

SUFFOLK ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP BOARD
21st December 2022

Attendees: Councillor Alexander Nicoll (Chair), Simon Barnett, Paul Horne, Graeme Mateer, Calum Poole, Timothy Stephenson (Suffolk CC), Piers Marlow (First), Justin Wythe (Ipswich Buses) Andrew Pursey (Border Bus), Charlton Thornhill (Stagecoach), Rob Crawford (Coach Services), Gavin Smith (Hedingham/Chambers), Dean Robbie (Stephensons)

Apologies: Paul Martin (First), David Boden (Stagecoach), Heath Williams (Ipswich Buses), Bill Hiron (Stephensons)

Item		Action
1	<p>BSIP Update SLB reiterated the contents of a recent email to all operators that the year 1 BSIP update had now been submitted to the DfT and published on Suffolkonbaord.com. The main document will be revised and updated during 2023.</p> <p>PH gave a progress report on current schemes: WSP have been commissioned to work up the designs for a number of the intervention sites, starting with London Road in Ipswich. They are also preparing a report into options for Bus Rapid Transit in Suffolk and should be contacting operators for thoughts early in January 2023.</p> <p>Work is also progressing on the new Traffic Signal Policy document.</p>	PH, WSP
2	<p>Scrutiny Committee Feedback AN reported on the SCC Scrutiny Committee into bus services and funding for them on 24th Novermber, thanking Bill Hiron for his part in the process.</p> <p>SLB noted that the committee had made a number of recommendations and requested some further information. More details can be found here: Scrutiny Committee - Suffolk County Council</p>	SCC Cllrs and Officers
3	<p>DVSA Feedback and BODS SLB updated on the recent DVSA meeting with SCC – they were able to confirm that no Suffolk operators had required investigation during 2022. However there were concerns that not all operators were fully participating in the Bus Open Data scheme.</p> <p>CP requested that Operators do pursue BODS as we hope to use the data to underpin future scheme design and evaluation work.</p> <p>AP noted that the DVSA attend Norfolk EP meetings. SLB confirmed that they have now been invited to all EP Forum meetings in 2023.</p>	All Ops
4	<p>National Bus Strategy Monitoring Project. The DfT is creating a new monitoring body to assess scheme delivery by authorities who received BSIP funding as well as progress by the rest. SLB has been nominated as SCC representative on this body and is awaiting further details.</p>	SLB

5	<p>Transport Focus Survey SCC have signed up for the national survey of bus passengers that Transport Focus will be undertaking during 2023. This is part funded by the DfT and SCC with operator contributions also requested. This will involve work on bus as well as at stops and is due to commence mid-January 2023 for up to 50 weeks across the entire county.</p> <p>Results and feedback should be compiled quarterly throughout the project and results will be compared with other authorities as well as adding evidential weight to the revised BSIP.</p>	ALL
6	<p>Marketing Group Progress SLB reported that the forward plan for the group is being prepared and should be presented at the February 2023 Board meeting. AN stressed the need for operators to contribute funds as well as expertise to the group in order to improve countywide brand recognition and help attract new passengers.</p>	All
7	<p>Clean Air – Ipswich PH reported that a new working group has been established to improve air quality in Ipswich. GM confirmed that Air Quality Management Areas do exist within the town and that this is a multi-organization initiative.</p> <p>The first action from this is likely involve work with Ipswich Town FC to encourage use of buses to attend matches. JW confirmed that Ipswich Buses were already working with the club (sponsoring tickets and doing some marketing) whilst PM noted that First had not yet been approached.</p>	ITFC/IB/First
8	<p>Fares and Ticketing A general discussion was held about the £2 fare cap scheme for Jan – March 2023. PM confirmed levels of promotion operators have to provide. First welcome anything that encourages passengers back onto buses but have concerns that capacity may be a problem on popular journeys. GS confirmed Chambers participation and echoed these thoughts.</p> <p>JW noted that most Ipswich Buses town fares were under £2 for a single trip already but their rural routes would be included. He also expressed concern at ways to retain any new passengers generated by the scheme.</p> <p>SLB confirmed that the DfT was not intending for the scheme to last beyond March. AN noted the end date was close to the start of campaigning for local council elections across much of England and has concerns about fares rising again impacting on these.</p>	
9	<p>Network Reviews Although not required by the DfT for the final payment of the Local Transport Fund or CBRG SLB confirmed the intention to continue holding reviews with operators on a regular basis going forward. As this funding will cease at the same time as the fare cap ends there is still concern that services will cease from 1st April.</p> <p>PM noted that the full notice period for service changes on that date is 20th January 2023 unless the traffic commissioner approval process is altered. There is thus little time for the impact of the fare cap to be factored into service decisions. Operators will still need to match service costs to income in the future.</p> <p>AN noted that this could be a good marketing opportunity.</p>	

10	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>AN confirmed that SCC is looking to arrange a ministerial visit to the county in early 2023 to look at bus services and discuss future funding prospects.</p> <p>GM reported back on issues raised previously regarding road closures. Members were reminded that it is the utility company or their contractor who is responsible for provision of information and signage about closures not SCC. We will work with them where possible and report problems that arise but only have limited network inspectors so are unable to check every set of works daily. Cancellation and duration of works is being challenged where possible but there is currently no requirement on utilities to notify local authorities if works are cancelled or finished early.</p> <p>AN is going to raise the matter with the Local Government Association and ask them to lobby on the matter. It is also suggested that commercial operators may have better results than SCC if problems are reported directly to the company carrying out works and their regulatory bodies. This could also be passed on to operator bodies such as ALBUM and the CPT to escalate as well.</p> <p>Particular local issues with closures and gritting were also discussed and are being investigated.</p>	
	<p>Future Meetings:</p> <p>10 Jan, 1400 – Passenger Interest Group</p> <p>17 Jan, 1000 – EP Forum</p> <p>1 Feb, 1400 – Councillor Group</p> <p>20 Feb, 1000 – EP Board</p>	