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Canterbury Bus Strategy

Draft Final Report

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 JMP Consultants was appointed to undertake a fundamental review of bus services in the District of Canterbury area, and to develop a strategy to promote improvements to all aspects of bus service provision. A key aim was to develop the network and service quality through Bus Quality Partnership initiatives, whenever possible.
- 1.2 This report outlines the work undertaken and the recommended strategy for implementation. Further details and background information is contained in the Appendices.

Canterbury District

- 1.3 The District of Canterbury is diverse in character and has the historic city of Canterbury as its administrative centre. The District has a population of some 143,200, of which 47,000 live within the City. To the North are the coastal towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay, which are significant centres of population. The remaining part of the district is rural in character.
- 1.4 Bus services in Canterbury District are predominantly provided by Stagecoach, but some smaller operators, including the County Council's own fleet, provide some rural services. In addition, the City currently has 3 park and ride sites with services provided by Stagecoach under contract to the City Council.
- 1.5 In general, the quality of the fleet in Canterbury District is poor and has seen little new investment in recent years. The predominance of high school flows means that many services are operated by larger older double deck vehicles. The only low flat floor modern buses currently operating are those on the park and ride services. The image of the bus network is also very poor in the city.

Key Issues affecting the bus Services in Canterbury

- 1.6 The key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be summarised as follows: -

Strengths

- 1.7 Canterbury is a focal point for East Kent, attracting leisure, shopping and tourist visitors, and thus presenting many new business opportunities. It is well served by the existing road and rail network, and several potentially strong bus corridors already exist, supported by a concentration of further education establishments and other focal points which may be seen as passenger generators.

Weaknesses

- 1.8 Severe traffic congestion, unreliability of bus services and consequent poor public perception, has created a significant barrier to serious bus service improvements. Stagecoach, the major operator, has a visibly ageing and

unattractive bus fleet at the present time, with little incentive to increase its investment in the City.

- 1.9 Public transport infrastructure is poor and, currently, there are few bus priorities. Both railway stations are relatively isolated from the bus network. At best, the quality and availability of public transport information could only be described as 'average'.

Opportunities

- 1.10 The City Centre, with its broad shopping offer and tourist attractions, together with the development of the new Whitefriars Shopping Centre, provides a vibrant and attractive visitor destination, with numerous possibilities for joint public transport promotions, especially those arising from Quality Partnership launches and the potential for late night bus services for the University. This exciting marketplace also has considerable potential for attracting external funding schemes. The compact area could facilitate improved public transport information and communications, and better operational control of buses, possibly by means of the evolution of the Kent Bus System to provide a proactive command and control structure. Potential also exists for bus/rail integration and the possible development of Manston Airport as a passenger terminal in the longer term.

Threats

- 1.11 The A28 ring road has a growing stranglehold on bus services and Park & Ride services without priorities. There is increased traffic congestion and general demand for road space and, inevitably, there will be increased demand for access to the City Centre, and particularly the new Whitefriars Shopping Centre. Increasing housing demand in East Kent will continue to lead to more cars competing for road space throughout the local authority's area.

Policy Context

- 1.12 The proposal outlined in this report are consistent with and support the main strategic objectives of the County and District. The County's Local Transport Plan aims to increase bus use by 2% pa, and identifies Bus Quality Partnership as a key delivery mechanism to achieve this. The proposals are also supportive of the principles outlined in the Kent Bus Strategy and the draft Information Strategy. They will also form a key element in the emerging Canterbury Transport Plan.

The Strategy

- 1.13 The strategy aims to give a way ahead for the development of effective quality bus services in the District of Canterbury. Many of the requirements of effective quality partnerships will present significant challenges to the partners. This is particularly so for the local authorities, because the need to offer bus priorities and relief for congestion, is central to the strategy. Reliability is now the key factor; not only is it essential to achieve passenger growth but it is now being demanded by the traffic commission. Significant fines can now be imposed for unreliability, which could effectively wipe out any profits on a network. Local Authorities need to help bus operators

improve reliability, as a first step to the development of networks of bus services that are high quality and effective.

2. Consultation

2.1 At an early stage in the project, a widespread consultation exercise was undertaken with all key stakeholders. The consultation re-inforced very strongly the more formalised public consultation exercise that was undertaken for the Canterbury Local Transport Forum. Respondents were asked to give their comments on what might be done to improve the travel / transport situation in Canterbury. Responses were grouped in to 7 areas and the category ranking highest was that Bus Services should be improved.

2.2 The following meetings were held:

- Stagecoach
- Pointer's Coaches
- Lehane Travel
- Regent Travel
- East Kent Health Authority
- Parish Council Representatives
- Simon Langton Boys School
- Canterbury High School
- University of Kent at Canterbury
- Canterbury East Railway Station
- Whitstable Community College
- Barton Court Grammar School
- Observations on Bus Network
- Kent County Council Transport Unit
- Canterbury City Council

2.3 The key issues raised at each of these meetings is summarised in Appendix C.

2.4 The key messages' derived from these meetings can be summarised as follows: -

- Stagecoach, the major bus operator, has a very poor image in the area and the services that they provide are seen 'as unreliable, inconvenient and operated with poor quality vehicles.
- Services are unreliable, primarily due to high levels and variability of traffic congestion in the city.
- Stagecoach do not see significant potential to develop and improve the network, particularly the city minibus network, as the area is seen as one unlikely to provide the return on investment required. Significant bus priority measures could, however, alter this situation.
- There is a willingness on the part of the university and hospital authorities to work in partnership to improve public transport in the city.

