

**UTTLESFORD TRANSPORT FORUM
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2007 AT DISTRICT
COUNCIL OFFICES, HIGH STREET, GREAT DUNMOW, ESSEX**

THOSE PRESENT

District Councillors David Gregory and Mark Lemon, Will Cockerell, Murray Hardy, Pam Kennedy, Sue Locke and Jeremy Pine (UDC), Richard Gravatt (ECC), Patrick Hamilton and Marilyn Moore (Uttlesford MIND), Andre Morris and Neil Wilson (Stansted Transit), Peter Blanchard (Walden Travel / CPT Essex), David Corke (LA21 Transport Group), Barry Drinkwater (ULODA), Paul Garland (LA21), Sue Meyer (UALC), Steve Mills (BAA) and David Rose (Uttlesford Community Travel)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1. Apologies were received from Rose Johnson, Linda Smart and Chris Stoneham (ECC), Kris Radley (RCC Essex), Richmonds Coaches and Ian Willard (Saffron Cycle Campaign).

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 25 JANUARY 2007

2.1. These were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record, except that the action included in bold at the end of Paragraph 5.3 should be at the end of Paragraph 4.2.

3. ACTION ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

3.1. Re Minute 3.1, David Corke had still not seen the letter written by UDC following the Environment Committee meeting. **Jeremy Pine to check.** Peter Blanchard said that he had not seen a copy of the LA21 bus survey – he was concerned that it was not accurate and that it had been publicised. **Paul Garland would send a copy.**

3.2. Re Minute 3.3, Paul Garland asked whether the removed timetable boards had been replaced. Richard Gravatt said that they hadn't.

3.3. Re Minute 3.4, LA21 had written to ECC and had received an acknowledgement, but no formal response. **Richard Gravatt to follow up.** David Corke was concerned about obscured information on the timetable boards in Dunmow High Street. It was also not clear that you needed to stand on the Chelmsford-bound side of the High Street to board a bus to Saffron Walden and vice versa. He also commented that the electronic display had been switched off, and when it was working was concerned that it often displayed timetable information which was unhelpful if buses were late. Richard Gravatt confirmed that timetable information was the default setting if there was a problem with the system. Peter Blanchard remarked that there still wasn't a bus timetable in UDC's Dunmow offices.

3.4. Re the postscript to Minute 6, David Corke welcomed the replacement of the 333 to an extent by the 7A at ECC expense. He was concerned, however, that the 7A only went to Bishop's Stortford, which left connection difficulties onwards to Harlow. Peter Blanchard commented that, in addition

to the remaining route of the 333, there were 6 other buses from Stortford to Harlow.

3.5. Re Minute 7, David Gregory confirmed that negotiations were still underway with Blue Triangle. It might be that the heritage route would not start until next year.

3.6. Re Minute 8.4, Jeremy Pine confirmed that comments from ULODA had been passed to Mouchel Parkman. Linda Smart had not reported back on any action being taken by ECC on the pedestrian crossing at Elsenham station.

4. INTEGRATING PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR SAFFRON WALDEN – BUS ISSUES – FUTURE OF EXCEL 18

4.1. A paper prepared by David Corke had been previously circulated to Forum members. The main issue was the cost / passenger exceeding £5. He queried whether the cost / passenger could be reduced by paying less for the contract. Richard Gravatt explained that all contracts were let under a closed tender system. Where buses are based will affect costs. On average there were 3.7 bids / tender, sometimes more, sometimes less. The 18 was now out to tender. It was hoped that there would be a lower price but there were no guarantees. The Cabinet Member would decide whether ECC can afford to renew a tender.

4.2. The paper also made some suggestions for increasing patronage, one of which was extending the service to Audley End. It was assumed that usage statistics and income figures were valid. David Corke had received some information by Email the previous evening, but had not had the opportunity to analyse it. Richard Gravatt highlighted some difficulties of interpretation, as there was some non-entitlement to scholars' passes and the system for calculating income from concessionary fares was different this year.

4.3. The paper also compared the 18 service with the 313. Richard Gravatt confirmed that the calculations that ECC had provided were as accurate as possible. The simple fact was that the 18 wasn't carrying enough passengers. ECC does not remove services unless it has to. In view of the many representations received from Uttlesford residents about bus services, John Pope has decided to undertake an area review. The review would be a "blank sheet of paper" look at services, involving public meetings and consultation. David Corke welcomed the review. **Jeremy Pine to include as an item for the next meeting.**

4.4. Richard Gravatt emphasised (for the benefit of operators at the Forum) that the review would not jeopardise existing contracts. ECC would not be breaking any existing contract, but might want to consider / agree / suggest options etc.

4.5. Peter Blanchard referred to the note that he had produced in response to David Corke's paper, and which was circulated around the table. Any issues arising from the note could be raised at the next Forum meeting.

5. “PUTTING PASSENGERS FIRST” – DfT’s NEW BUS POLICY

5.1. David Corke said that he had asked for this item, but was not in a position to present it. **Jeremy Pine to circulate executive summary and current position and proposed changes in time for the next meeting.** Richard Gravatt said that the bus service review item could include reference to the DfT policy.

6. OLYMPIC GAMES PREPARATION

6.1. David Gregory explained that Uttlesford was a point of entry for the Games. The local aim was to increase tourism by encouraging visitors to stay in Bed and Breakfast accommodation before and after events. Uttlesford had produced an Olympics Action Plan, and he was looking at transport issues. He highlighted the possible holding of a cultural festival, perhaps somewhere in the southern half of the District. One issue was the possibility of Oyster Cards for Essex.

6.2. Jeremy Pine felt that making rail timetable changes to accommodate local tourism could be difficult and that the Forum should liaise with the Stansted Area Transport Forum. It was very important that commuters going about their daily business were not inconvenienced by the Games.

