

Report of the First Public Transport Forum - 16 January 2015

Executive Summary

This report summarises key points made by speakers at the First Suffolk Public Transport Forum and provides a write up of all the points made by participants in the facilitated sessions. Reflecting on all that was said a way forward is set out that can be further developed and refined in future meetings. Participant's views are invited by 9 March 2015.

Welcome – Cllr Mary Evans *Assistant Cabinet Member for Roads, Transport and Planning*

Councillor Evans chaired a cross party enquiry into [Accessibility](#) that heard evidence from witnesses last year, revealing a range of issues including:

- the isolation of non-drivers
- military families being stranded in rural bases
- complicated regulatory framework for commercial and community transport operators
- range of services available that customers did not understand e.g. Demand responsive, Dial a ride, hospital transport

One of the recommendations was that a Forum be established to enable commercial and community operators to meet together with stakeholders to look at supply and demand, to collaborate and learn from each other. The "Total Transport Pilot Fund" aimed at rural Counties announced on 14 January 2015 presents a real opportunity for a collaborative bid to come out of this first meeting of the Forum.

Presentations (These are now all available on Suffolk County Council's web site)

1. **Bus Passenger Priorities for Improvement** - *Linda McCord, Passenger Focus*

- Survey results show punctuality is the key passenger priority
- In rural areas getting a seat for duration of journey was 2nd priority
- Bus Passenger survey Suffolk 2012-3 overall satisfaction increased from 86% to 93%
- Passengers want to be kept informed when disruptions happen
- Value for money is not just a measure of cost but also includes punctuality and reliability
- Planning to do research on Demand Responsive Transport

2. **A bus operator's perspective** - *Bill Hiron, Managing Director, Stephenson's of Essex, CPT (UK) President 2015*

- Passenger numbers are up 11% in the Shires
- Demand seems to be growing but cost of supply and income generated is hindering expansion
- Costs include DDA vehicle standards, congestion, regulatory regime, miles per gallon is less on modern buses, more body damage from low floor design.
- Traffic Commissioner sets targets on punctuality and performance whilst having no power over illegal parking. 95% 1 minute early and 5 minutes late - targets are higher than rail and they have track to run on. Due to congestion can achieve less today than 10 years ago.
- Reimbursement levels for free bus passes have reduced. On average it costs an operator £2.87 for every £1 subsidy by government. In London operators get 96% of the fare, other cities 72%, rural areas 48% of adult fare.
- Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) refunding fuel tax has reduced over the years (air and rail don't pay). If it disappeared completely it would mean a 37% increase in fares due to the number of concessionary pass holders that would not be contributing.
- Key things the industry can look at
 - Stimulating demand
 - Smaller buses

- Reduced fares if could get higher use
- Target specific groups like 16-19
- Evening /Sunday services for retail
- Tackle government policy – high standards hits marginal services, Generic standards (e.g. AV for blind) on all buses can put costs up is that good for whole society?

3. The role of the third sector in transport – Susannah Walters, Suffolk Community Transport

- Community transport can offer
 - Passengers often older people that need access and social contact, local and very personalised services
 - Families – safeguard for those living a long way away
 - Business community – gives access to retail market and pool of rural employees
 - Statutory authorities – means less reliance on NHS and social care
 - Volunteers get confidence and work experience
 - Transport operators get feeder links to their services
- Barriers – perceptions and misconceptions
 - ‘Unregulated’ and ‘unprofessional’, ‘Only for old people, ‘Not part of the transport network’, ‘Unfair competitive advantage’
 - State aid regulations and licencing
 - Shortage of drivers as retirement age increases and D1 restriction at 70 makes dwindling pool
 - Rising costs £40k for a new bus; 36% of CTOs have less than £10k reserves
 - Burden of compliance
 - Restrictions on use of SCC fleet
 - Burden of health transport
 - Non – integrated booking systems
- Aspirations
 - Workable regulations
 - Profit donation and support
 - Integration – with NHS and others – issues of sharing data
 - Social value savings poorly recognised by LAs at present
 - Recognition of CT role by NHS and CCGs
 - CSR Corporate Social responsibility - LEPs help promote commitment to social value and encourage investment in community transport
 - Recognition of role in training and employment - helping people to get there

