

Second Public Transport Forum - 24 July 2015

Held at Landmark House Ipswich

The second Public Transport Forum was opened by Cllr James Finch, Portfolio Holder at Suffolk County Council for Highways, Public Transport and Farming. He stressed that the aim of the forum is to:

- Focus on new ways of working
- Facilitating networking
- Encouraging innovation
- Sharing good practice
- Lobbying for legislative change

The overall aim is to grow public transport. He also emphasised that this is “Your Forum” – Suffolk County Council are happy to administer but we would like people to volunteer to chair.

Introduction – Aidan Dunn now Head of Public Transport and Assistant Director Strategic Finance and head of procurement.

At the last meeting the focus was on the range of issues facing public transport as seen by commercial operators, community transport, passengers and Suffolk County Council. In particular the pressures on Suffolk County Council’s budgets were highlighted. The opportunity for funding from the Department for Transport for a total transport pilot project that looked at how services across organisations could be better organised to maximise capacity was discussed and participants were encouraged to support a Suffolk/Essex bid. There was also a special focus on hospital transport where good practice from Nottinghamshire was explored (Medilink) and we reflected on what the specific issues are in Suffolk. There have been follow up meetings with the 3 CCGs covering Suffolk to explore possibilities for closer working, particularly in tendering for services and increasing integration between transport services.

Presentations

1. [Getting around in rural communities – the Total Transport research project](#)

Dr Belinda Godbold, Travel Transformation Programme manager, Suffolk County Council.
[Presentation](#) is published on Public Transport Forum web page.

Questions /Comments

1.1 West Suffolk is under represented in the research, of particular concern due to the loss of bus services in the Mildenhall area over recent years.

Answer: The research looks at 7 pilot areas of varying degrees of rurality in Suffolk and Essex as this is a joint project. Unfortunately there is not the resource to gather information from the whole of the County. The area around Bury St Edmunds is included as one of the pilot areas so there is some representation of West Suffolk.

1.2 It would be helpful for a base questionnaire to be sent to Forum members.

Answer: The role of this will be discussed with Futuregov.

1.3 Will stage reports be made public?

Answer: Yes

2. [Rural Transport tender](#)

Aidan Dunn, Assistant Director Finance and head of Procurement and Public Transport [Presentation](#) is published on Public Transport Forum web age.

Questions/Comments

2.1 Why 7 areas based on District Council boundaries and not based on transport routes?

Answer: It is thought residents identify with District Council areas.

2.2 But would this not imply District Councils had some role in administering?

Answer: No, this is not the intention. The 7 contracts may be won by one supplier or 2 by one and 5 by another so the marketing and contracting arrangements may be for larger areas in practice. Moving up to District level provision is considered to be an appropriate step change depending on the way groups of operators may decide to join together in consortium. Some may find themselves challenged to serve wider areas.

2.3 Should the rural transport tender be delayed until the results of the Total Transport research are available?

Answer: The Total Transport research findings will be fed in over the next few months but consideration is being given to lengthening the timescale for the rural transport tender.

2.4 With the devolution debate 7 District council areas may not be relevant in the future.

Answer: The contract is for 5 years and the geography can be reviewed accordingly.

2.5 How will the new model pick up the unmet need amongst young people?

Answer: Bidders will be encouraged to demonstrate how they will organise services that will enable young people to access transport to connect with commercial services to enable travel to college and employment.

3. Issues for military communities in Suffolk

Panel: Lisa Bambridge, Wattisham HIVE; Stirling Askew and Mandi Cox-Osborne, Rock Barracks, Woodbridge facilitated by Belinda Godbold.

3.1 Wattisham

- 2 Army Air regiments , 1900 service personnel, 545 families some live in Hadleigh
- Rapid response unit – can be deployed anywhere in the world in 72 hours
- Served by Demand responsive Suffolk Links service
- Many don't drive
- Family members need to get to Bildeston and Needham market for doctors surgery (no bus services) rely on family, friends, and Suffolk Links for transport
- Hospital - 3 bus services to Ipswich
- No bus service on Sundays for family days out
- Without community transport (LINKS) there would be a real problem. Current service is very accommodating – they do try to help for short notice trips to doctors.

