

## Public Transport Forum Report - 15 April 2016

Held in Endeavour House, Suffolk County Council, Ipswich

The third Public Transport Forum was attended by 28 people (see Appendix 1 for Attendance list).

**1. Welcome - Cllr James Finch**, Suffolk County Council Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport Presentation is published on Public Transport web page.

The meeting was opened by Cllr James Finch, who stressed the importance of this being “Your Forum” and the opportunity it gave to:

- Network
- Encourage innovation
- Share good practice
- lobby for legislative change
- focus on service improvements

An update on the progress with the Rural transport service contracts was given, in future to be called “Connecting Communities”. New service providers will all be operational on **13 June**, providing one telephone number for each District Council area.

Contractor	Area covered
The Voluntary Network (TVN)	Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury
Bury St Edmunds Volunteer Centre (BSEVC)	Mid Suffolk and Ipswich
Hadleigh Community Transport group (HCTG)	Babergh
Coastal Accessible Transport Service (CATS)	Suffolk Coastal
BACT	Waveney

Focus is currently on the communication of change and the range of activities that will be going on, particularly the launch events in each District open to District/Borough Councillors, stakeholders and the public. Attendees were encouraged to attend to meet their local operator and to promote within their organisations.

Places can be booked via [SuffolkonBoard](#).

The key benefits of the new rural transport service were identified as:

- a “joined up” rural transport service
- a better more comprehensive service
- integrated with mainstream bus services
- the thinking developed out of this forum
- Cllr Finch will be taking a close personal interest, supported by Cllr Fleming.

## **2. Introduction to the Forum – Aidan Dunn, Assistant Director Finance and Head of Procurement and Passenger Transport**

An update on recent discussions on the devolution deal for East Anglia was given, explaining that:

- It involves transfer of power and funding from Westminster to local decision makers
- The deal for East Anglia could be worth £900m to invest in infrastructure and £175m in housing
- Science and technology are key aspects of the East of England powerhouse
- The deal has not yet been done -feedback from consultation is on going
- The deal needs to be ratified by Local Authorities
- It would result in a Combined Authority and directly elected Mayor
- The Combined Authority would have responsibility for a multi-year, consolidated and devolved local transport budget and for a new Key Route Network of local authority roads
- The Buses Bill also offers an opportunity to do things differently, with greater integration and the possibility of franchising.

Overall it is too early to say what the implications could be for public transport.

### **Discussion:**

Need to link to investment in the rail network and work more closely with Network Rail. Buses Bill is of interest but more could be done within the existing legislation. Need to develop a Quality Bus partnership in Ipswich.

## **3. Getting around in rural communities – the Total transport research project**

Adam Walther – FutureGov

Presentation is published on Public Transport web page.

FutureGov is a digital and design company that focuses on improving public services. It has been contracted by Suffolk and Essex County Councils to research rural transport issues and what we can do to improve services. Having worked with users and service providers in both Counties for the last 9 months they are now have a proposal that needs robust challenge.

Transport in rural areas is a huge challenge - of logistics, legalities and finance. There is a trade off between the cost of travel and convenience. However there is huge potential as there is much innovation going on: real time data, software, smartphones, car sharing, electric vehicles, driverless cars. Community transport is an important community resource. The research has taken time to talk to 55 staff across 11 community transport organisations and 85 users across 15 locations including all age ranges.

The key findings reveal a wide range of reasons to travel - health, leisure, education etc. A number of hypotheses have been tested around:

- Value of real time information
- Ride sharing
- Smarter payment systems
- Back office route planning

Experiences have been mapped revealing that users and providers do not understand each other very well – users are not aware of the Endeavour card, timetables or what services are provided. It was decided to start with Demand Responsive transport because it feeds into the existing bus network and look at how usage and service supply could be increased. A prototype mobile app has been developed and the intention is to get feedback and to build a Minimum Viable product for testing in a pilot area. The app enables the customer to ask for a service and a number of potential suppliers to respond, offering a service at varying times and costs.

**4. Park and ride update** – Belinda Godbold, SCC Travel Transformation Programme Manager Presentation is published on Public Transport web page.