6.3. Richard Gravatt said that one of the main problems with smart card systems is the hardware. One way forward might be to look at this in connection with the introduction of the national concessionary fares scheme in 2008. Suffolk had a regional initiative.

7. AIR QUALITY REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT – SAFFRON WALDEN

7.1. Will Cockerell explained that monitoring had been undertaken since 1993. The 1995 Environment Act introduced health-based standards with 2005 as a deadline. There were 3 locations in central Saffron Walden where targets hadn't been met for NO². The 3 locations were:

- Thaxted Road / Radwinter Road
- High Street / George Street
- High Street / Castle Street

A report had been produced, which had been accepted by the Government.

7.2. There was a current consultation on the size and shape of proposed Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). The suggestion was circular areas based on the road junctions. AQMA status gave a legal requirement to put together an Action Plan to reduce pollution levels. This would affect everyone interested in transport.

7.3. Suggestions received so far included doing away with traffic lights, a bypass from Shire Hill to Tesco, a lorry ban with appropriate enforcement and a roundabout on the old gasworks site. Other suggestions included encouraging bus use and walking / cycling, better use of car parking, car

sharing, congestion charge, adjusting delivery times and turning off engines when stationary.

7.4. Will Cockerell would come back to the Forum to talk about the Action Plan. In answer to a question from David Corke, there was no information at the micro level on the breakdown of pollutants from buses, cars and lorries. Paul Garland wondered whether the size of AQMAs influenced the remedial measures.

7.5. David Corke asked whether pollution levels went down during school holidays.

8. UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE ON RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

8.1. Murray Hardy introduced the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, following from which a Code of Practice was approved by the Government in December 2006 affecting all land based transport (except air). The aim of the Code is to raise standards for people with disabilities. The Code gives good and bad examples and is available from the DRC in London.

8.2. The Code is similar in status to the Highway Code (which can be used in evidence in cases of dangerous driving). The Code requires that operators train their staff appropriately.

8.3. Paul Garland asked what happens if someone tries to board a bus that is not DDA compliant. Murray Hardy emphasised that operators are required to make reasonable adjustments, and Peter Blanchard said that the 1995 Act made it clear by when bus services had to be operated by low floor vehicles. However, many rural stops were not capable of accommodating low floor vehicles. Paul Garland expressed concern that the cost of new vehicles could lead to service withdrawals. Peter Blanchard said that a “conventional” small bus would cost about £60k, a low floor one typically £85 – 90k.

8.4. Marilyn Moore explained that mental health was a recognised disability, in which transport issues featured heavily. Isolation was a major problem. A report entitled “Mental and Emotional Health in a Rural District of the UK” had been presented to UDC. David Gregory said he was unaware of this – had it gone to the Community Committee?

8.5. David Corke said that it wasn’t widely advertised that those who had a doctor’s letter saying they shouldn’t drive were entitled to a free bus pass. This should be publicised more by UDC and by MIND. Richard Gravatt confirmed that this was the case, with the exception of those banned from driving for drink / drug reasons.

9. NEW BUS / COACH STATION AT STANSTED AIRPORT

9.1. Steve Mills reported that the shell and roof were now complete. The waiting room was also finished and was ready for use. Fit-out was now taking place. Local bus services would be using their allocated bays from midnight

Wednesday. The full facility would be operating by mid May. The Uttlesford Access Group had been sent an invitation to come and view.

9.2. Peter Blanchard asked about charging for entry. Steve Mills said that only express coaches were subject to charge, but this was subject to review. A barrier would be erected to prevent fly parking at the bus / coach station.

9.3. David Corke asked about the relationship between the new bus / coach station and services between Great Dunmow and Bishop's Stortford. It was a key route in LTP2, but all services between the two went to the airport and stopped there. "X" services don't stop locally, except at Barnston. Richard Gravatt said that the main routes were well served. Operators decided that it was more efficient commercially to run to the airport. There were good links to Stortford. Ticket interavailability was frowned upon by the powers that be. It was agreed that there were better bus links in Uttlesford because of the airport.

10. POSSIBLE ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

10.1. Paul Garland felt the Green Travel Planning should definitely be an item. It involved getting people to use means other than the private car, and was consistent with an LAA objective to reduce the carbon footprint. **Richard Gravatt would speak to his colleague, Moira Mason who was ECC's Travel Plans Co-Ordinator.** Will Cockerell felt that trips to and from school should be included as well.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11.1. Marilyn Moore mentioned Natural Mind Week, which had a green energy theme. There would be a cycle ride in Widdington on 20th May starting at 10:00am. Patrick Hamilton was concerned at how difficult it was to cycle into Dunmow. The A130 was a problem for cyclists. David Gregory emphasised that Felsted was to be the first designated Quiet Lane area in Uttlesford. Sue Mayer again put forward a route into Bishop's Stortford from Little Hallingbury. Paul Garland said that Ian Willard had produced a guide for cyclists in Uttlesford, which could be made available in UDC offices and at railway stations. It was hoped that UDC would help with distribution costs.

11.2. It was reported that there was no board outside Audley End station giving telephone numbers for taxi firms. **Barry Drinkwater to take on board.** Also, there was no map showing how to get from Audley End to saffron Walden.

11.3. Barry Drinkwater reported on a presentation made to the Licensing Committee about taxi rank provision in Saffron Walden. Murray Hardy was taking the matter forward.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

12.1. Wednesday 27th June 2007 at 10:00am in the Committee Room, UDC Offices, High Street, Great Dunmow. It was agreed that the next meeting should still be in 3 months time despite problems of scheduling because of the

forthcoming airport public inquiry. Jeremy Pine indicated that it was unlikely he would be available as facilitator due to the inquiry.