest.

Based on the current level of patronage, the increased cost needed to operate bus services in future, and where individual bus services fit into the overall bus network, we have set out proposals for:

- *Keeping most services as they are,*
- *Investing in infrastructure to support and prioritise bus services such as bus lanes, bus gates, and clearways,*
- *Changing some services to reduce their frequency, daily operating hours, or days of operation, and*
- *Transforming some services into Digital Demand Responsive Transport services.*

Broadly, we are looking to support bus services and their operators where we, and they, believe that patronage may recover close to pre-pandemic levels or where there is a current high level of demand at specific times of day or to specific destinations, such as schools and hospitals. However, there are some routes that are unlikely ever to recover to the levels of use seen before the pandemic. In these instances, we are proposing amending the bus service to better reflect how people are travelling.

5. *Do you agree with our overall approach? Please select one of the options below.*

Agree

6. We would like to provide you with the opportunity to comment on individual routes where a change is proposed. Please select the individual route(s) you want to comment on from the drop-down menus below the table. You may select up to three routes. If you don't select any routes, you will be taken to the next section of the questionnaire.

Please note that for some of the routes listed we are looking to introduce Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT). This is explained in more detail in Section 3 of the survey.

Main Service Proposals			
Service	Route	Days of operation	September 2023 proposals
520	Aldershot-Tongham-Ash-Normandy-Woking/Guildford	Tue/Wed/Fri	Combine with service 17 OR convert services 520 and 17 to DDRT.
592	Addlestone-Rowtown-New Haw-Woodham-Kettlewell Hill-Woking Station-Morrisons	Thur/Fri/Sat	Combine service 592 and 593 routes to operate five or six days a week. Withdraw extension to Brooklands.
593	Ottershaw-Lyne-Chertsey-Penton Park-Staines	Mon/Wed/Fri	See service 592 above

Route 520

The main concern regarding the proposal to convert the route to DDRT is around ensuring the general public is aware a service like this is available, and that the service is accessible for those who find it difficult to travel from Town to Town.

Converting the 520 service should be supported where it is demonstrated that this service will be widely advertised, accessible for those with difficulty travelling, and be targeted across age-groups-although we are aware this is not a service intended for school children to commute to/from school during peak periods. Not all users may be fluent with technology and so there should be further consideration as to how the service is advertised and communicated with the public.

The proposal to convert the 520 service to DDRT is especially supported where it can encourage more members of the public to use public transport to make shorter distances, as highlighted within the recent draft Town Centre Masterplan (TCM)...

“Transport accounts for 30% of the Borough’s carbon footprint. Whether you live, work or visit the Borough, the Council would like travelling around Woking to be easy while also contributing to and maintaining cleaner, greener borough. The Council’s priority would be that walking, cycling and public transport will be the first choice for short journeys.”

Therefore, improving public transport services (that reduce car dependency) and the proposal to increase the fleet of zero emissions buses is especially encouraged. Has consideration been given towards introducing hydrogen buses, as recently implemented in London/Birmingham?

There is a concern that some members of the public will still prefer to travel by bus regardless of how reduced the proposed bus service is. DDRT is a new method of travel for the majority in Woking. So, it is important that any new DDRT services are well advertised to the public as an alternative but similar transport service with more benefits i.e., reduced fares in comparison to current bus operators (journeys under 5 miles are even cheaper), the reliability of the service and the ability to book 7 days in advance.

Route 593

Key for Woking is ensuring that more people are encouraged to walk/bike or Bus into their local Town or Village centre. The TCM outlines the council's intentions to encourage more use of public transport for shorter journeys and improve connections into and around the Town Centre.

Relevant General Infrastructure objectives outline the TCM will...

"... deliver committed and emerging schemes that will provide efficient and sustainable transport networks – create a high-quality network of streets in and around the town centre, and improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport."

By improving the environment and street condition for those who cycle, walk or bus, it is anticipated more people will choose to travel sustainably, or only use car travel for a portion of the journey which can reduce pressure on the strategic road network (SRN).

Within Transport objectives it is outlined the TCM will...

*"Support the town centre regeneration and other development planned in Woking Borough, by improving access to the town centre and helping to lower traffic congestion; and
Increase the range of sustainable travel options, which have a lower impact on local air quality and lower carbon emissions"*

On this basis both proposed changes to the 520/592/593 bus services are supported as long as all proposals ensure routes into and around Woking Town Centre remain viable.

One concern with merging the 592 and 593 bus service and removing the extension to Brooklands is that this will not encourage further use of the bus service as journeys, in some case, will become longer. Key to ensuring that more people travel sustainably means ensuring services remain feasible for people in terms of time, frequency, reliability, and proximity to healthcare/education/green spaces and other priority infrastructure.

Please note, although it falls just outside the Borough, the Brooklands retail park is one of a few retail centres (outside Woking Town Centre) that provides a place to shop for Woking residents. Therefore, removing the 593 extension to Brooklands may deprive others of access to this location and may encourage use of private vehicles, and so would not be supported.

Section 3: Expanding Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT)

Surrey County Council has successfully introduced a new on demand, door to door shared bus service in north Mole Valley. User feedback has been extremely positive, and we are looking to introduce more DDRT services in areas where we believe it will improve the local transport offer. In areas where the timetabled bus network is more limited, a DDRT scheme may provide a better travel offer for

residents than a timetabled service. In those instances, we are proposing that those bus services be replaced with a DDRT scheme.

What is Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT)?

Rather than being restricted by traditional bus timetables, accessible electric minibuses are available for travel when you need them. To register and book to travel you only need an email address or phone number; the minibus is available to book online or via a smartphone app (to support all users a telephone booking service is also available). Bookings can be made up to seven days in advance or on the same day, with a minimum of 30 minutes notice required.

For more information visit the web site: www.surreycc.gov.uk/molevalleyconnect

9. Looking at the list of areas and routes proposed for transition to DDRT, do you think these are the right areas and routes to choose? Please select one of the options below.

DDRT Service Proposals			
Service	Route	Days of operation	September 2023 proposals
520	Aldershot, Ash Road, Tongham, Ash Green, Shawfields, Ash, Normandy, Fairlands, Royal Surrey Hospital, Park Barn, and Guildford	Tues/Wed/Fri	Convert to DDRT.

Agree

10. Is there another location in Surrey where you would like to see DDRT in the future?

Woking maintains good transport links across the Borough and with neighbouring Towns. However, as highlighted within the TCM an issue is ensuring people use more sustainable means of travel to other local areas. From this perspective increasing DDRT services around Town/Village Centres in Woking would be considered more sustainable as journeys can be concentrated within an area and demand pinpointed directly to areas where people travel more often than what current bus services would allow.

Places to consider for future DDRT services: Horsell, Pyrford, Byfleet

If DDRT is planned to roll out further, it would be important to outline the financial implications of running such a service i.e. How much is being budgeted to educate the public on DDRT? How long will this service run for and be maintained? Will the app provider ensure the technology is kept up to date? Has the cost of effective DDRT communications been factored into calculations on cost savings? There is concern that those who may benefit most from this service may not be fluent with technology and so additional costs would be needed to ensure those people can be reached.

Currently the connect service provides text notifications to inform users about their bus booking, is there scope for the app expand and show where the buses are at times of the day? If a bus is seen in the local area people may be more inclined to use it.