3.2 Rock Barracks, Woodbridge

- Located on the former American air base, Army 23rd Parachute Engineer Regiment
- Home to 1,500 personnel and 50 civilians plus families – nearly 5,000 people on the former base area (although some of the housing has been sold off to the private sector).
- Isolated location
- Rapid reaction units - 5 days' notice
- Families use demand responsive transport to access doctors, schools and employment

- 3 timetabled buses a day
- Cycling dangerous
- 5 miles to nearest doctor's surgery (part time surgery near Hollesley)
- Farlingaye is popular school but if year group full they have to go Alde Valley, Leiston or Felixstowe. One family actually had a child at Alde Valley and Felixstowe.
- Employment opportunities are restricted – little on offer in the area and travel is difficult
- Difficult for young people to travel particularly for Saturday jobs
- Difficult to access leisure activities at weekends and evenings, often need to get taxi home
- One bus in the morning at 7.30am will get students to Suffolk One
- Families are choosing courses to fit limited transport availability
- Difficult to get to Otley College but young people would like to get there
- Secondary school transport is free but Post 16 is not and this is a strain on family budgets
- Families are at the Base normally for 2 years but does vary depending on specific role of personnel – may stay 5 years
- Driving licence for young people is difficult – cost issue for family

3.3 Initiatives tried

- Survey undertaken on Rock barracks with CATS helped identify that transport was wanted for
 - Evenings and weekends
 - Employment, night school
- Got a minibus but need volunteers to drive. CATS do the administration
- Difficult to find volunteers (could be soldiers but can't rely on them as may be moved at short notice)

4. Workshops

4.1 Unmet demand – hotspots for the rural transport tender Facilitated by Belinda Godbold

- Health – specific needs
 - Individuals have mobility problems
 - Need easy access across hospital sites e.g. Papworth
 - Challenges for park and walk e.g. Mothers, Disabled, older people
- Volunteers traveling to hospital – takes their time up
- Super practices for GPs - new hub sites for transport links. Need to look at expected changes in health service provision and link to Health and Social Care integration transformation programme
- Often want or need services door to door for health e.g. in Hadleigh. Lots of community car trips because of changes
- Duration of travel and timing of appointments can be important factors when planning travel to health appointments
- After some health procedures
 - you are advised not to drive
 - or not to travel on public transport due to risk of infection so public transport not an option
 - Need appropriate transport options – could be community car
- SCC Sponsored service enables Felixstowe to Woodbridge for employment. Other routes do similar elsewhere.
- Young people to get to college
- Main areas of employment e.g. East Suffolk areas; West Suffolk Bury St Edmunds to Newmarket and Mildenhall. Some scheduled services

- Low numbers to travel because of sparsity – Demand responsive may be appropriate
- Bury - Need links between College to Rail station to get to small towns – pick up in Total Transport research
- Some good bus services in Bury but need to link to DRT
- Where do you put interchange hubs? Need to consider space for multiple vehicles, passenger facilities.
- Diss to Bury for employment
- Need to look at links between bus services to get good mix of different types of passengers
- Need London by rail strategy e.g. Sudbury no buses when get home 6pm
- Linkages to wider employment e.g. no route Mildenhall to Ely
- Social care employees getting into care homes located in the middle of nowhere
- Planning to meet uncertain demand?
- Changing nature of demand e.g. large care homes rural areas and border urban
- More planned integration between town planning and increased demand analysis – be proactive. Need data for marketing.
- Young people – national data revealing behaviours regarding car ownership/driving
- Cost of car ownership and learning to drive becoming increasing problem for under 21s
- Rural Suffolk cannot afford to live and work based in rural. Higher earners tend to commute from rural to urban whilst poor urban commute out of towns
- Shift potential in market - Young people from rural areas not high earners, need transport
- Young people working patterns evenings and weekends
- New batch of volunteers needed – not all would want to work with young people
- DBS checks
- Other volunteers do not want to transport young people
- Otley College – lots of young people and sponsored services. Poor services to get to college outside normal college times. Services are tied to start and finish times.
- Strategies for young people – underestimating demand for travel?
 - Disabled people – underestimate need for transport
 - Non- disabled - overestimate need
- Community covenant – any potential to financially contribute to services?
- Technological solution/app technology to facilitate use of DRT?
- Data on travel demand/trends to inform new market is needed