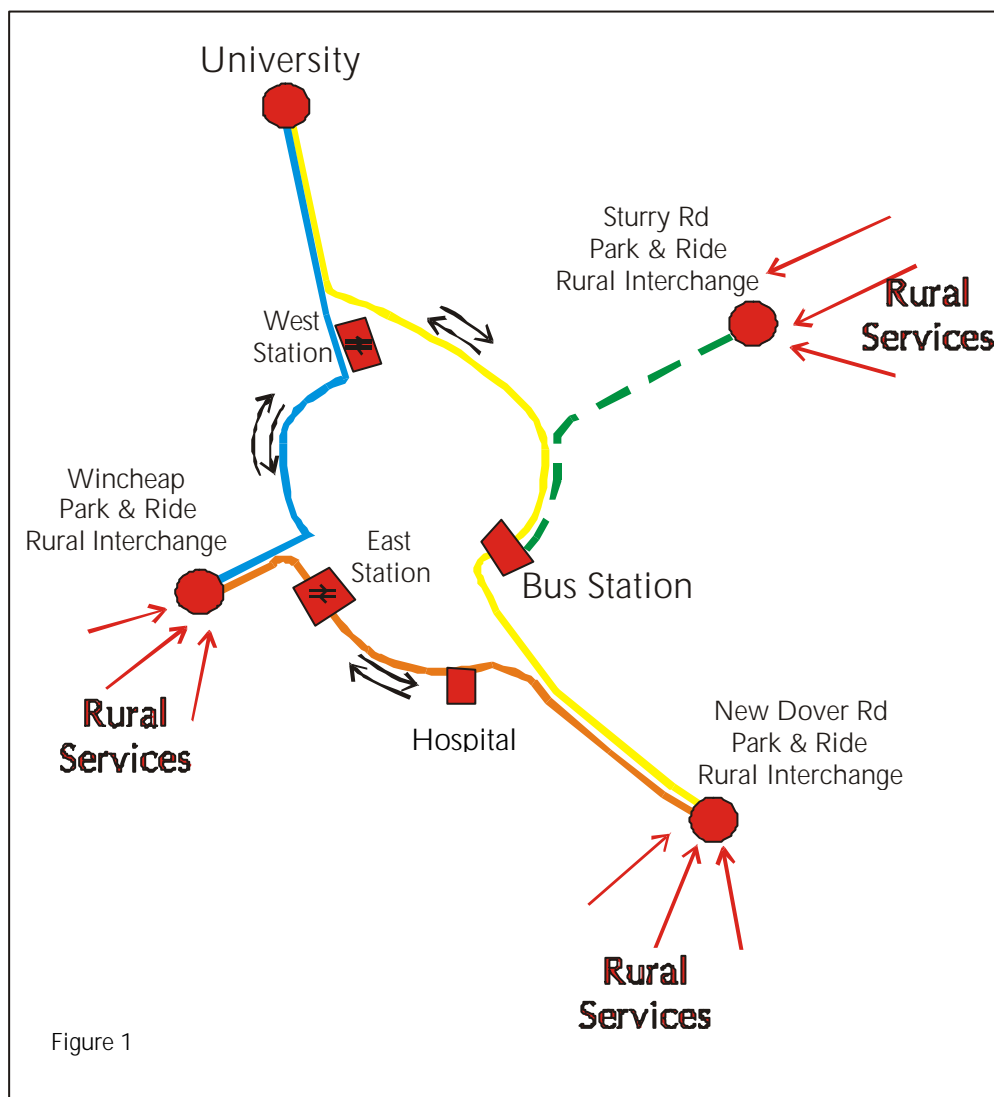
- Connex are willing to work in partnership with the bus companies and the local authorities to improve bus/rail integration.
- Lack of inter-availability of tickets causes some problems.
- Bus waiting facilities poor, including the bus station.
- Lack of integration with rail services.

3. Strategy Overview

- 3.1 The methodology adopted for the study has consisted of a phased process of research, consultation and analysis, followed by the identification of the key bus route for Quality Partnership corridors, bus priority measures and infrastructure projects. There has been an analysis of passenger and revenue data, timetables of the existing bus network, Park & Ride, schools transport, car park policy and pricing, demand management, taxis and private hire cars, community transport, and the identification of potential bus/rail links and external funding opportunities and potential bids.
- 3.2 From this detailed analysis a strategy has been developed which aims to develop the bus network of Canterbury. Each element of the strategy is described in detail in this report, but this section aims to give an overview to show how the whole fits together into a co-ordinated strategy.
- 3.3 A fundamental element of the strategy is the identification and development of Bus Quality Partnerships. Much of the analysis has been directed towards defining which elements of the existing network can be developed to become sufficiently profitable to warrant investment in new high quality vehicles, and the circumstances under which this could happen. It is clear that the overriding problem for bus operations in Canterbury is the traffic congestion that is experienced in the City. Thus, in order to realistically lever in investment from Stagecoach, it is necessary to offer buses significant priorities which will relieve them from the worst effects of the traffic congestion.
- 3.4 It is envisaged that a Bus Quality Partnership would draw in many partners, but at its core the essential participants would be: -
- Stagecoach – to provide new vehicles
 - Kent County Council / Canterbury County Council – to provide bus priorities, new roadside infrastructure and better information (possibly Real Time Information)
- 3.5 The analysis has shown that a two phase Bus Quality Partnership would be appropriate: -
- Phase 1 – Coastal Route – Canterbury, Whitstable, Herne Bay (services 4 & 6).
 - Canterbury – Thanet Corridor
 - Phase 2 - Canterbury city minibus network.
- 3.6 The Phase 1 Coastal Route Bus Quality Partnership is based on the existing services, which are financially sound, and offer Stagecoach good returns. The assessment indicates that with progress towards the provision of the complementary bus priority measures and new infrastructure, this route could be upgraded in the short term, with the Partnership being established with clearly defined deliverables. In addition, it is proposed that the Canterbury to Thanet corridor be included, which will link the scheme with the existing Thanet area partnership. It is considered that revenue on this corridor is

sufficient to support the implementation of new vehicles. Recommended Phase 1 Bus Priority measures, which would be an integral part of the partnership agreement, are identified later in the report.

