

Suffolk Enhanced Bus Partnership

EP Forum Meeting

March 21st 2023, 1000

Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Simon Barnett **SLB** (Suffolk County Council) (Chair & Minute-taker)

Alan Neville **AN** (Greater Anglia)

Andrew Pursey **AP** (BorderBus)

Dan Johnson **DJ** (Transport East)

Daniel Butterfield **DB** (Go Ahead East Anglia)

Douglas Cook **DC** (Suffolk County Council – Intelligent Traffic Signals)

James Wright **JWr** (Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council – Passenger Information Group Representative)

Justin Wythe **JWy** (Ipswich Buses)

Katherine Davies **KD** (Babergh & Mid-Suffolk District Councils)

Mark Wedgwood **MWe** (Suffolk Highways - Maintenance)

Paul Martin **PaM** (First In Norfolk & Suffolk)

Piers Marlow **PiM** (First In Norfolk & Suffolk)

Barry Pope **BP** (DVSA)

Rob Crawford **RC** (Coach Services)

Samuel Guiver **SG** (Suffolk Highways – Network Assurance)

Sarah Cooper **SC** (Stutton Parish Council – Passenger Interest Group Representative)

Martyn Washbourne **MWa** (Norfolk County Council)

Apologies:

Cllr Alexander Nicoll (Suffolk EP Chair, EP Councillor Group Chair & Representative)

Timothy Stephenson (Suffolk County Council)

Doug Gray (Halesworth Community Transport – Community Transport Group Representative)

Calum Poole (Suffolk County Council)

Michael Newsham (Ipswich Borough Council)

Paul Horne (Suffolk County Council)

Robert Kemp (Suffolk County Council)

Helen Morris (Essex County Council)

John Russell (DVSA)

| Item | Discussion | Actions |
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| 1: Highways Updates | No Traffic Signals items were raised. | |

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| | <p>MWe Noted that Suffolk Highways were dealing with multiple pothole repairs at present, but stressed that other problems were still being covered, they just might take a little longer than normal. All members were reminded of the online problem reporting system and that although bird-nesting season was due to start, safety for users of the highway still took precedence.</p> <p>AP queried whether there is a replacement plan in place for old sign posts – he has observed many that have rusted through. MWe confirmed that only Mandatory signs have a replacement time built into the Highways Maintenance Operations Plan, with other “non-essential” signs looked at as a lower priority. SLB confirmed that Passenger Transport does have a maintenance budget that can be used to replace bus stop poles, although there have been issues accessing staff to process jobs in the past. The team will work with MWe to review procedure for bus stop poles in advance of the new Highways contract commencing later in 2023.</p> <p>SG reported that Network Assurance are awaiting dates for the next wave of rural broadband installations from OpenReach. They have now been set a target for replacing all copper cables with fibre optic which will ultimately impact on every property in the UK. We are likely to see more road closures in rural areas than have happened in the towns due to reduced available road widths to work in.</p> | SLB/MWe |
| 2: BSIP Update | <p>SLB reported on various schemes in progress:</p> <p>1: Implementation of the West End Road bus lane had to be postponed due to bad weather. It was anticipated that a fresh date would be given in mid-April. POST MEETING UPDATE: This planned date has now been pushed back again until after the local council elections on May 4th, final date to be confirmed.</p> <p>2: Design of future schemes for the Ipswich area is continuing, a meeting with operators is arranged for 24th April</p> <p>3: Consultation period now closed on Enforcement for Moving Traffic Offences. The feedback is being collated for inclusion in the final submission to DfT for transfer of powers. The current submission period ends in October 2023.</p> <p>4: Refinement of the multi-operator ticketing agreement continues, with implementation planned to follow the end of the Government-funded £2 fare-cap and operator decisions on their fare structures after this. SLB is also attending regular DfT briefings on Project Coral, their plan for a national multi-operator ticket which will likely replace any local offerings.</p> | |
| 3: Transport East Update | <p>DJ Gave a brief update on work Transport East are involved with in supporting Local Authorities to deliver BSIP schemes and strengthen their future bids. A written report was also supplied after the meeting, which is reproduced below.</p> | |
| 4: DfT Funding | <p>SLB confirmed that SCC had not heard anything indicating that the current recovery grant and £2 fare-cap funding would continue past 30th June 2023. Operators were asked for any</p> | |