4.2 Integration – What does it mean to you?

Facilitated by Tracey Vobe

- Need to identify the movements and strategic times
- Journey to school/work - most expensive
- In rural area high demand for school – need to encourage use of public bus so share provision
- Lack of volunteers in rural areas to run bus
- People want to go to different places
- Is it really a transport problem?
 - Communities need to work together
 - Put facilities in one place so can create a hub eg Woodbridge so can get to Ipswich and Farlingaye
- Need more people on buses to put more money into the public transport system
- Current hubs at Woodbridge and Martlesham Park and ride
- More buses could go to Martlesham Park and ride – it's a good facility
- Facilities needed at hubs need to include shelter so people don't have to wait in the rain
- Hub or infrastructure first?
- Copdock Park and ride another good hub and already used by Dial a ride

- People with mobility issues don't like to change vehicles
- Integrated tickets? Network ticket - Oyster type
- Young people - 2 tickets more expensive
- Developing hubs - need to develop marketing - if more people use and link with CT, this will help fund CT
- The more frequent the buses, the larger the impact a hub will have
- East Kent hub increased passengers – doubled but East Kent is different to Suffolk where there are more miles between towns
- Link cross town (so options for going to two places not one)
- Need hourly service and patronage to support it
- Less car parking in Ipswich would help bus services – this is key
- Need to make best use of bus service
- Would like more bus priority measures into Ipswich
- Car sharing schemes to get to hubs
- Good neighbour schemes in Woodbridge
- Need more volunteers to drop people off at hubs
- If volunteer, want to feel there has been a benefit to the customer
- Switches between different modes or more than one operator increased costs
- Concessionary pass holders not being able to travel before 9.30am is problematic for integration
- Different offer in London for concessions pre 9.30am
- Scope for innovative cross supplier ticket, making best use of technology
- Integration of services and hub needed
- Need multi-agency working to achieve integration e.g. shopping or getting to schools and colleges
- Need to integrate better than we do now for example:
 - Integrated tickets – enable people to travel further (penalty costly)
 - Smaller hubs e.g.
 - Pub car parks
 - Saxmundham/Leiston hubs
 - Harder to find in Tunstall
 - Martlesham Park and Ride
 - Rail stations(infrastructure already there)
 - Degree of public confidence
 - In railway (confidence that service will be there for next 11 years, unlike bus service less confidence)
 - Rural/urban - different levels of confidence
 - Overheads spread over fewer people in rural area hubs
- Mildenhall Bus station good hub
- Mildenhall base
 - currently close inward focus but will be less so in the future
 - source of unmet demand
 - MOD funding possible?
 - SCC signed military covenant and support
 - Facilities/expertise at military bases
- Integrated bus/rail ticket - operator threatened to take off bus – better communications needed
- 80 people a year use Plusbus service – needs better marketing
- Ipswich bus station located away from rail station

- Timings of bus (cross over for operators) can be difficult e.g A to B to C, if journey to B is 5 minutes too late to make connection have to wait another 20 minutes – possible workstream to look at integration?
- Fornham All Saints – worth considering as interchange?
- Beauty of DRT not restricted to times
- Workstreams – small? Need all operators around the table
- Tourism - information on bus/rail is limited and not easy to access