- 3.7 Phase 2 is identified as the City minibus network. This set of services is far less financially sound and further bus priorities would be necessary to make this phase of the partnership viable. The analysis has, however, shown that it will be possible, with appropriate complimentary measures to develop a revised network that would support investment in new vehicles. A revised network has been designed and this is explained in further detail in Section 4 of this report.
- 3.8 To further augment this network it is proposed that new minibus services should be introduced linking the park and ride sites and the university. This is diagrammatically represented in Figure 1.



3.9 Minibus shuttles would link the following in both directions: -

- New Dover Road Park & Ride and Wincheap Park & Ride.
- Wincheap Park & Ride and University.
- University and New Dover Road Park & Ride.

- 3.10 These services would offer the following key links and facilities: -
- New Dover Road Park & Ride and Wincheap Park & Ride Hospital.
 - Hospital to railway stations.
 - University to railway stations.
 - University to bus station.
 - East Station to West station.
 - Increase service frequency to hospital.
- 3.11 It is envisaged that this network would initially be supported but would, in time, be accommodated within the Commercial City mini-bus network. It is proposed that this element of the strategy would form the Kent County Council 2002 Urban Bus Challenge Bid.
- 3.12 Fares are also an issue on the city services and it is proposed that the existing relatively complex structure is replaced by a Citywide flat fare. This will also address the key issue coming from the Canterbury Local Transport Forum consultation indicating that fares were the most important issue, relating to bus services in the District.
- 3.13 The new Quality Bus Network, with a strong brand image emphasising quality and reliability, will form the core of the wider network for the District. Clearly, the core quality network will need to be supported and fed by a range of other services, some of which may be commercial and some of which will need some ongoing support.
- 3.14 A detailed analysis has been undertaken of the rural network. In general, services are provided to the more rural areas at a low and irregular frequency. Often the peak hour services are dictated by the school transport requirements, which in some cases makes the services difficult to use for home to work journeys. It is felt that if rural services are to be developed to a point where they can adequately cater for a range of journey requirements the frequency needs to be increased and put on a clockface basis whenever possible. However, given the current low revenue earning potential of the rural network, it would be difficult to justify the deployment of significant additional resources.
- 3.15 The strategy, therefore, seeks to make better use of the existing resources, by feeding the rural network into special rural interchange facilities at the Park & Ride sites. Passengers would need to change onto Park & Ride Buses, but special waiting facilities would be provided with appropriate electronic information, which would seek to minimise the perceived interchange penalty. This interchange would allow the rural buses to make more journeys to service the rural areas, offering a higher frequency without the use of additional resources. It will also have an effect of reducing the number of buses travelling to the city centre, with a small positive impact on congestion.
- 3.16 This concept is diagrammatically represented in Figure 1. It is envisaged that this alteration to the rural network be the basis of Kent County Council's 2002 Rural Bus Challenge Bid, which if successful could fund the infrastructure modifications required to implement the strategy.

4. Quality Partnership Overview and Service Proposals

- 4.1 It can be seen from Section 3 that Bus Quality Partnerships form the core of the Canterbury Bus Strategy. The Transport Act 2000 promotes the concept of Bus Quality Partnerships to improve the quality of bus networks. It offers two new opportunities for Local Authorities, to develop Bus Quality Partnerships. These are: -
- Statutory Bus Quality Partnerships
 - Bus Quality Contracts
- 4.2 Prior to the enactment of the legislation Bus Quality Partnerships were set up on a voluntary basis. They are found in many different forms and have had very variable levels of effectiveness. Many areas have opted to enter into 'over-arching' agreements between the bus company, local authorities and in some cases other bodies, which have in effect been statements of intent, without specific deliverables or timescales.
- 4.3 Other agreements have been on an area or corridor basis and have included specific deliverable and timescales for each party. These agreements have, in some cases, delivered very significant improvements to the bus networks, with resultant increased in patronage. In other cases, these agreements have offered disappointing results due to the failure of one party to deliver its commitments on time.
- 4.4 The main benefit that Statutory Quality Partnerships offer is the ability to formalise this delivery. In the Act a quality partnership scheme is defined as a scheme to: -
- Improve the quality of local services provided in the whole or any part of their area, or combined area, by bringing benefits to persons using those services, or
 - Reduce or limit traffic congestion, noise or air pollution.
- 4.5 The facilities specified in the scheme must be facilities provided at specific locations along routes served, or proposed to be served, by local services within the area to which the scheme relates, or facilities which are ancillary to such facilities.
- 4.6 The services which may be specified in the scheme can: -
- Include requirements which the vehicles being used to provide the services must meet.
 - Not include requirements as to frequency or timing of the services.
- 4.7 It is, therefore, clear that authorities can specify vehicle quality but can have no influence on service levels or fares.
- 4.8 The main benefit from a Statutory Quality Partnership derives from the fact that operators not providing vehicles to the defined quality can be stopped

from using the specified local authority provided facilities. This is particularly relevant where an operator and an authority invest in a partnership and this investment is then undermined by a low price low quality operator using the facilities. This is most likely to occur in an area where competition for the commercial network is strong.

