Essex County Council is seeking the views of residents on a number of bus services it currently supports.

Residents can share their views on 41 of the 154 bus services funded by Essex taxpayers as part of a new consultation.

These 154 services make up around 15% of the bus services delivered in the county. The remaining services are delivered by commercial operators. These are not part of this consultation.

The aim is to ensure that the future bus network supported by the council is ready to meet passenger demand and is good value for money.

The services being reviewed operate Essex-wide but are mostly in rural areas. They often operate at less popular times for travel, such as in the evenings or on Sundays.

The consultation will look specifically at options around:

* continuing services as they are now
* redesigning services to better reflect how they are used (for example, the days of operation, routes, number of journeys and/or the timetable)
* returning some services to commercial operation

The 41 services are provided by the council where there is no commercial service but there is a need for a service to help residents stay connected.

Currently around £11 million of taxpayer money is spent on these services. It’s therefore important to keep them under review and ensure they remain a good investment.

Bus services help communities thrive by:

* supporting economic growth by getting people to work, training, school and town and city centres
* protecting the environment through improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions
* allowing young people, older people and those with disabilities or without cars to travel
* helping to support diverse and thriving communities
* helping to combat loneliness and isolation

Councillor Tom Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Sustainable Transport, said: “Bus services can be a lifeline for so many communities and individuals in Essex. The council’s long-standing support for so many services is testimony to its commitment to making sure communities are well connected and residents can travel around the county.

“We want to ensure the council services are as good quality as they can be and represent a good investment for Essex taxpayers. I would invite as many people as possible, particularly those that use the services currently being reviewed, to share their views with us.

“Together we can shape the future bus service in Essex and ensure it remains a safer, greener and healthier way for everyone to travel.”

Visit <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/iptu/localbus2025> to complete the consultation. It is open now until 27 October 2025.