SCC is looking at the future of the Ipswich Park and Ride because the County Council faces a £156m funding deficit in the next 4 years and can no longer afford the £712k running costs. No decision has been taken to close the 2 sites as we realise it is an important facility for people who do not wish to drive into the town centre. Hence consideration is being given to ways SCC can cease its subsidy.

Park and Ride started in Ipswich in 1997, building up to 3 sites by 2007. Funding pressures resulted in the closure to the Bury Road site in 2011. The two remaining sites at Copdock and Martlesham have 550 car parking spaces at each site, are open 7am to 7pm everyday except Sunday, with buses running every 12 minutes in a loop from one site to the other. Both have staffed terminal buildings with seated waiting areas, toilets and ticket purchase. There are electric charging points which are regularly used. Tickets are per passenger £2.50 or £3 depending on the distance travelled. Copdock runs non-stop to the rail station but diverts to SuffolkOne in the peak period. It has a bus lane along London Road whereas Martlesham has not bus lane priorities. Martlesham has a stop at Kesgrave High School and then runs non-stop to Ipswich Hospital. Around 1,000 tickets are sold per day with an average of 1,800 single journeys being made daily.

The challenge is to make the Ipswich park and ride self funding and there are 2 aspects to this:

- Provision of services
- Making the maintenance of the sites self-funding

SCC has been working with local operators on the provision of commercial services. This will likely mean breaking the service into 2 parts with different operators. The current contract that is due to run to November 2018 will need to be terminated early. Ways of promoting the services with Ipswich hospital and large employers is being considered. Infrastructure changes may also be needed to improve the timing of commercial services.

In terms of generating income to maintain the sites, other public sector uses to share the sites, retail and interim use of unused parking spaces are being considered.

Agreement has still to be reached with the operators and the earliest service changes would take place could be January 2017. Further consideration needs to be given to infrastructure improvements and to the acceptability of income generating uses.

## **5. Update on current education travel issues - Jan Scott SCC Senior Infrastructure Officer (Admissions & Transport)**

Presentation is published on Public Transport web page.

Information about travel arrangements for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is published on Suffolk's Local Offer, something SCC is required to do by law. Through the work of the Travel Transformation Programme SCC is seeking to offer more choice and control for families, including for example travel training to enable children to travel by public transport, independently to school. This develops their life skills and supports the Preparing for Adulthood Outcomes including employment and being part of the local community. Area wide Ofsted/CQC inspections will be commencing across the country from May 2016 and these will include inspection of travel arrangements.

The Post 16 Policy Statement for 2016-17 has just undergone consultation and plays a central role in signposting students to alternative travel options to schools and colleges in Suffolk. This now includes routes run by individual schools and colleges. SCC needs help to get information to families about travel options, discounts that may be available, and timetables for services.

SCC spends £20m per year on transporting children to school. The market place for home to school is growing and changing for suppliers:

- SCC faces rising costs from arrangements to support vulnerable learners – those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, Pupil Referral Units and Out of County provision;
- Pressure from new development often in the countryside more than 2/3 miles from schools;
- Academies able to change start and finish times and lengths of days and terms;
- White Paper – Educational Excellence everywhere is seeking to empower schools, parents and communities to provide school transport services where this makes sense locally.

## **6. Workshops – Key points**

### **6.1 Park and Ride and East Ipswich congestion issues**

What is important? (Group 1)

- Elderly don't like driving into Ipswich (prefer to park outside)
- Need to look at market segments and who might stop using P & R services - commuter, Shoppers, Regular/irregular users
- Ensure students travelling to ONE can continue to do so
- Hospital
  - some drive round for 40 minutes to find a space
  - encourage use of park and ride (missed opportunity)
  - target staff or target relatives
  - some hospital staff work shift patterns (don't necessarily match P & R outside working times)
  - research has shown 15% of cars relate to staff working 9am to 5pm. Could encourage them to park off site and charge patients more to park on site.
- Retain/not retain due to congestion – time delays. Sometimes have to cut links to station already.
- Some view that cross town has had an impact on passenger loss (takes too long)
- Speed up P & R - merge with current bus services, increase frequency and price.
- Bus priority measures will be key to increasing speed - double benefit - not want to lose passengers at beginning as it is difficult to get them back.
- Cheap car parks in Ipswich have the impact of increasing cars driving into town /more congestion