- 4.9 Quality Contracts are applicable where the Quality Partnership provisions have clearly not worked, and allow an authority the ability to grant and exclusive right to an operator to operate services in a defined area. The service needs to be operated according to clearly specified terms including frequency, fares, and standard of service.
- 4.10 An authority can only apply to DTLR for the authority to impose a quality contract where a quality partnership has been introduced in accordance with the Act and failed to be effective.
- 4.11 In terms of Canterbury, the decision needs to be taken as to whether a voluntary partnership agreement or a statutory partnership is preferable. The clear advantage of a voluntary agreement is that it can contain provisions for levels of services and fares. However, a statutory partnership is more easily enforceable, but does require the local authority to adhere to its commitments as well as the operator.
- 4.12 It is felt that further more detailed discussions are required with Stagecoach to gauge their willingness to engage in the process realistically, before a decision on the type of Partnership is taken. Initial discussions with Stagecoach would indicate that they are willing to take a positive approach to the implementation of the Strategy.
- 4.13 In order to progress the two phase partnership proposed an appropriate constitution for the Quality Partnership will need to be agreed, including the identification of key potential partners which may include: -
- Stagecoach
 - Kent County Council
 - Canterbury City Council
 - Connex
 - Kent Police
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - City Centre Partnership
 - Health Authority / Hospital Authorities
 - University
- 4.14 The following sections of this report consider the main contributions that each party could bring to the partnership.

- 4.15 Terms of reference must be agreed, and a robust Business Plan constructed, with measurable KPIs, and quality standards monitoring. There should be formal agreements, objectives and obligations to ensure full commitment by all parties. A small Steering Group of key players should be established to give executive direction, with the wider partnership forums providing platforms for consultation and feedback. The Local Authorities will also need to make appropriate provision for the management of the project implementation to ensure that agreed partnership targets are met.
- 4.16 In drawing up a Business Plan and timescales for the roll-out of a phased programme, each element should have clearly defined and measurable objectives and outputs. Implementation working groups should be established in the development stages, encompassing ; operations/infrastructure, bus/rail integration, marketing, public relations and external funding bids. High profile publicity and promotions should surround the roll-out of each element and the launch of each new route corridor.

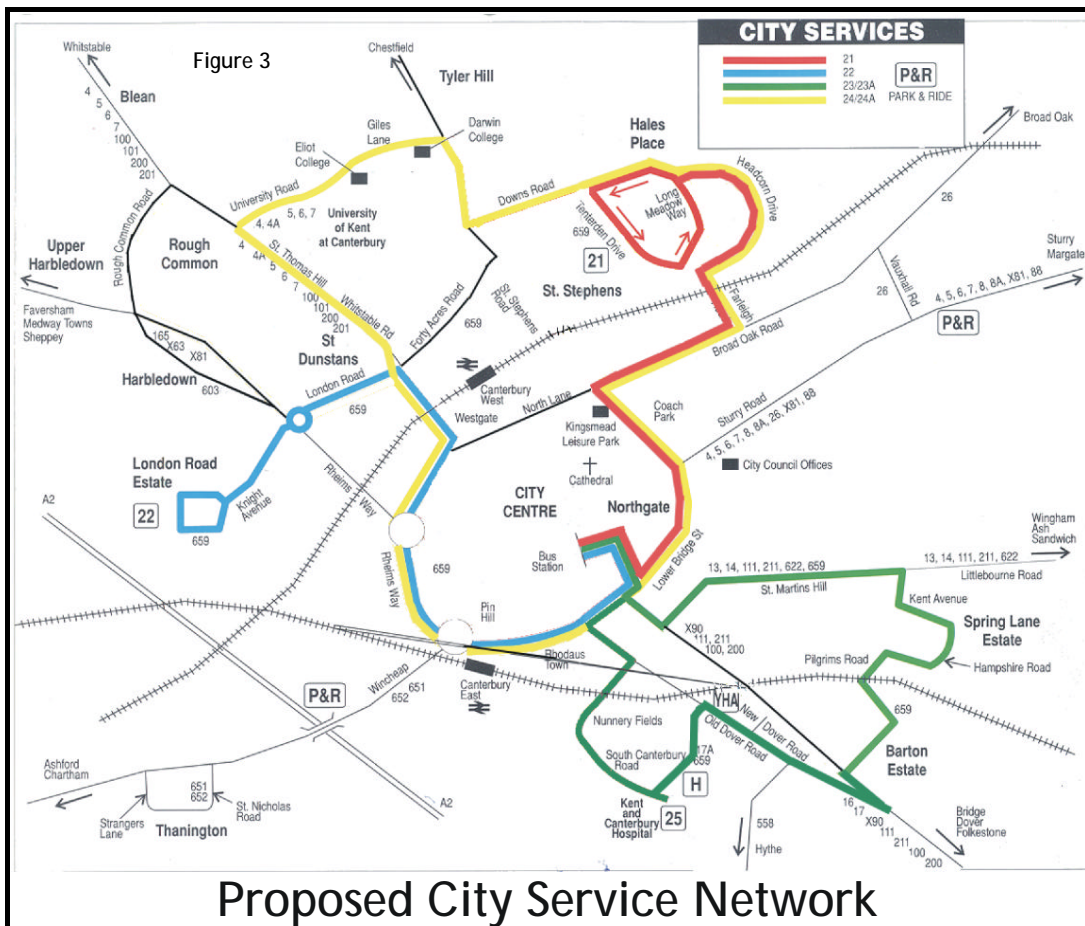
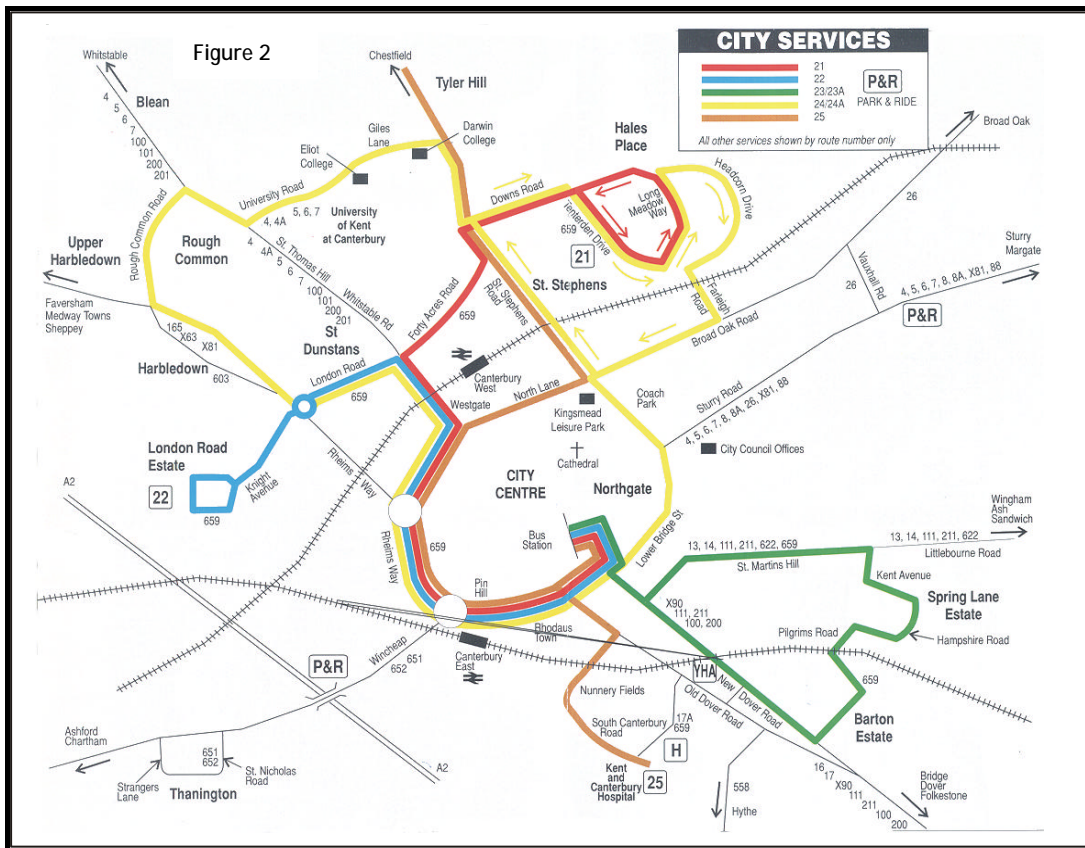
Quality Partnership Phase 1

