

**UTTLESFORD TRANSPORT FORUM  
MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2008 AT DISTRICT  
COUNCIL OFFICES, HIGH STREET, GREAT DUNMOW, ESSEX**

**THOSE PRESENT**

District Councillors Elizabeth Bellingham-Smith, Keith Eden and Mark Lemon, Gaynor Bradley, Murray Hardy, Sue Locke and Jeremy Pine (UDC), Nick Blachell, Wendy Jackson (ECC), Rachael Price and Robin Wheatcroft (ECC), David Corke and Paul Garland (Sustainable Uttlesford), Michelle Bassett (West Essex PCT), Peter Blanchard (Walden Travel / CPT Essex), Barry Drinkwater (ULODA), Sue Mayer (UALC), David Rose (UCT) and Gilly White (Cross Country Trains).

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1. Apologies were received from District Councillor Catherine Dean and Chris Radley (RCCE).

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

2.1. These were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

**3. ACTION ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

3.1. In relation to Minute 3.5, there was now a 9.00am start to concessionary fares, uniform over the County.

3.2. Re Minute 10.1, secretarial support for the Forum would start from the first meeting in 2009. The minutes of the Forum meetings in 2007 and 2008 were now available on the District Council's website. It would be for the Lead Officer of the Environment Committee to decide whether the Forum minutes should be reported to that Committee.

**4. REVIEW OF BUS SERVICES IN UTTLESFORD - UPDATE**

4.1. Wendy Jackson provided the update. Phase 1 was now complete. There were now some accessible school buses. There were some outstanding issues with services 445 and 11, Arkesden and Wendens Ambo.

4.2. David Corke was concerned that the only new services both served Chrishall, and that the review was driven by the needs of schoolchildren. An illustration of this was that to get to Saffron Walden from Littlebury in the middle of the day, you had to go via Newport Grammar School. The City 7 was more convenient. He was concerned that some cheaper / cost free options had not been looked at. There were lessons to learn for other parts of the review.

4.3. Nick Blachell acknowledged that there were teething troubles, which were being looked at. This was the first review to encompass all school and local services. Phase 2 would not involve reviews of schools services in Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet, as new contracts had just been awarded on a one school – one operator basis. The Phase 2 review would look at replanning and improvement where needed. Comments were welcomed.

4.4. David Corke referred to earlier comments that the key was better integration of school contracts into public services, which did not seem to have happened. He mentioned the Viceroy service, which is schools only at Wimbish. He has used it illegally, but it is half empty.

4.5. Wendy Jackson mentioned that an “on bus” survey to aid the Phase 2 review had been carried out by RCCE two weeks ago.

## **5. ACCURACY OF WEB-BASED TIMETABLE INFORMATION**

5.1. David Corke referred to the Google Maps system, which gave bus stop, service and timetable information. The usefulness of the system rested on database accuracy. He gave some examples of out of date information in Wimbish, which had been resolved by ECC removing the timetable board and database. It was odd that non-used stops still remained in the database, including that outside Saffron Walden Post Office. He asked how ECC verified its list of bus stops.

5.2. Robin Wheatcroft explained that the Post Office stop was plotted when the Post Bus ran. That had now been corrected. He welcomed errors being reported to ECC. There were 6,000 bus stops to deal with. Historic services got missed.

5.3. Elisabeth Bellingham-Smith asked about the reporting of damage to bus stops. They should be reported through ECC and repaired by the contractor.

5.4. Paul Garland repeated his concern that some pristine bus stops had no information on them. Information was necessary to get people to use buses. No stops within Uttlesford have a service number and few have timetable information. Any spare money should be spent on this. At Audley End station, he was frequently asked for the arrival time of the bus as there was no obvious timetable information. At Audley End, the timetable information is inside the ticket office which few people pass through.

5.5. Nick Blachell explained that ECC spent a lot on where to get hold of bus information, but it was impossible to promote each individual journey. There was an inconsistent approach on bus stop information, with operators posting more in urban areas. A new roadside publicity approach was being finalised, and was being trialled in Chelmsford before being rolled out elsewhere. Robin Wheatcroft mentioned that a few years ago there were 6 services that ran along Saffron Walden High Street. There were 16 now, putting pressure on timetable space.

5.6. Paul Garland acknowledged that it was difficult with multiple routes, but not elsewhere. He asked about the timescale for the rolling out of the new roadside publicity.

5.7. Sue Locke referred to 2 stops in Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden which had no information. Information was now even more important because of the concessionary fares scheme.

5.8. David Corke felt that newspaper adverts were a waste of money. The timetable book was not available in local newsagents. He referred to the Sunday Saver fare advert. Saffron Walden has one Sunday service, but the ticket isn't valid.