4. Meeting demand in a time of austerity – Aidan Dunn, Assistant Director, Strategic Finance and Head of Procurement, Suffolk County Council

- SCC has a 4 year saving challenge of £156m; £36m found in year one but some way to go
- Travel transformation programme is focussing on spend in home to school and concessionary fares and looking for opportunities to join up service provision
- Public sector spending in Suffolk on transport is around £38m if include CCG Non-emergency hospital travel expenditure
- SCC is not confident all needs are met, especially in rural areas
- Is there a way to provide a better service at a lower cost?
- An opportunity has come up from DfT Total Transport Pilot Fund £4m for rural authorities to bid to “pilot the integration of the transport services in their areas”
- SCC is looking for partners.

5. Issue of the Day - Hospital Transport - An alternative Solution – Ian Combellack, Nottingham Community Transport

This presentation described how public transport services have been developed in Nottingham to access the two big hospital sites. It looked at issues involved in setting up 3 trial services, a not for profit organisation, running electric vehicles and the role of the Nottingham Workplace parking scheme.

Facilitated sessions

Session 1: What do we want out of the forum?

Participants in six groups were asked to consider three questions. The following table sets out the views expressed.

Session 1: What do we want out of the forum?	
1.	What opportunities are there for a new Forum to make a difference?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network on plans, proposals and changes in service delivery e.g. NHS decentralising some services to local centres that will mean less movements to hospitals Identify needs and look at service provision Strengthen working with NHS High level players to meet and improve integration, grow community sector role Conversation between community transport and commercial operators brokered by SCC. Co-ordinated interchange points – create a map of the areas where interchanges take place Sharing good practices to reduce barriers where there is a lack of understanding Break down barriers/improve communication between operators and community transport Networking Constructive voices Encourage a sense of perspective Partnership working Enable local voice to be a contributing voice Community ownership of the issue Identifying demand and data sharing Third party funding arrangements Better understanding of other people’s position and constraints Sharing resources Identifying key people Breakdown silos Improved consultation Better communication Apps - make better use of what is available Get the youth perspective Integration opportunities – unravel all transport One shop Dialogue opened to simplify Be more flexible in what is offered Promotion/marketing Community Transport is for everyone
2.	What should be the main purpose of the Forum?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic with pilot projects/working groups Not a talking shop Break down silo working Identify where we can combine services/activities Develop pilots that feedback into the forum – sub groups working outside the Forum Greater collaboration/partnership

	Lobbying re legislation conflicts Co-operation between bus operators, LAs, CTOs etc. Lobbying by all transport providers Rural lobbying – link to SPARSE group Consider conflicting incentives e.g. park and ride vs car parking charges Grow local economy Improved communications Responding to consultations
3.	Who should lead on the Forum?
	County Council SCC facilitate to create working groups from the Forum Local Authority administer with rotating lead

Overall it was thought that the Forum should involve the higher level players and facilitate an open dialogue. It should focus on doing things not just talking and hence could have task groups that look in more detail at issues and report back to the Forum. It should:

- create opportunities for commercial and community operators to interchange ideas
- map out where there are issues that could be jointly tackled
- share good practice
- facilitate networking
- enable the creation of partnerships

There was general agreement that it should be facilitated/administered by SCC but the leadership of meetings could rotate.

Session 2: Issue of the day hospital transport

People attending the conference were arranged into groups according to the geographical area they represented or operated in as far as possible. Where an organisation had more than one representative they were distributed between the groups to even up the numbers. Below are the points made in each of the groups.