- 4.17 The first phase of the Quality Partnership is considered to be the 4 and 6 services which service Canterbury and the coastal towns of Whitstable and Herne Bay and the Canterbury Thanet Corridor. The 416 service operates at a daytime frequency of 15 minutes and is appears to be robust financially. The analysis has indicated that this service could support new vehicle investment in the short term, and is, therefore, well positioned to lead early implementation of quality services.
- 4.18 The main service provision is by circular services 4, 4A, 4B, 4C, and 6, 6A, 6B, 6C on a daytime frequency of 15 minutes in each direction. Examination of the timetable reveals that diversions via Greenhill and Broomfield, every 30 minutes, considerably disrupt the frequency via Herne Bay in each direction. It would be preferable to take the most densely populated sections of route, and operate a ten or fifteen minute frequency as part of the proposed Quality Bus Partnership. There is no doubt that this would form a strong and viable corridor between the coastal towns and Canterbury, via The University. At least fifteen new low-floor single deck buses would be required, plus spares. Route branding, and extensive marketing would ensure the success of scheme. Based upon experience of Quality Partnership route conversions elsewhere, initial passenger growth of at least ten to fifteen percent could be expected. Additional seasonal coastal visitors and student travel will be beneficial to these particular routes.
- 4.19 All the other services, on at best hourly frequencies, seem to fulfil some form of local service provision, as well as bespoke schools and peak hour facilities. Whilst it is difficult to judge without more detailed demographic information, some form of town service provision might be justifiable to cover the sections of route no longer served by new QBP services 4 and 6, the residential areas to the south of Herne Bay and Whitstable town centres, and possibly Seasalter. This might be achieved by separate town services for each, or a coastal service linking each locality. A 30 minute frequency would be acceptable, but close co-ordination with through circular services 4 and 6, also would be very necessary.

- 4.20 The Canterbury / Thanet corridor (services 8, 88, X82) is also considered to be sufficiently viable to support new vehicle investment as part of the phase 1 implementation. 13 buses plus spares would be required for this element of the scheme.

Quality Partnership Phase 2

- 4.21 It was felt essential that the city mini-bus network was included as a core part of the strategy. However, these services are far less financially robust than the coastal service. The existing network (shown in Figure 2) has been subjected to detailed analysis, in an attempt to identify a network that could form the basis of a quality partnership agreement.
- 4.22 The potential appears to exist for a small, viable network with scope for growth, although some of the existing routes are clearly marginal, according to sample passenger and average fares extracted from data supplied by Stagecoach. The existing City Service network also suffers from numerous operational difficulties, mainly as a direct result of traffic congestion and obstruction. The financial return on the present network is thought to be too small, and insufficient incentive to provide future investment in this network. A revised network has, therefore been devised which is shown in Figure 3 below. All services would operate at 30 minute intervals, to ensure reliability. Some sections of route covered by the existing network (eg Rough Common Harbledown and Forty Acres Road) will not be served by the new network but can be covered by other services.
- 4.21 The retention of existing service numbers is considered essential to the new scheme, in order to minimise confusion, especially amongst existing elderly bus users. A transfer ticket facility is strongly recommended to cater for transfers to and from the railway stations and the Kent & Canterbury Hospital, where no direct services are provided, and to cover the small but significant demand for diverse cross-city journeys. Scheduled cross-city route linkages may be possible, but unlikely to generate any substantial new business, whilst it will be much more important to ensure reliability in all the bus schedules. A simple flat fare structure should be considered, with a full range of season and promotional fares also offered.
- 4.23 Reliability will be the key to the success of the basic thirty-minute frequencies proposed for the new services, which have proved successful in many small town networks.



