

**UTTLESFORD TRANSPORT FORUM
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24 APRIL 2008 AT DISTRICT COUNCIL
OFFICES, HIGH STREET, GREAT DUNMOW, ESSEX**

THOSE PRESENT

District Councillors Elizabeth Bellingham-Smith, Keith Eden (Chairman) and Mark Lemon, Sue Locke and Jeremy Pine (UDC), Catherine Gaywood, Wendy Jackson and Rose Johnson (ECC), David Corke and Paul Garland (Sustainable Uttlesford), David Green (representing Littlebury PC), Sue Mayer (UALC) and David Rose (Uttlesford Community Travel).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1. Apologies were received from District Councillors Jackie Cheetham and Catherine Dean, Murray Hardy (UDC), Sean Bailey (West Essex PCT), Peter Blanchard (Walden Travel, CPT Essex), Barry Drinkwater (ULODA), Kris Radley (RCCE) and Richmonds Coaches.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

2.1. The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the Forum at being elected.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 24 JANUARY 2008

3.1. These were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record subject to "disability planning" being changed to "accessibility planning" in Minute 5.1.

4. ACTION ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1. In relation to Minute 7.3, Jeremy Pine confirmed that, through other transport work that he was doing, he now had the names of contacts at Network Rail and National Express East Anglia. Whilst it would be unlikely that the rail industry would regularly attend Forum meetings, he would speak to the contacts about receiving minutes and attending when relevant items were on the agenda.

4.2. In relation to Minute 10.4, this action would be carried over to the next meeting.

5. PROPOSED REVIEW OF BUS SERVICES IN UTTLESFORD - UPDATE

5.1. The Forum welcomed David Green to the meeting.

5.2. Catherine Gaywood drew the Forum's attention to the North Uttlesford Bus Survey, which had been carried out by RCCE from 3rd – 18th March 2008. ECC defined the services and routes for consultation and ECC / RCCE drew up an appropriate survey timetable. Copies of the resultant report were passed round the table. The survey consisted of:

- A full and comprehensive review of existing services 11, 17, 18, 23, 29, 34, 59 & 62
- A review of proposed routes (Citi7, Little Sampford and Homelye Chase)
- An assessment of public services used as part of home to school transport (Routes 118, 445 & 446)

5.3. Different companies offered different services, and it was clear that some services were valued immensely by users. David Green said that the information regarding Citi7 was inaccurate re the weight restriction at the bridge at Littlebury.

5.4. Catherine Gaywood introduced the Forum to a second document which followed from the RCCE survey. This document (map and summary) identified a number of journeys and services that ECC would like to enhance subject to practicalities and cost. These enhancement proposals were now out to consultation until 30th May 2008. The deadline was strict in order that any alterations could be delivered by 1st September. Enhancements would be funded through efficiency savings across the wider transport budget for the area as there is no additional funding available. Tenders had been issued, with quotes expected in early June. Higher costs were expected as a result of the new tenders (15%). Most of the money would come from schools services.

5.5. The Chairman said it was unclear what the finished product would look like. Catherine Gaywood confirmed that the proposals were “ideal world”, the 29 being the lowest priority. However, the proposals were more comprehensive and co-ordinated than before. She confirmed that the proposed Saffron Walden – Audley End shuttle would complement the 590.

5.6. David Corke felt that the 301 not calling at Audley End station would be a problem for Newport and Widdington. David Green pointed out that the stop at the Fighting Cocks on the B1383 was only 3 minutes from the station.

5.7. David Corke asked how many settlements would remain with services below ECC’s minimum level. The answer was 2. The situation countywide was that Sunday and evening services were not a priority. David Corke said that the Sustainable Uttlesford report covered Sunday services, including replacing service 132. David Green was against this as, having studied the service, it was moderately used to get to Cambridge and also to Audley End.
Catherine Gaywood to find out how many buses go to Audley End.

5.8. David Corke pointed out that use of Swan Meadow as a “park and ride” venue for Audley End had been opposed by local Members when first proposed. David Green was surprised at this, as the car park was usually only half full. Catherine Gaywood referred to the tender for a shuttle with starting points in the town centre and at Swan Meadow.

5.9. In answer to a query from Elizabeth Bellingham-Smith, Catherine Gaywood said that the bus stop request at Homelye Chase was being processed.

5.10. The Chairman asked for a further update at the next meeting.

5.11. David Green then commented on the Sustainable Uttlesford report. He realised that DfT minimum service level was the determining factor, but it was of limited value. Of more importance is when / where to passengers wish to travel. Littlebury had one of the worse services in Essex – most locals needed to go either to Cambridge, Saffron Walden or Audley End. Most could be served by re-routing alternate Citi7 services. Re-routing the 312 wasn't the answer as that only got people to Saffron Walden. A further option was getting the 132 to travel both ways through Littlebury. He was also concerned about the condition of the bus stop at the Littlebury turn.

5.12. David Corke asked to be allowed to introduce the Sustainable Uttlesford document. The question asked was whether it was possible to make service improvements at no extra cost. The existing situation had been reached by incremental growth over time, but was it possible to make adjustments to bring settlements closer to minimum service levels? One aim was to try to get buses used by all age groups, to increase patronage and the availability of information. The latter should include details of existing ticket deals and not just the £8 Essex Network Saver. He asked to sit down with ECC to discuss.

