

Local Bus Services Assessment and Priority Policy

Appendix 1. Assessment Stage 1 Definitions

1.0 Background

The County Council's policy for assessing whether a transport service needed looks at number of factors to make a determination. In Assessment Stage 1 it asks the question "Is there a market failure?" and sets out a number of factors that will be considered when answering this question. These are:

- *Are there reasonable alternative services on offer that will already allow residents to make the same Journey?*
- *Are there broadly comparable journeys or suitable alternative destinations accessible without the need for an intervention by ECC?*
- *Will any ECC service provision risk undermining the economic viability of a commercial service?*

If there are reasonable alternative or broadly comparable services available or of the provision of a contracted service would undermine the economic viability of a commercial bus service then normally assessment will end here and no contracted service will be provided.

For the assessment to be made it is necessary to make it clear what is meant by the terms 'alternative service' and 'broadly comparable Service'

2.0 Alternative Service

For the purposes of Assessment Process Stage 1, an alternative service is one which offers a service which allows the current service users to continue to access the same locations, services and amenities with the same frequency and over the same period of time as the service which is being lost, while allowance for relatively small variations. The County will also consider an alternative service's stop location requires a potential user to make an additional journey before using the service. In general if an alternative services stop is within 800m of the original service stop, it will be considered viable.

For example;

- Service 1 offers an hourly frequency bus service between Village X and Town A between 09:00 and 17:00 on weekdays with a trip length of 1 hour and is being commercially withdrawn,

- Service 2 also offers an hourly frequency bus service between Village X and Town A Via Village Y, between 09:30 and 17:30 on weekdays, with a journey time of 1 hour 10 minutes
- Service 2 would be considered to offer an alternative Service to Service 1
- Service 3 offers an once a day bus service to Town B during the morning and afternoon peak travel periods, with a journey length of 1 hour 30 minutes. Service 3 would **not** be considered to offer an alternative service.
- Service 4 also offers an hourly frequency bus service between Village X and Town A Via Village Y, between 09:30 and 17:30 on weekdays, with a journey time of 1 hour 10 minutes. However, in one area along the route the nearest stop for Service 4 to that currently operated by Service 1 is 1Km away. Service 4 would not therefore be considered an alternative service to service 1

3.0 Broadly Comparable Journeys

For the purposes of Assessment Process Stage 1 a 'broadly comparable journey' is a journey which offers access to a similar alternative destination, amenity or key services to that offered by the service being lost, with an acceptable level of access in terms of frequency and journey duration. This may vary significantly from the service being lost. The same approach will be taken to stop location as applies to alternative services as set out above.

For example:

Service 1 offers an hourly bus journey between Village X and Town A (which has a shopping centre including a supermarket owned by a well-known national company) between 09:00 and 17:00 on weekdays with a trip length of 1 hour and is being commercially withdrawn,

Service 2 offers a 90 minute frequency bus journey between Village X and Town B (which also has a shopping centre with a supermarket owned by a different well known national company) between 10:00 and 17:30 on weekdays, with a journey time of 1 hour 10 minutes.

Service 2 would be considered Broadly Comparable to Service 1

Service 3 offers a twice a day, hourly frequency bus journey between Village X and Town B, focused on serving train terminating at Town B's Rail Station a 20 minute walk from the shopping centre.

Service 3 would not be considered to be broadly comparable to Service 1

4.0 Breadth of discretion in making a determination.

By their very nature decisions about whether one service is an alternative or broadly comparable to another are subject to individual circumstance and situation. It will be

impossible to identify and detail every single factor that might make a service whether an alternative service or a broadly comparable journey or not.

Therefore when undertaking such an assessment the County Council will exercise broad discretion when determining whether an alternative or broadly comparable journey exists, making allowances for local circumstances .

For example. Service A currently stops in Road X where there is a large residential home used by elderly and/or disabled people and the nearest buss top for any alternative service 0.9Km away. The County Council will exercise discretion if determining ether this should count as an alternative journey for the purposes of the Stage 1 Assessment Process.