

Suffolk Enhanced Bus Partnership - Passenger Interest Group

Meeting via Teams on 9th August 2022

Attendees:

Simon Barnett (Chair) (Enhanced Partnership & Integrated Transport Manager, SCC), Wendy Brame (Town Clerk, Hadleigh Town Council), Calum Poole (Principal Strategic Transport Planner, SCC), Toby Warren (Policy Officer, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce), Ben Walsh (Mid Anglia Rail Passengers Association), Graham Newman (Felixstowe Travel Watch & Felixstowe Town Council obo Ash Tadjrishi, Town Clerk), Cllr James Wright (Representing bus passengers - Rushmere St Andrew), Colin Butler (Lowestoft Town Council & ESTA), Rory Lankester (West Suffolk Partnership Manager, DWP), Antonia King (Hargrave Parish Council), Victoria Walker, Tony Dawes (Bungay Town Council), Trevor Rix, Bryan Frost, Thurston Parish Council, Ronnie Knight (West Suffolk and Ipswich Partnership Manager, DWP), Mary (Nayland & Wissington Parish Council), Graham Cock, Fliss, Paul Ashton, Robert Kemp (Transport Development Manager, SCC)

Simon Barnett welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that this meeting would go through the main obligations of the partnership.

Infrastructure: currently trying to arrange a survey form to be sent out which will list all infrastructure that is in place and ask PC's to check and return.

Bus Priority: Calum Poole advised there are 8 bus priority corridors, 4 in Ipswich, 2 in Bury St Edmunds and 2 in Lowestoft plus 6 hotspots. Will be looking at possibilities of bus lanes/signal priority to prioritise bus travel and improve the journey. Also looking to commission work looking into bus rapid transit system/inter-urban system. Traffic enforcement powers were being looked at to help clear congestion at bus lanes/gates along with installation of ANPR cameras. An application for this will be put in early next year.

Graham Newman asked if anything had been done in Ipswich as it had been a longstanding issue.

Calum advised that some changes have already taken place along Norwich Road, Ipswich. General traffic changes to give some bus priority but not to the extent that had been hoped.

Permit Scheme: Simon advised of the roadwork permit scheme. Working alongside Network Assurance to look at the length of time a road is closed. Working with the utility companies to co-ordinate works so that they can be done at the same time as best as possible.

Information/Charter/Branding: Simon advised they're looking at a publicity sub group to come up with branding and to co-ordinate publicity. Ben Walsh (via Teams chat) suggested branding of Suffolk Enhanced Transport Partnership - SETS

The passenger charter is shared with Norfolk CC which launched this week. It sets out the basic minimum requirements of what you should see when travelling on public transport.

Social Necessity/Network Review: Simon advised that to qualify for covid support funding a network review survey had to be carried out with operators and returned to DfT. He has been speaking to all bus companies about the future after the funding ends in October. There have been 2 trains of thought, it will either carry on building up or services will disappear. To date SCC has not been

notified of any service cancellation. The 384/385 will be reducing to a school day operation only as not enough passenger revenue on non-school days.

Social necessity services are those routes that are subsidised. SCC spends £1.6m p/year on these services and £1m on rural transport. The Connecting Communities contracts end in Mar 23. An event was held in Kesgrave in July to discuss the way forward and what the services may look like in the future. Ben Walsh (via Teams chat) stated he found the conference very good and had lots of people with the same ideas.

Engagement: Simon advised that currently Beccles Town Service is under threat so Cllr Topping organised a catch the bus day with the town council. Members travelled on the bus throughout the day talking to passengers. If this works then it could be tried in other areas but volunteers would be needed. Cllr Wright expressed an interest in doing this on routes 4 & 59 through Rushmere.

Ticketing: At a meeting hosted by SCC operators agreed to a county wide multi-operator ticket which will allow the same ticket to be used across various operator if required to complete a journey. This will be available to all passengers not just concessions and should be live from the Autumn.

Strategic Issues: Mary asked whether a permanent stop would be installed on the A134 southbound at Nayland as there has been a temporary stop for 2 years. This is no good for anyone with mobility issues due to the verge. She requested the parish council are involved in discussion regarding stops going forward. Simon advised he did visit the area recently but can't stop where operators route their services either via the main road or through the village.

Brian Frost asked that following previous comments about inter-urban services, now the 384 service has been reduced what options are there to get between Ipswich and Bury in school holiday time? Simon responded that unfortunately there aren't any other than the train. There is no budget to support any further services. Thurston Parish Council (via Teams Chat) stated that for rural-urban passengers there is no choice but to use a bus service if there is no train.

Tony Dawes, Colin Butler and Cllr Wright all requested bus stop markings in their towns/villages. Simon requested that they email him with specific requirements as although there is no budget for this he is putting together a package of works that need doing.

Graham Cock stated (via Teams chat) that the bus from Brandon to Thetford doesn't stop at Santon Downham which has a picnic area and camp sites and would be an ideal stopping point. Also in Brandon there are 2 bus stops opposite each other meaning if both buses are there at the same time the Thetford Road is blocked.

Passenger Representation: Cllr Wright stated he was encouraged by the multi-operator ticketing. Adding bus and rail through ticketing would be great for the future. Simon advised this was already being looked into. Cllr Wright also stated frustrations over bus priorities in Fore Street.

Simon asked that people thought about how to engage with people who don't use the bus. Previously there has been canvassing in the town centre car parks. Any ideas would be welcome.

Ben Walsh (via Teams chat) suggested holding roadshows at railway stations to advertise what services went from there. Ipswich would be a good start as it has lots of services serving the station and commuters many not know about them.

Graham Cock (via Teams chat) stated he would like to see some focus on rural inter-town services and whether large supermarkets would be interested in sponsoring services to bring in customers.

AOB: Mary asked who was responsible for timetables at stops. Simon advised this was now down to the operators (with exception of main bus stations) although SCC still maintain majority of the cases.

Next meeting would be in October. Any agenda items to be sent to Simon in advance.