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| | <p>feedback on the two funding streams and any fears caused by the “double-whammy” of them both finishing at the same time.</p> <p>PiM stated that First had seen January patronage at approximately the same level as December (before introduction of the cap) rather than the traditional post-Christmas slump, with a steady climb in passengers since then. Concerns over capacity on key journeys have not borne fruit, although this may partly be due to adverse weather during much of February and March. They are hoping that sustained higher passenger numbers may mean that they can keep fares closer to the £2 level on many routes when the funding ceases, but no decisions have yet been made.</p> <p>AP agreed that Jan-March had seen similar results for BorderBus with December patronage sustained. He also raised concern that the funding offer from the DfT for April – June was not as generous as the first tranche and negotiations were ongoing at the time of the meeting.</p> <p>DB confirmed that Go Ahead East Anglia had also had the same retention of December patronage.</p> | |
| 5: The Future | <p>SLB noted that the Suffolk EP had been in place for 1 year now and that SCC had carried the administrative burden so far. As such, volunteers to assist with organising meetings, minute taking etc. are sought.</p> <p>Following the anniversary of the BSIP and publication of an addendum/update in November SCC are now embarking on a full version 2 and seeking ideas for additional projects to include. We are keen to look for schemes away from Ipswich as the current pipeline is largely focussed here due to the EP evolving from the previous QBP.</p> <p>PaM expressed concern that the wider council still appears to be very Ipswich-centric, citing the revised wet dock bridge plans. But also suggested consideration be given to a new Lowestoft bus station and the turning area at Fort Green in Aldeburgh.</p> <p>SC reminded the group of previous requests for more buses through Stutton and the rest of the Shotley peninsula.</p> | |
| 6: AOB | <p>JWr reported that the Guide Dog Association has increased numbers of dogs in training in the Ipswich area and requested assistance in access to buses for acclimatisation purposes. Both First and Ipswich Buses offered aid including making drivers aware and offering the use of buses when not in service to enable familiarisation with bus layouts. PiM also suggested a general awareness campaign if the Association has any publicity materials. PaM suggested that there could be a link with the existing Independent Travel Training scheme operating in Suffolk.</p> | |

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| | The next EP meetings scheduled are: 31 March – Community Transport Forum 5 April – Councillor Group 24 April – EP Board 9 May – Passenger Interest Group 16 May – EP Forum | |
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TRANSPORTEAST

Transport East Briefing – Suffolk EP Forum

Date: 21 March 2023
Subject: Bus Back Better Update
Report by: Suzanne Buck
Contact: Suzanne.buck@suffolk.gov.uk

1. Bus Back Better

1.1 The proposal submitted to the DfT for the additional in year funding was for a joint STB project to identify and deliver support needed to assist local transport authorities with the delivery of their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) and Enhanced Partnerships (EPs).

1.2 The project covers TE, EEH and TfSE STB regions and is led by TfSE. Each STB received £100,000 to contribute to this work.

1.3 An update on the progress on the identified support packages is provided below.

- **Package 1. Fares and ticketing** – a webinar has been held and a FAQ document produced to respond to questions raised. 30 officers attended the webinar on 13 February.
- **Package 2. Data analysis** – a toolkit and advice note are being developed. A webinar on Data, Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation is being held on Thursday 30 March.
- **Package 3. Low cost and quick wins** – a webinar was held on 15 February and an updated technical note has been produced. 5 officers attended the webinar on 15 February.
- **Package 4. Building a strong case** – support was provided through one-to-one sessions. Support materials are being prepared. 28 officers registered to attend the webinar on 18 January and 25 on the webinar on 25 January.
- **Package 5. Bus infrastructure guidance and road space design** – a webinar will be held on 21 March.
- **Package 6. DRT** – a technical note has been produced.
- **Package 7. Rural hubs and integration** – a technical note is being developed.

- **Package 8. Funding mechanisms** – a technical note is being produced including case studies from TCF Southampton and WPL in Nottingham.
- **Package 9. Collaborative working and bus forums** – the first TE regional bus forum was held on January 23; the next forum is 21 April. DfT attend these meetings.
- **Package 10. Marketing** – work is ongoing.
- **Package 11. Alternative low emissions fuels** – A webinar will be held on Friday 31 March.

All material produced is available to local transport authorities in the TE region.

2. Acronyms

Unfortunately, the transport field is heavily invested in acronyms. The table below summarises those used in this update.

| Acronyms | |
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| TE | Transport East |
| BSIP | Bus Service Improvement Plans |
| DfT | Department for Transport |
| EEH | England's Economic Heartland |
| EP | Enhanced Partnerships |
| TCF | Transforming Cities Fund |
| TfSE | Transport for the South East |
| STB | Sub-national Transport Body |
| WPL | Workplace Parking Levy |

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