4.3 Issues raised about the rural services tender generally

- Development of 7 areas?
- Previously 3 educational areas – Bury, Lowestoft, central – would it be better to divide contracts in this way? Variable sizes
 - Wattisham 2 GPs in different directions – how could you fit this into 7 area model?
 - If had 3 easier to look at travel to work, school, health and entertainment
 - Bigger areas fit better to transition to a new model
- District would be easy to make contact and get across District
- Could create another problem by linked to District area – people think linked to District Council
- Logo possible – like Suffolk on Board – x7 Districts on Board
- Don't rush it through for August

5. Conclusions

5.1 Things to be passed to the Total Transport research project to consider

- Possibility of a base questionnaire to Public Transport Forum participants
- Next Public Transport Forum would like to consider findings in the Stage 1 report.
- Need to feed in any relevant findings over August – September into Rural transport tender work. Specific questions that Total Transport might consider as they go about their research are:
 - How much is known about met and unmet demand?
 - What is the potential size of the young person market?
 - Are there any person centric views on the appropriate size of areas for the Rural transport tender?
 - Is there going to be an issue about rural transport being able to manage demand in the future?
 - Is there a demand to justify improving links between West Suffolk College, Bury St Edmunds rail station and small settlements outside Bury? (Relevant to Bury study area)
 - Volunteers – what is the risk of a shortage constraining service provision?

5.2 Things to be considered in the further development of the Rural Transport tender

- How much is really known about unmet demand?
- Seven or three areas better from outset?
- Should we delay Rural transport tender until Total Transport has reported?
- Data – need to put maps of key destinations on Rural transport website e.g. new purpose built medical centres like Framfield House, Woodbridge and Grove Medical centre, Felixstowe.

5.3 Workstreams

In response to the themes raised in this and the first Public Transport Forum two workstreams will be set up as follows:

Integration

- To consider integration hubs – review what we have now and what we need in future, including role of park and ride sites
- Buses - key locations military bases, health facilities, Sudbury rail links to London services, West Suffolk College, Otley College

This will relate to new ways of working and thinking bigger picture for example car sharing schemes to get to transport hubs.

Health

Working with Healthwatch in response to their recent publication on the findings of a survey of Non-emergency Patient transport and the themes raised at the first Forum meeting:

- Identify gaps in service provision and seek methods through which they can be addressed
- Increase awareness of transport options and costs among the residents of Suffolk

Invite Healthwatch to join the Public Transport Forum and facilitate this workstream.

If you would specifically like to be included in the workstream please email

Belinda.godbold@suffolk.gov.uk.

6. Date of the next meeting

5 Feb 2016 when the workstreams will report and the first report from the Total Transport research will be available.

Public Transport Forum 24 July Attendees

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
1	Paul Oxley	Abellio
2	Andy Ambrose	Arrow
3	Kevin Marshall	Arrow
4	Debbie Blowers	BACTS
5	Derek Cocker	CATS
6	Lynn Butler	CATS
7	John Thompson	East Suffolk Travellers Association
8	Robert Richardson	Essex County Council
9	Bryan Frost	Felixstowe Travel Watch and town council
10	Steve Wickers	First
11	Alan Braybrooke	Galloway
12	Joy Moran	Hadleigh CT
13	Phil Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
14	Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council
15	Dean Robbie	Ipswich Buses
16	Duncan Merran	Mid Suffolk/Babergh District Council
17	Kim Fishenden	Office of the Traffic Commissioner
18	David Wheeler	SALC
19	Suzannah Walters	SCT
20	Bill Hiron	Stephensons
21	Caroline Page	SCC Councillor
22	James Finch	SCC Councillor
23	Sandra Gage	SCC Councillor
24	Richard Baldwin	West Suffolk Council
25	Lisa Bambridge	Wattisham
26	Mandi Cox-Osbourne	Woodbridge Hive
27	Stirling Askew	Woodbridge Rock Barracks
28	Sue Davey	SCC
29	Simon Barnett	SCC
30	Sarah Vize	SCC
31	Tracey Vobe	SCC
32	Belinda Godbold	SCC
33	Aidan Dunn	SCC