Session 2: What is the issue in Suffolk and what can we do about it?	
1.	Is hospital transport a key issue in Suffolk? What is the main issue?
Suffolk Wide	It is a rural issue. Wattisham issues – limited buses to Ipswich to access hospital. The Base welfare services are forced to support journeys.
Waveney	NHS can't charge for transport. Hospital transport has strict criteria based on health needs to a secondary base(i.e. hospitals/clinics not GPS) Low income is not a criterion for hospital transport. NHS transport is based on medical needs not means Complicated contracts where different contracts are in place i.e. Suffolk vs Norfolk Different contracts for different CCGs? CT journeys to hospital 45p a mile for appointment; 35p a mile to visit a patient Hospital transport is well funded but limited by criteria but to increase transport will decrease NHS budget in hospital Co-ordination of people with different health needs from same area (post code) not able to co-ordinate by hospital
Babergh/ Mid Suffolk	Been made a key issue due to non-emergency criteria being implemented more strictly, significantly affecting community transport Buses at West Suffolk hospital get caught up with car traffic Resources are not sufficient - in future West Suffolk College students will have more accommodation in town so opportunity for higher student use

	<p>Appointments – some at 8am Need to group e.g. 3 living in IP3 area could travel together</p> <p>Need intelligent appointments (workers early) or</p> <p>Use public/demand responsive timetables to make/change appointments</p> <p>Need to put timetables in with letter from hospital</p> <p>Staff have no flexibility for times.</p> <p>Felixstowe bus drops about a mile away.</p> <p>Hospital staff have set shift times</p> <p>Need quantity of staff/passenger numbers</p>
Ipswich	<p>Congestion issue - people chose to drive because its direct and quicker and its possible to park in the local area (£2 to park in Ipswich hospital, £6 in Nottingham)</p> <p>Adds to congestion around the hospital</p> <p>Ipswich Buses to in and out of hospital not around the site at all</p>
Suffolk Coastal	<p>Hospital transport is a key issue</p>
Forest Heath/ St Edmundsbury	<p>Car parking around West Suffolk hospital is an issue – staff have been encouraged to use a park and ride from the Rugby club.</p> <p>Inconsiderate parking in residential areas by staff and patients frustrates local residents</p> <p>As a single site hospital WSH doesn't encounter the same problems as Nottingham 24/7 working places more demands on public transport.</p> <p>There is an issue about bus ticketing – buses from 3 different operators travel regularly from bus station to hospital - tickets aren't interchangeable.</p> <p>Conflicting incentives e.g. park and ride VS cheap car parking</p>
2.	What do we need to do to tackle this issue?
Suffolk wide	<p>Integrated ticketing.</p> <p>Improved CT / Network bus / Rail connections.</p> <p>Improved information.</p> <p>Rail stations could display transport options.</p>
Waveney	<p>Need to map/gaps who can do what under different legislation and drive upwards change in policies</p> <p>Use a P & R service in Eastern Region – use local bus operators?</p> <p>Parking - too expensive work with local bus operators</p> <p>NHS looking at cheaper alternatives to transport without charge and in keeping with legislation/policy</p> <p>Leaflets provided to patients on transport options available.</p>
Babergh/ Mid Suffolk	<p>Local partnerships – encouraged by Traffic Act.</p> <p>Develop Quality Bus Partnership – SCC/St Edmundsbury BC/Operators/NHS/ Employers (Local Chambers Service could help if all the right people get together)</p>
Ipswich	<p>Look at service provision – e.g. in Nottingham Park and Ride runs a 15 minute shuttle service to the hospital and it runs around the hospital site</p> <p>Raise awareness of transport options – there are 4 or 5 operators running into the Ipswich hospital site.</p> <p>Integrated ticketing - one single ticket – two passes more expensive. SCC done nothing to develop this.</p>