Proposed City Service Network

4.24 Table 1 below shows the existing frequencies to key locations in the city and those which could be achieved under different options for the new network. The proposed option is D, which requires 7 vehicles instead of the existing 7.5. As viability improved additional resources could be deployed to increase frequencies.

Table 1:

CITY BUS SERVICE NETWORK - PROPOSED FREQUENCY OPTIONS

		EXISTING	REVISED FREQUENCY OPTIONS			
		E	A	B	C	D
Hales Place	21	10	20	10	15	15
London Road Estate	22	20	20	20	30	30
Spring Lane Estate	23	30	20	20	30	30
Barton Estate	23A	30	20	20	30	30
Kent & Canterbury	25	20	20	20	20	30
University	24	60	20	20	30	30
Circular	24A	60	20	20	30	30
BUSES REQUIRED		7.5	9	9	8	7

4.25 A financial analysis has been undertaken comparing the existing situation with the proposed new network of services, with new buses. This analysis has considered Revenue, Direct Costs, Depreciation, Engineering costs and overheads. It shows that the investment could increase the overall profit made by the network and significantly improve the profit margin achieved.

4.26 Relevant to mini-bus services in the City is a Planning Application by Canterbury College for re-location to a site adjacent to the New Dover Road Park & Ride Site. This planning application proposes a new mini-bus link from the College campus to East Station with fares subsidies for students. The application is currently the subject of a judicial review challenge and has been called in.

QP Vehicles

4.26 The Canterbury area bus network has an aging bus fleet, (with consequent escalating engineering costs), and thus adding to an already poor public perception of bcal bus services. From the fleet list and other information supplied by Stagecoach, Canterbury depot appears to have a fleet with an average age of over 10.5 years, and it is understood that more recently some older buses have replaced newer ones, thus exacerbating this situation.

4.27 Stagecoach is prepared to invest in new vehicles, but new vehicles alone will not generate extra passengers if travel is still unreliable and unpleasant. Bids

for new buses within the Stagecoach Group must demonstrate that increased business would result, in order to justify each investment.

- 4.28 For the Herne Bay/Whitstable circulars, new services 4 and 6, at least fifteen new low-floor single deck buses would be required, with careful consideration of spare capacity resource. A further 13 buses would be required for the Thanet corridor.
- 4.29 There are currently no plans to invest in new small buses. The City Services are operated by older minibuses, the revenue is low, and Stagecoach is not convinced of their viability, as compared with other small town networks in Kent and elsewhere. The Group is experimenting with Optare Solos at present, but there is a concern with their size in relation to difficulties encountered on some estates in Canterbury. There is no other real alternative for Mercedes 709 replacement at present. Policy is to cascade buses replaced by new vehicles throughout the Group companies, which does not improve the ever-increasing engineering costs of older buses.

5. Quality Partnership Bus Priority

- 5.1 JMP Consultants Ltd has identified opportunities for providing highway infrastructure improvements to the bus network in Canterbury and the surrounding area as part of its commission to review and develop the local bus services.
- 5.2 The strategy adopted for the study promotes a quality bus partnership focussed on key routes and services for the city. The two main areas for this approach are the high passenger volume corridors between Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable (the Coastal Triangular Routes) and the Canterbury City Network as recommended in the service review part of the report.
- Bus Priority measures to the highway network
 - Interchange with other travel modes
- 5.3 The bus priority measures proposed have been packaged into 2 phases to fall in line with the Quality Partnership proposals: -
- Phase 1 – the Coastal Triangular Routes
 - Phase 2 – Canterbury City Network
- 5.4 This section reviews the current facilities for both phases and identifies where further improvements could be made. Schematic plans of many of the opportunities that are considered appropriate for inclusion in implementation programme are included in Appendix A.

Bus Priority Development Strategy

- 5.5 It is known that the success of Canterbury generates significant and volatile traffic congestion conditions throughout the working day. At times these can severely impact on movement to and around the City both for general traffic and buses. From a bus operational point of view this results in difficulty achieving timetable schedules beyond those that can reasonably be managed by the service operator. Traffic congestion typically starts to build up on the City ring road then rapidly spreads to the radial routes slowing journeys to walking pace. The strategy adopted has sought to bring about a better control of traffic entering the City via the radial routes thereby improving movement in and around the City itself.
- 5.6 With the introduction of controls, the strategy has considered how these impact on bus journey times and service regularity and reliability, and how route sections might be upgraded to bring about significant and qualitative improvements. In addition, other areas within the District have been further investigated and local bus priority and traffic management measures considered.
- 5.7 As part of the overall review of the network, the effectiveness of the existing bus priority measures have been reviewed, where applicable, and

consideration given to whether these facilities could be modified to bring about further benefits and, where problems for buses are occurring, how these could be overcome.

5.8 In developing the various measures discussed in this report, a view has been taken as to the impact of the bus priority proposals on other traffic movement. Bus priority measures themselves can be considered to fall within three distinct levels as follows:

- Level 1 – Bus priority measures that bring about little or no disbenefit to general traffic
- Level 2 – Bus Priority measures that disbenefit general traffic but overall provide a benefit to travel as the benefits to bus services outweigh the disbenefits to other traffic
- Level 3 – Bus Priority measures where the overall benefits to buses are substantial but are less than disbenefits accrued to other traffic (second generation bus priority)

5.9 The suite of measures available for bus priority are wide ranging, diverse and include the following, which can have a high or low visual impact:

High Visual Impact

- Bus Lanes
- Bus Gates
- Bus Only Streets
- High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes
- Bus Stop Improvements
- Signalised junction – bus pre-signals
- Route Branding
- Passenger Information

Low Visual Impact

- Virtual Bus Lane
- Traffic Management measures
- Selective Vehicle Detection at traffic signals
- Traffic Control measures (UTC, SCOOT, Bus SCOOT, MOVA, etc)
- Waiting and loading improvements
- Controlled Parking measures
- Enforcement

5.10 Many of the available measures could fall within any of the levels of bus priority described. For example, a bus lane that is a result of using spare highway land or additional land would be deemed to be Level 1, while a bus lane on approach to a signalised junction might involve some disbenefit to other road users (Level 2). A bus lane involving removal of a lane from general traffic would be considered Level 3. Overall, the various proposals discussed elsewhere in this report are considered to fall into Level 1 and some into Level 2. This approach has been adopted with due regard to the local economic activity of the city and endeavours to reflect the current strategic planning and transport policies in place for East Kent and Canterbury District.