5.13. David Green re-emphasised his view that the report focussed too much on minimum service levels. There was a need to understand travel objectives. David Corke said he supported the Citi7 suggestion. ECC could only make decisions on those services it funds. Paul Garland agreed that destinations were important – other villages had similar objectives, including connections. The VillageLink 5 missed Citi7 by a few minutes.

5.14. **Catherine Gaywood agreed to meet with David Corke and to remind colleagues about the importance of looking at connections.**

5.15. David Green mentioned how full Audley End car park was off-peak.

5.16. Mark Lemon asked when there would be a review in the south of the district. Catherine Gaywood replied not this year due to the workload arising from the previous consultations and the forthcoming one.

5.17. Paul Garland and Sue Locke enquired about progress on bus stop accessibility and information issues. Basic information required was route numbers on flags and a timetable. **Catherine Gaywood to feed back.** David Green commented that a complaint about the timetable in the Littlebury bus shelter not being updated resulted in the removal of the timetable case itself.

5.18. The Chairman asked about ECC's budget for bus stop signs. The reply was that there were different pots, some via the marketing budget. There was a rolling programme of timetable upgrades, starting with Colchester.

5.19. Sue Mayer reported encouraging news that the VillageLink 5 was now getting quite full going into Bishop's Stortford.

5.20. David Corke pointed out that the Sustainable Uttlesford report did put forward suggestions for the whole of the district. He also mentioned the travel information that could be obtained via Google Maps. Any comments on this should be passed to ECC for forwarding to Travelline.

5.21. David Carmichael said that he felt Dunmow's evening bus service was hopeless.

6. ROLE OF THE FORUM WITHIN UTTLESFORD FUTURES.

6.1. Paul Garland referred to the last Uttlesford Futures meeting when all working groups raised transport as a key issue. It seemed to make sense to have a transport group within Futures at a fairly high level. His proposal was that a representative from the Forum should sit on the Futures Board and the Forum should become the transport working group that reported to the Board.

6.2. Mark Lemon felt that this proposal would give the Forum more strength and would enable working with other partners. Paul Garland felt that a Member should sit as the Board representative, with an officer on the management group.

6.3. The Chairman would speak with Councillor Howard Rolfe.

7. SAFFRON WALDEN CARNIVAL – TRANSPORT IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Unfortunately, no one was able to attend to present this item.

Postscript:

Jeremy Pine did subsequently pick up a forwarded Email from Mick Ashton of Essex Police setting out the route of this year's parade. The route would be the same as previous years. The floats will form up in Ashdon Road and Chaters Hill (roads closing around noon), with the parade commencing at 2pm. The route will be:

Common Hill, Cates Corner, East Street, Thaxted Road, Peaslands Road, Mount Pleasant Road, Borough Lane, London Road, High Street, Castle Street and Castle Hill.

8. PROPOSED FORECOURT IMPROVEMENTS AT AUDLEY END STATION

8.1. Jeremy Pine said he wasn't aware of any further progress to that which he reported at the last Forum meeting. In relation to David Green's earlier comment, any proposals for extra car parking would have to come forward from Network Rail via an application for planning permission, as they were outside the scope of the forecourt proposals. Catherine Gaywood said that

the provision of a 3-point turn for buses was still being looked at, a particular difficulty being the priority parking area.

9. STANSTED AIRPORT GENERATION 1 AND 2 – GENERAL UPDATE

9.1. Jeremy Pine explained that the decision on G1 had been delayed by a few weeks by an air quality issue that had arisen. He now expected a decision by the end of May or in early June.

9.2. All the G2 planning applications had now been submitted and were being analysed. UDC had set a deadline of 26th June for receipt of comments.

10. NEW BUS / COACH STATION AT STANSTED AIRPORT

10.1. Jeremy Pine reported that he had noticed a problem with a tear in a part of the roof canopy, which BAA was checking out with the contractor.

10.2. Sue Locke reported that the Uttlesford Access Group had visited the bus / coach station and felt that BAA had found it quite useful. One of National Express's DDA compliant coaches had been tried out.

10.3. David Corke referred to the airport's role as a transport hub. He hoped that the new X5 service to Ipswich could have local stops in the fullness of time.

11. NATIONWIDE CONCESSIONARY FARES SCHEME

11.1 David Carmichael said there were some issues regarding availability times that were concerning many. Wendy Jackson explained the nature of the new scheme and that some local authorities had reverted to a start time of 9.30am for financial reasons, although others (e.g. Braintree, Brentwood, Epping Forest and Maldon) were still using 9am. It was up to each local authority to decide for itself. Wendy Jackson said she believed that the scheme did apply to park and ride services.

11.2. Catherine Gaywood said that the main difficulty was that Government money did not cover the full costs of the scheme. David Corke referred to the differing reimbursement factors mentioned at the previous meeting.

12. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

12.1. Items 5, 6 and 8 would be rolled forward, with the request that item 5 should also cover bus service publicity. Jeremy Pine asked for any other items to be brought to his attention by Friday 11th July.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1. There was none.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

14.1. The next meeting will be on Thursday 24th July 2008 at 10.00am in the Council Offices, Great Dunmow.