Suffolk Coastal	Look at logistics - capacity at hospitals Accessibility from areas and to hospitals (geographical issues)
Forest Heath/ St Edmundsbury	Challenge culture and get people out of cars Impact on residents parking Need a clear plan to deal with residents parking conflicts Can different operators accept each other's tickets?
3.	How can we do this?
Suffolk wide	Online information. Hospital information packs related to patient / staff postcodes. Postcodes to assist with advance transport planning. Improved bus access on hospital sites. Identifying appointment types – Short / Long / Same day – hot spots. Transport hubs.
Waveney	Undertake a larger study of people who do/'don't have transport to hospital and what the needs are of the people. NHS limping along patching up.
Babergh/ Mid Suffolk	Develop Bus Quality Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find people/involve stakeholders (College, supermarkets, hospital) • Pump prime funds (future commercial)
Ipswich	Promote Park and Ride in west Ipswich. CT could feed into P + R Need to offer information about transport discounts - link to regular appointments Identify champions in organisations to promote use of public transport Taxis could play a bigger part Need to consider hospital transport options as part of wider transport strategy development - cycle and bus
Suffolk Coastal	There are no pretty solutions – one role of the Forum could be to provoke/facilitate discussion NHS/CCGs need to help – has some responsibility as they offer the appointments
Forest Heath/ St Eds	Need a parking facility linked to the bus station (so can offer shuttle) for patients and staff

In Suffolk hospitals do not seem to see the issues they create (difficulties for patients to access appointments, discharging from hospital, congestion and parking issues in the surrounding area) as their issues, in which they should have a role in mitigating.

Closing remarks from Cllr Graham Newman

- Lot to cover in one morning and there is a need to think through what we can improve and what the priorities are
- The Forum seems to have been a success with people swapping business cards enabling conversations to continue in the short and longer term.
- Documenting the restrictions in legislation – all the contradictions that exist could be a starting point with there being an opportunity to get it on the table with the new government in May
- Need is County wide but we need to work with local partners on local solutions as we know that what might work in one area (for example on Sunday services) may not work elsewhere
- In a time of restrained finances we can't afford not to work together.
- Further ideas are welcomed, plus volunteers to host, lead and help or suggestions for issue of the day should be emailed to Belinda.godbold@suffolk.gov.uk

Next steps

This section of the report reflects on everything heard and shared and presents a way forward and invites participants to comment further on the proposals by 9 March 2015.

Governance

Meeting twice a year

Rotating chair between commercial operators, community transport, Stakeholders, and Public sector, invited by Suffolk County Council who will act as the administrator. Chair will be asked if they would like to suggest a venue, set the topic of the day and help devise the agenda.

Purpose of the Forum

- Co-create new ways of working and develop new partnerships
- Facilitate networking, information sharing and involvement in strategic planning
- Promote innovation and sharing of resources
- Share good practice
- Lobby on legislative issues

Regular invitation list to the Forum:

Major public transport operators in Suffolk – commercial, community bus and taxi

Key stakeholders – Age UK, Healthwatch, Suffolk Youth Parliament, Suffolk User Forum (Disability Group), East Suffolk Travellers Association, SALC

Public sector - LAs, NHS, FE Colleges, CCG, MOD

Groups that would no longer meet: Bus operators forum (organised by Suffolk County Council)

Task and Finish Sub groups – to be set up as required

Total transport – draw from participants to help frame the bid to Department for Transport and contribute to resulting research work should the bid be successful. Report progress back at next meeting.

Other key issues raised that could be the subject of specific development:

1. Multi-operator integrated ticketing – can be used to broker a Quality Partnership scheme (additional feedback received from Chambers). Could look at this in St Edmundsbury area involving SCC, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, Operators, NHS, and major employers. Chambers is willing to help. This could complement the Total Transport Pilot Bid to the Department for Transport.
2. Corporate Social Responsibility – need to clarify strategic policy on social value
3. Documenting restrictions and contradictions in legislation - ready to present to the new government post May 2015
4. Travel Training for older people who have had to give up driving and have not used public transport for a very long time. Volunteers could support the training aimed at confidence building/journey planning. Idea came from networking with Tessa Litherland NHS, Debbie Blowers BACT and Sue Davey
5. Future planning – big doctors surgeries in Woodbridge Road and Lattice barn are going to combine and be on the periphery of Ipswich hospital. This could be an opportunity for integrated travel planning. The broader issue for Suffolk is that some NHS services are decentralising to reduce the need for people to travel long distances to hospitals.
6. Promote Park and Ride in West Ipswich to get to Ipswich Hospital and discount schemes available for regular appointments.