- 5.11 In developing the strategy a view has been taken in respect of opportunities to provide for better public transport interchange between bus and rail. At present bus/rail connections at both Canterbury East and West stations are low or virtually non-existent. It is acknowledged that both stations are in relatively easy walking distance of the city centre, however, a wider view has been taken to consider how the infrastructure might be adopted to provide for better integration with the University campus and outlying estates.
- 5.12 As outlined in the Kent County Council Bus Strategy all proposed bus priority measures would be fully tested prior to detailed design and implementation to accurately assess their impact on general traffic as well as buses.
- 5.13 A full description of the key highways issues and the proposed priorities is contained in Appendix A. The proposals are summarised in the tables below.

Table 5.1 Phase 1 Schemes

Route Section	Bus Priority Facility	Proposal Ref. Plan (Appendix A)
A28 Sturry Road	City board bus lane	14295D/PR-01
	Bus Gate (option)	14295D/PR-01
	Barton Mill Road Signalisation (option)	14295D/PR-01
A28 Tourtel Road	Offside bus lane Military Road Signalisation	14295D/PR-01
A28 Military Road	Link crossings to Military Road Signalisation	_____
Broad Street / Lower Bridge Street	Extend northbound bus lane	14295D/PR-02
A28 Upper Bridge Street and Canterbury Bus Station	Roundabout Signalisation (option) Signalisation of Junctions (option)	14295D/PR-03
A28 Rhodaus Town / Pin Hill	Extend existing westbound bus lane eastwards Eastbound bus lane	14295D/PR-03
St Dunstan's Street	One way system options	14295D/PR-04
A290 Whitstable Road	University Road Signalisation	14295D/PR-05

	Bus gate and bus lane	14295D/PR-05
Whitstable Town Centre	Bus boarders	_____

Table 5.2 Phase 2 Schemes

Route Section	Bus Priority Facility	Proposal Ref. Plan (Appendix A)
A28 Wincheap	Additional highway capacity Contraflow bus lane(2 options) Simmonds Road Signalisation	14295D/PR-06/01 & 02 14295D/PR-06/01 & 02 14295D/PR-06/01 & 02
A2050 New Dover Road	Old Dover Road roundabout bus only access Bus Lane Bus Gate Barton Road Signalisation	14295D/PR-07 14295D/PR-07 14295D/PR-07 14295D/PR-07
Old Dover Road	Lawrence Road and Nackington Road Signalisation (Council Scheme) UTC/Bus Scoot	14295D/PR-07 14295D/PR-07
Kent and Canterbury Hospital	Parking Review	14295D/PR-08
Longport	Bus Lane Lower Chantry lane Signalisation	14295D/PR-09 14295D/PR-09
St Stephens Road / Downs Road	Signalisation	14295D/PR-10
Canterbury Stations	Bus stops and boarders	_____

Table 5.3 Other Issues

Scheme
UTC City Network
Selective Vehicle Detection (SVD)
Parking Enforcement on Bus Routes
Bus Lane Enforcement
Waiting and Loading Review

6. Quality Partnership Passenger Infrastructure, Publicity, Branding and Promotion

Roadside Infrastructure

- 6.1 A full Audit of all roadside infrastructure has been undertaken on both phases of the proposed Quality Partnership routes. The detail of this audit are contained in Appendix B. Each bus stop is located on a map and details are given about the facilities at each site. A photograph of each site is also included, which gives an indication of the physical location of the facility and its condition.
- 6.2 It is quite clear that a considerable investment is required to bring the roadside infrastructure up to Quality Partnership standards. The City Council currently has a contract with Adshel, which has recently been renewed. Any new or replacement facilities provided under this contract will be to a higher quality and capable of accommodating Real Time Information. However, the vast majority of the bus stop posts, flags and shelters require a very significant upgrade, or more likely replacement.
- 6.3 New infrastructure needs to offer good shelter from the weather, but also needs to be capable of accommodating real time information and bright lighting to enhance the perception of personal security. A budget figure for the provision of a shelter with those facilities would be £10,000.
- 6.4 It is clear that a very significant investment in roadside infrastructure is required for the quality partnership to be launched. Modern roadside infrastructure also presents maintenance issues. If the facilities are to remain high quality and achieve the desired patronage growth and high level of maintenance and cleaning is required. This required a significant ongoing budgetary provision.

Canterbury Bus Station

- 6.5 Canterbury Bus Station is a relatively new facility, funded, in past, through developer contributions associated with the current redevelopment on the adjacent site. The site provides for a large number of departure bays and a similar number of layover spaces. Passenger facilities are poor and the shelters provide little protection from the weather. A passenger information office is provided, and the Stagecoach offices are also in the site.
- 6.6 It is felt that the current site represents a significant missed opportunity to develop a new bus station with a high level of passenger facilities.
- 6.7 The following issues have been identified: -
- Stand utilisation is very low and consequently there is too much space taken up which could be better used to accommodate passenger facilities.