## **6. THE FORUM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH UDC / UTTLESFORD FUTURES / LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT**

6.1. Gaynor Bradley gave a brief presentation on local strategic partnerships (LSPs) by way of introduction to this issue. She explained the relevant national guidance, the performance framework, national indicators and the development of local indicators. The local authority pulled together all the local strategic partnership partners. Uttlesford Futures as the relevant LSP received ECC and partnership funding, and there was a good level of partnership working. The key issue was to provide what the community wanted, not what Uttlesford Futures wanted.

6.2. The Futures Assembly met once per year, and was served by a Board and a management team. There were a number of LSP working groups. Transport and Accessibility had been identified as a key LSP working group, but as yet one had not been formed. The suggestion was that the UTF took on this function as part of its role.

6.3. There were a number of mutual benefits from UTF / LSP linkage. The UTF received useful input from a number of agencies, and had a clear route to the local community. The UTF would have the opportunity to contribute to a wider community agenda, and could benefit from more officer / secretarial support.

6.4. Paul Garland explained that each LSP working group had an action plan with achievable outcomes. The Board would have an oversight role, and the UTF would be accountable to it. The Board would need a transport representative, and an officer would sit on the management team.

6.5. Nick Blachell said his team already sat on other LSPs and would be more than happy to do so here. Michelle Bassett also supported linkage. David Corke queried how transport would be represented in Uttlesford's two Community Forums, especially the railway industry. Gaynor Bradley explained that ECC's Area Highways Manager attended the Forums, with specialists by invitation when needed.

6.6. Mark Lemon supported linkage as an existing Board member. He felt this could help in "unsticking" issues. He considered that road safety should come within the working group's remit. David Corke felt that bus / train and road safety issues would likely have different audiences and might merit separate meetings. Paul Garland pointed out the UTF hadn't considered walking and cycling issues for a while, and road safety issues could sit within that umbrella. On the issue of representation, Wendy Jackson pointed out that there were a lot of specialisms within ECC, making it difficult to find one ideal representative.

6.7. As the UTF facilitator, Jeremy Pine supported the principle of linkage with the LSP, rather than it being taken over by it. The reason for this was that, as a Forum, the UTF had the flexibility to deal with issues as they arose (such as commenting on the Audley End Station forecourt layout), which might be outside the scope of an LSP approved action plan.

6.8. Linkage was endorsed by the Forum members, subject to details being worked up. **Gaynor Bradley would talk to the Road Safety Group. She would also discuss the issue of nomination to the Board and management team with the Futures Chairman. She would then look at action planning from the point of view of what would be realistic and achievable.**

## **7. AUDLEY END STATION**

7.1. Jeremy Pine gave an update on the planning application for the car park extension. The previous application had been withdrawn pending the preparation of a transport assessment. Paul Garland commented that the previous application had been put in without considering the needs of others, especially those with disabilities. **Jeremy Pine to check on progress with the new application.**

7.2. Gilly White gave an update on Cross Country's performance for the Stansted to Birmingham service, which was above the industry average. New timetable changes were due on 14<sup>th</sup> December, with extra evening and early morning trains. There were stock refurbishments, and should be faster journey times.

7.3. Keith Eden asked why sometimes trains were either 2 or 3 cars. The reason was inherited rolling stock, but 3-car trains were better. Gilly White also explained that Cross Country was looking into agreements with PTAs over linking trains and buses.

7.4. David Corke said that Cross Country did serve Audley End, and he would like to achieve better linkage with buses, e.g. PlusBus. It was not widely known how good a service there was north up to Scotland, and he felt that Cross Country could do more to publicise. Gilly White agreed to put linkage possibilities to the Executive Board

7.5. Murray Hardy commented on local stopping patterns. Gilly White confirmed that there were commercial reasons against local stops where those stops were already served by local trains. She was aware of information problems encountered by passengers when trains to the airport were short-stopped at Cambridge. **Gilly White to feed back on how passenger information on short-stopping could be improved.**

## **8. STANSTED AIRPORT GENERATION 1 AND 2 - GENERAL UPDATE**

8.1. Jeremy Pine set out the current position. Planning permission had been granted for G1 by the Secretaries of State following the public inquiry held in 2007. In relation to G2, the public inquiry was due to start on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

He directed Forum members to the dedicated inquiry website for the latest information.

**9. BUS / COACH STATION AT STANSTED AIRPORT – UPDATE**

9.1. Jeremy Pine mentioned that the passenger safety barriers now appeared to be finished in front of the bus / coach station. In compliance with a planning condition, wind monitoring equipment had been installed in the station environs. The results of the monitoring would be reported to the local planning authority in due course.

**10. ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

10.1. Items 4, 6 and 7 would be rolled forward.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

11.1. Nothing was recorded.

**12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

12.1. Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at 10.00am in the Committee Room at the UDC offices in Great Dunmow. Dates for meetings for the rest of the year would need to be worked out once the G2 inquiry timetable was known.