

EP Cllr meeting 5/12/22

Present: Simon Barnett (SLB), Robert Kemp, Calum Poole (CP), Suzie Morley (SMO), Philip Smart (PS), Andrew Stringer (AS), Alexander Nicoll (AN), Jessica Fleming (JF), Sandy Martin(SMA), Norman Brooks (NB)

AN - concern over coms issues recently, working with operators to share resources.

SMO – volunteered for the data side.

1: BSIP Update

SLB - Update published 30/11/22 on Suffolk On Board - link: [BSIP Update Nov 22](#) Includes report on status of all obligations.

BSIP to be re-written as live document that will be updated to include data for schemes/passenger numbers etc.

AN - keen to be sure that this is communicated where possible. Also Council due to discuss results/recommendations of scrutiny committee. This must be taken note of when re-writing BSIP.

2: DfT Funding

SLB - Still waiting on Jan-Mar covid support.

AN - mentioned DfT feedback from LGA meeting, need to chase rep. Hampshire gave examples of why cutting services because no BSIP funding. Bring DfT to county to see real situation – agreed to go to Hampshire, meet Cllrs and see problems on the ground. Should we do the same here? Via Transport East?

PS – aware of Transport East role as rural lead for buses.

AN – give more support via Andrew Summers.

SMA – invite people to somewhere which ought to have a regular bus service to show lack of real services and use.

AN – need to promote existing services more via Operators.

AS – support bringing people out but need to be certain of message we are trying to give (e.g. Bacton 106 money for buses) Also messaging from partners – Connecting Communities website implies only available if no bus at all so people don't engage.

SMO – has 8 villages with no bus to main market town (Stowmarket). Concern over lack of other bodies present

SLB - due to short-notice rescheduling a date when as many as possible were available was chosen.

PS – 106 money tends to be used on Capital projects, rail gets revenue funding but buses don't – need to change rules at govt level.

AS – many sites gained planning permission when there was a service that has now stopped, so then have to give back as can't use.

AN – perhaps need to reject more applications?

JF – Thurston planning sites – tried to get engagement with rail to improve station car park capacity but got nothing. When looking at COBA for bus services standard schemes tend to be urban based where there are alternatives but don't score well for rural areas.

AN – bring in with GA next time in forum.

CP – working on bus measure scoring and how schemes appraised. Needs more data – no industry standard and bespoke to Suffolk. This was fed back to DfT. Looking at bus priority measures to speed up journey times and reliability rather than services. Most of these occur in urban areas but it does benefit those from rural areas travelling into towns.

NB – agree with above plus lack of services outside Ipswich. Many small developments that meet local plans but not able to turn down just because of lack of buses.

SLB – reviews with operators taken place regarding service provision if no further funding. No known changes currently as everyone is waiting to find out before making a decision. First have indicated they may look at sponsored service changes.

AN – can we feed this back? There needs to be longer term plan from DfT rather than 3 monthly.

SMA – any chance of bringing DfT to a threatened service? Pick somewhere with a significant impact?

PS - in current situation due to long term funding, concessionary fares, BSOG – national mechanisms that need improvement.

SLB – recently agreed to reimburse 100% of pre-covid concessionary fares (currently 96%). Operators are advising numbers are growing and at approx. 65% of pre-covid. BSOG reform is on hold.

3: Network Recovery

SLB - Concessionary passengers now up to 60-65% from 50-55% Fare payers up to 100 or more.

AN – trends in times of travel?

SLB – none as yet due to nature of travel by bus – e.g. home to school, retail work not flexible plus not as many choices on buses to travel at different times.

PS – can we encourage concessions to travel more e.g by removing 0930 rule? Perhaps 0900?

SLB – could relax the rules and extend times but need to find the money.

SMA – may not work as pass holders appear not to want to travel. Why? Have any surveys been done?

SLB/SMA – loss of mobility during pandemic plus change of habits during covid and alternatives found now more attractive.

AN – work with operators on coms to encourage concessionary usage.

4: Survey work

SLB - Transport Focus commissioned to do survey of transport use in Suffolk. This includes surveys at stops, on buses and also non-users of buses. 20-30 bus routes and 6 bus stop clusters to be covered. Proposal to do all survey work in Ipswich rejected and suggestions as to other locations to cover Suffolk sent. Cost of survey work £30k - funding breakdown – £10k from DfT, £10k from SCC and £10k from operators (collectively).

AN – Request that informal courtesy conversations had with some key operators before next Board meeting and make them aware of funding requirements/commitments.

SM – inducements to participants to fill in? Free travel per person or draw for a whole year?

SLB – not built in but could look at.

AN – how are they making sure they get the best result? On-bus advertising of the survey.

5: Councillor questions/AOB

SLB - Marketing group – main plan to be shared at February board meeting. Those noted as being part of marketing group – Dave Jordan (First), Justin Wythe (Ipswich Buses), Andrew Pursey (Borderbus), Suzie Morley, Alexander Nicoll.

AOB – none recorded

Meeting Ends