- The number of layover bays is excessive. The bus station is effectively used to park buses all day. An alternative site should be found for this parking, away from the City Centre.
 - The bus shelters offer little or no protection from the weather.
 - Passenger information is adequate but no thought has been given in the design to the provision of Real Time Information.
- 6.8 It is felt that the bus station should be re-designed with fewer bays and fewer layover spaces. Passenger facilities should be improved and a passenger concourse constructed, which would offer a dry and safe environment with the general ambiance of a modern bus station. It is also felt that a redesign could accommodate drop of facilities for tour coaches.

Information and Publicity

- 6.9 Accurate, well presented information is an essential part of the quality partnership. Decisions need to be taken over responsibilities and / or cost sharing. However, the ideal would be to have clear departure lists at every bus stop on the QP routes. This again is a significant ongoing revenue commitment.
- 6.10 Real Time Information is seen to be an important element of the Quality Partnership package, and it is proposed that this should be rolled out in a programme that parallels the Quality Partnership programme. Funding has already been secured for the Phase 1 Whitstable / Hearne Bay route element of the package through a recent bid to DTLR for RTI funding. It is proposed that funding for the remaining elements of the Canterbury Quality Partnership routes will be bid for in future rounds of the programme.

Branding and Promotion

- 6.11 Successful quality partnerships, which have achieved significant levels of passenger growth in other parts of the UK, have often used strong branding to help the marketing and promotion of the package. A strength of the Quality Partnership principle is that it concentrates all investment into the same package, in order to achieve an impact. This impact is greatly aided if the product is given a strong brand image. The aim is to alter the public perception of bus services and to promote the new services as a real alternative to the private car. The branding is only used on the new quality network and thus, if standards are maintained, it rapidly becomes synonymous with quality.
- 6.12 Stagecoach, in common with the other large bus groups in the UK. Have a strong corporate identity of their own. Very often the corporate guidelines offer little scope to vary liveries etc to accommodate local branding. Attempts should be made to overcome these problems as it is felt that strong branding and promotion are paramount to the success of the scheme. This is particularly the case in Canterbury where Stagecoach seem to have a very poor image, which needs to be addressed if services are to develop.

7. Urban Bus Challenge

- 7.1 Urban Bus Challenge provides an opportunity to gain external funding to help pump prime certain elements of the strategy. The DTLR has recently published guidance for this year's bidding round. Challenge funding "is essentially intended to allow for innovative and / or unconventional solutions to the problems of public passenger transport provision in urban areas of economic or social deprivation". Bids have to be submitted by 2 August 2002.
- 7.2 The indices of deprivation for the District of Canterbury are shown in the maps on the pages that follow. It is clear that the bid document must in particular be seen to address the problem in Northgate Ward.
- 7.3 It is proposed that the core of the urban bus challenge bid is based around the new shuttle mini-bus service which is outlined in Figure 1 of this report. This service would link the park and ride sites, the hospital, the stations and the university. Other parts of the bid could include:
- Initiatives aimed at encouraging bus use to hospital and university
 - Improved bus stop infrastructure
- 7.4 Partnership will be key to a successful bid. An outline of the strategy will be discussed with a range of partners, in order to formulate the bid proposals. The partnership is likely to include:
- Kent County Council
 - Canterbury City Council
 - Kent & Canterbury Hospital Trust
 - University
 - Stagecoach
 - Canterbury Volunteer Bureau
 - Connex Rail
- 7.5 The bid will seek funding in the order of £1 million.

8. Rural Services and Rural Bus Challenge

- 8.1 The Rural Bus Challenge competition has been running for 3 years. Like the Urban Bus Challenge, it provided revenue and capital funding towards innovative transport schemes, aimed at meeting identified needs. The DTLR has indicated that bids this year will be invited for submission in October, although an actual date has not been announced.
- 8.2 Rural Bus Challenge is complementary to its Urban counterpart, and could be used to assist with a number of the elements of the Canterbury Strategy, including:
- Introduction of demand responsive minibus services from rural communities to the Canterbury Park & Ride sites.
 - Increase frequency of other rural services to feed into Canterbury Park and Ride sites.
 - Improved interchange facilities at the Park & Ride sites.
 - Improved bus stop infrastructure in villages.
- 8.3 A similar partnership as that established for Urban Bus Challenge is envisaged. Again, the bid will seek funding in the order of £1 million.
- 8.4 The existing rural services have been reviewed and an initial proposal for consideration as part of rural bus challenge bid could include the following: -
- 556-559 Ashford/Hythe – Canterbury. Operated by Stagecoach for Kent County Council. The section of route between Stelling Minnis and New Dover Road Park & Ride lends itself to a co-ordinated hourly service together with through journeys.
 - 620 Hastingleigh/Bodsham – Canterbury. Operated by Poynters for Kent County Council. The section of route between Hastingleigh and New Dover Road Park & Ride lends itself to additional journeys, perhaps hourly.
 - 621 Nonnington – Canterbury. Operated by Stagecoach for Kent County Council. Currently Thursdays and Saturdays only. The section of route between Adisham and New Dover Road Park & Ride lends itself to additional journeys and days of operation.
 - 667 Charing – Canterbury. Operated by Poynters for Kent County Council. The section of route between Chilham and Wincheap Park & Ride lends itself to additional journeys, perhaps hourly.
- 8.5 The Cordon Census in 2000 indicated some very heavy peak, presumably schools journeys, which would have to remain as through journeys, but generally off-peak loadings are light with considerable potential for improvement.

- 8.6 Co-ordination of Rural and Park & Ride services would be essential, particularly for return journeys from Canterbury, and the 7/8 minute frequency of the Park & Ride buses will certainly help. Nevertheless, part of a Rural Challenge Bid should be for the provision of radio links in all the Rural and Park & Ride buses, to ensure public confidence in connections, together with the initial marketing and publicity costs, (including branded buses), and any infrastructure enhancements which may be necessary at the Park & Ride terminals.