

## REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

4<sup>th</sup> July 2023

### AGENDA ITEM 9.10 CEC CONSULTATION – BUS SERVICE SUPPORT CRITERIA

#### 1 REPORT

1.1 The following communication has been received from Cheshire East Council:

*Dear Town/Parish Councils,*

*Cheshire East Council are today launching a consultation exercise designed to capture the views of all interested parties on the criteria used to prioritise bus support.*

*The council has a budget of £2.4m to spend on bus routes that are not seen as commercially viable by bus operators but are still deemed as important to run.*

*This financial support for bus services is prioritised using a set of 10 criteria adopted in August 2011, which help to deliver the following key objectives:*

- Supporting the economy and environmental sustainability;*
- Improving access and social inclusion; and*
- Bus service performance.*

*There is a need to update the criteria to reflect the council's current corporate priorities, policy objectives in the council's local transport plan (LTP), the needs of local communities and the challenges facing the bus industry following the Covid pandemic.*

*The council is asking for views on three new criteria, which are proposed to be added to the existing 10. They are:*

- Contribution to carbon reduction to consider bus service carbon emissions, in line with the council's environment strategy and the authority's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2025 and its further pledge to make Cheshire East a carbon neutral borough by 2045;*
- Areas of deprivation covered by the bus route; and*
- Passenger numbers since the Covid pandemic*

*The decision-making framework relates to the council's provision of fixed-route, scheduled bus services, to supplement the network that can be provided commercially. Any consideration of the role of flexible, demand responsive transport, such as FlexiLink and Go-Too is the subject of further reports to the council's highways and transport committee.*

*It is important to stress that this consultation is not a review of the current buses operating in Cheshire East. Rather, this consultation is about the criteria we use to decide which bus services in the borough we give financial support to.*

*The public consultation on the council's additional bus support criteria will run for six weeks from 26 June until 6 August. You can complete the consultation online at:*

*<https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/BusC23/>*

*People can also request alternative formats of the consultation by contacting the council's customer contact centre on 0300 123 5500. Printed copies will be available in local libraries.*

*We encourage all Town and Parish Councils to take part in this consultation to help inform our prioritisation process.*

## **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Council notes the report and decides accordingly.