Appendix 1: Attendees

Waveney		Facilitator: Kirsty Marjoram
1	Steve Wickers	First Eastern Counties
2	Debbie Blowers	Beccles/Bungay Area Community Transport
3	Erika Spall	Suffolk Youth Parliament
4	Peter Twiss	Waveney Community Bus
5	Tessa Litherland	NHS Great Yarmouth and Waveney Clinical Commissioning Group
6	Cllr Ritchie	Suffolk County Council
7	Lyn Butler	CATs
Babergh/Mid Suffolk		Facilitator: Tracey Vobe
1	Jeff Clayton	Chambers & Son
2	Kevin Marshall	Arrow Taxis
3	Billy Morton	Community Action Suffolk
4	Jim Overbury	AGE UK
5	Margaret Beardsell	Station Welfare Co-ordinator, RAF Wattisham
6	Michael Meredith	Suffolk Youth Parliament
7	Cllr Mary Evans	SCC
Ipswich		Facilitator: Belinda Godbold
1	Malcolm Robson	Ipswich Buses
2	Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council
3	Cllr Sandra Gage	Suffolk County Council
4	Rachel Price	Essex County Council
5	Linda McCord	Passenger Focus
6	Ian Seggar	Suffolk CC
7	Ian Combellack	Nottingham Community transport
8	Chris Wouldhave	Nottingham Community transport
9	Isabel Cockayne	NHS/PCT
Suffolk Coastal		Facilitator: Phil Magill
1	Carolyn Barnes	Waveney and Suffolk Coastal DC
2	Derek Cocker	CATS
3	Cllr Caroline Page	Suffolk County Council
4	Ben Coulson	Chair Of ALBUM
5	Linda Hoggarth	Suffolk User Forum (Disability Group)
6	Peter Cogar	East Suffolk Travellers Association
7	Cllr Finch	Suffolk County Council
8	Cllr Newman	Suffolk County Council
9	Mandi Cox-Osborne	Rock Barracks Woodbridge
Forest Heath /St Edmundsbury		Facilitator: Aidan Dunn
1	Bill Hiron	Stephensons of Essex
2	Andy Ambrose	Arrow taxis
3	Cllr Peter Stevens	St Edmundsbury
4	Mrs Kim Fishenden	OTC Senior Team Leader, Traffic Commissioner's Office
5	Nicholas S Turk	RAF Honington
6	David Wheeler	SALC
7	Jan Bloomfield	West Suffolk Hospital
8	Jean Le Fleming	West Suffolk Hospital
Suffolk		Facilitator: Sue Davey
1	Alan Braybrooke	Galloway
2	Councillor Phil Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
3	Susannah Waters	Suffolk Community Transport
4	Richard Turfitt	OTC (Office of the Traffic Commissioner)
5	Lisa Bambridge	HIVE Wattisham
6	Nick Burfield	Suffolk Chamber
7	Dean Robbie	Ipswich Buses
8	Paul Oxley	Abellio

Public Transport Forum – NEXT STEPS Feedback Form

Name:

Date:

Organisation:

Please give your views on the 'Next Steps' section on page 7 of the report.

Do you agree with the recommendation?	Yes	No	Alternative suggestion/comment
Governance			
Two Forum meetings pa			
Rotating chairman			
Would your organisation be willing to chair?			
Purpose of the Forum			
Regular Invitation list			
Groups no longer meet			

Please indicate your agreement with the following and prioritise (1 being top priority for action)

Task and Finish Groups	Agree		Priority	Comments
	Yes	No	1 - 5	
1. Multi-operator integrated ticketing and Quality Partnership				
2. Corporate Social Responsibility – how its handled in contracts and procurement				
3. Document restrictions and contradictions in public transport/licencing legislation				
4. Travel training for older people giving up car licences				
5. Future planning co-ordination of service provision with public transport				
6. Promotion of Park and Ride in West Ipswich with direct link to Ipswich Hospital				

Other Suggestions for Forum Issue of the day

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Email to Belinda.godbold@suffolk.gov.uk Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, Ipswich IP1 2BX by 9 March