- London Road P & R – one car- 5 adults £10 charge would be reasonable (currently £4)
- 20 cars all single car drivers makes space on the road for bus
- Car congestion prevents shoppers getting into Ipswich
- Community transport running 3pm to 5pm in peak traffic congestion time
- Could have cheaper fares in school holidays
- Need to improve road layout on east side of Ipswich
- Convenience factor low or high for buses?
  - Low (in rural)
  - High (in central towns)
- UTMC needs to be working
- Need a certain level of traffic congestion to make bus priority to improve bus use
- Culture is an issue - in Germany excellent efficiency so people use buses (perception in UK is it is not efficient)
- Bus priority measures would be difficult in some parts of Ipswich (width of highway not there use to houses – need to get the whole line of traffic moving)
- Some unintended consequences – traffic caught in outer Ipswich

#### Group 2

- Hassle free (park, pay, get on bus, not having to drive into town, no need to look for car park space)
- Time is important
- Use as a visitor – quick shop in town and back
- Different customers – time is an issue 15 minutes may be too long and people will drive instead
- Use bus from Woodbridge 64,65,63
- P & R bus is useful for users that want to get straight to the station – direct service
- Hospital (Visiting) bus stop at hospital?
- Currently hospital have a limited number of buses on site (at capacity)
- Add Sunday and evenings but not as frequent
- Elton John concert P & R worked well
- Offer daily rates – Smart card discount for regular users. Green travel £1.15 per day for commuters
- Lot of car parking spaces in Ipswich town centre
- Split sites. Serve hospital by Martlesham end only. If congestion at London road it impact s Martlesham. Through service end to end gets delayed.
- Copdock P 7 R needs to go direct to the station
- Oyster card for London travel - need to do something similar for Ipswich. Parking at station costs £7 P & R is cheaper.
- People who live in Bury St Edmunds drive to Ipswich to get the train to London to avoid Stowmarket.
- New train franchise could be an opportunity for multi-modal ticketing train and bus
- Need to make things easier – better service and increased ease
- Extend hours of service? P & R ends at 7pm. After 7pm can use service 13 with P & R ticket up to 11pm
- Notice boards – one item people read, many items they don't
- Publicity of P & R bus – need to promote extra service 13 (after 7pm) if you miss it

#### Traffic congestion

- Takes ages to get off A14
- Too many traffic lights
- Side streets empty

- Norwich Road congested
- Need change of culture to get people to use public transport
- Buses in Europe are much more efficient
- Education of bus use

## **6.2 Developing the Total transport concept**

User testing of the prototype was undertaken.

The aim was

- To gauge passenger's desirability on an hypothetically improved DRT service
- To get feedback around increased visibility of supply
- To understand the major triggers/ barriers for users
- To understand the detailed nuances to make it happen

Comments made to Adam Walther from FutureGov have been included in the further development of the project.

## 15 April 2016 Attendance list

Carolyn Barnes	Waveney and Suffolk Coastal DC
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council
Councillor Phil Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
Lizzi Cocker	West Suffolk
ClIr John Burn	West Suffolk DCs
ClIr Caroline Page	Suffolk County Council
ClIr James Finch	Suffolk County Council
ClIr Jessica Fleming	Suffolk County Council
Vanessa Lomax	Age UK
Linda Hogarth	Disability Forum for Suffolk
Jeremy Cooper	Ipswich Buses
Steve Wickers	First Eastern Counties
Trevor Garrod	East Suffolk Travellers Association
Debbie Blowers	Beccles/Bungay Area Community Transport
Lynn Butler	CATS
Anita Taylor	West Suffolk CCG
Jean Le Fleming	West Suffolk Hospital
Warrant Officer Bob Hargeaves	Honnington RAF
Bryan Frost	Campaign for Better Transport Chair bmwfrost@btopenworld.com Felixstowe Travel Watch and Town Council
Billy Morton	CAS
Alan Braybrook	Galloway

### SCC Officers

Aidan Dunn  
Belinda Godbold  
Tracey Vobe  
Jan Scott  
Graeme Mateer  
Andrew Gee  
Simon Barnes