

Committee: Environment

Agenda Item

Date: 17th March 2011

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Title: Uttlesford Transport Forum – Setting up a Transport Users' Group

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Item for decision

Summary

1. At the 2010 Uttlesford Futures Assembly, there was some support for the setting up of a transport users' group as a further working sub-group of the Uttlesford Transport Forum (UTF). The UTF is the transport working group of Uttlesford Futures. This report considers whether a transport users' group would be of benefit and makes some suggestions on how it might operate within the UTF framework.

Recommendations

2. That the Committee agree in principle to support the setting up of a transport users' group, subject to:
 - a. An initial meeting being held to gauge the level of public support for the group, consider what it could deal with, when and where it should meet, and who could best represent the group on the UTF.
 - b. The initial meeting taking place as soon as possible after the May local elections.
 - c. Endorsement of the establishment of a user group either at the initial meeting or by other representations.
3. That officer support and other enabling activity be provided to the user group within the agreed budget for FY2011/12.

Financial Implications

4. There would be a small cost to the Council acting as group meeting host and facilitator, which would need to be found from existing budgets. (It is anticipated that the group would meet quarterly, as do the other sub groups). There is no budget for any original survey work, which would either need to be undertaken by group volunteers on a goodwill basis, or funded externally.

Background Papers

5. DfT White Paper January 2011 – “Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon” - *Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen*.
6. A copy of the White Paper is available from the report author, or at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/sustainabletransport/pdf/whitepaper.pdf>

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	The initial meeting and any subsequent group meetings would need to be publicised, and the terms of reference of the group would need to be agreed
Community Safety	None
Equalities	The group would be able to take into account issues raised by ethnic minorities and / or people with disabilities
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	The aim of the group would be to improve sustainable transport for Uttlesford residents and workers
Ward-specific impacts	The group would operate district wide
Workforce/Workplace	Officer time spent in setting up and running the group

Considerations

8. In January, the author prepared a note setting out some initial informal views on how a transport users' group might operate without duplicating other existing arrangements. A revised version of the note is attached as an appendix to this report. It is anticipated that the District Council would support the group and could host the meetings, but the group would be made up of local transport users who would volunteer their time.
9. Amplifying the conclusions section of the note, it is clear from the DfT's White Paper that the Coalition Government seeks to make the entire journey experience, from door to door, better for passengers. The Government is *“challenging the train, bus, cycling and car hire industries to consider what improvement measures they can put in place as quickly as possible to*

enhance the whole journey experience, including improving facilities for more integrated transport, for example through improved integrated ticketing and better information for journey planning from door to door” (Para 6.3 of the White Paper).

10. In particular, the Government is targeting journeys between 2-5 miles in length, the majority of which are still made by car. The Government’s philosophy is that of using “nudges”, i.e. measures to encourage people out of their cars but without forcing them to do so. The Government does recognise, however, that in rural areas like Uttlesford there may often be little alternative to using a car and that multi-purpose trips may only be practical by car.
11. One way of meeting the Government’s challenge will be to identify what, at the local level, hinders seamless door to door sustainable travel. In addition, whilst Essex County Council has just announced that it will protect rural bus subsidies for the financial year 2011 - 2012, it has also stated that the level of subsidy will have to be reduced in future years. Looking at these two issues, a transport users’ group could be of use, drawing on the local knowledge and travel experiences of its members, identifying good practice, problems and possible improvements.

Risk Analysis

12.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The proposed user group adds another layer to existing engagement mechanisms without adding value	2 See existing transport liaison arrangements as set out in the appended note	2 Modest resource requirement to support new group	Test level of support amongst users Careful agenda setting.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.