

Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title:	Agenda										
Date:	Thursday 20 October 2016										
Time:	6.00 pm										
Venue:	Council Chamber District Offices College Heath Road Mildenhall										
Full Members:	<p style="text-align: center;">Chairman Simon Cole</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vice Chairman Ruth Bowman</p> <p><u>Conservative Members (7)</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Chris Barker</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Brian Harvey</td> </tr> <tr> <td>John Bloodworth</td> <td>Christine Mason</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ruth Bowman</td> <td>Nigel Roman</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rona Burt</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>West Suffolk Independent Members (2)</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Simon Cole</td> <td style="width: 33%;">David Palmer</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>UKIP Member (1)</u> Reg Silvester</p>	Chris Barker	Brian Harvey	John Bloodworth	Christine Mason	Ruth Bowman	Nigel Roman	Rona Burt		Simon Cole	David Palmer
Chris Barker	Brian Harvey										
John Bloodworth	Christine Mason										
Ruth Bowman	Nigel Roman										
Rona Burt											
Simon Cole	David Palmer										
Substitutes:	Named substitutes are not appointed										
Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.										
Quorum:	Three Members										
Committee administrator:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk										

Public Information



Forest Heath

District Council

Venue:	District Offices College Heath Road Mildenhall Suffolk, IP28 7EY	Tel: 01638 719000 Email: democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk Web: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk
Access to agenda and reports before the meeting:	Copies of the agenda and reports are open for public inspection at the above address at least five clear days before the meeting. They are also available to view on our website.	
Attendance at meetings:	The District Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public.	
Public speaking:	<p>Members of the public who live or work in the District are invited to put one question or statement of not more than three minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within three minutes, the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.</p> <p>A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.</p> <p>There is an overall time limit of 15 minutes for public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.</p>	
Disabled access:	The public gallery is on the first floor and is accessible via stairs. There is not a lift but disabled seating is available at the back of the Council Chamber on the ground floor. Please see the Committee Administrator who will be able to help you.	
Induction loop:	An Induction loop operates to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.	
Recording of meetings:	<p>The Council may record this meeting and permits members of the public and media to record or broadcast it as well (when the media and public are not lawfully excluded).</p> <p>Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.</p>	

Agenda

Procedural Matters

Part 1 – Public

1. Substitutes

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Public Participation

Members of the public who live or work in the District are invited to put question / statements of not more than 3 minutes duration relating to items to be discussed in Part 1 of the agenda only. If a question is asked and answered within 3 minutes the person who asked the question may ask a supplementary question that arises from the reply.

A person who wishes to speak must register at least 15 minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.

There is an overall limit of 15 minutes of public speaking, which may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.

4. Transport Links for Rural Villages in Forest Heath

1 - 8

Report No: **OAS/FH/16/028**

A selection of public transport operators have been invited to the meeting to discuss transport issues affecting Red Lodge. This is the second enquiry meeting looking at transport links for rural villages in Forest Heath.

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Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Forest Heath
District Council

Title of Report:	Transport Links for Rural Villages in Forest Heath	
Report No:	OAS/FH/16/028	
Report to and date:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	20 October 2016
Chairman of the Committee:	Simon Cole Chairman of the Committee Tel: 07974 443762 Email: simon.cole@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Portfolio Holder:	Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth Tel: 07970 947704 Email: lance.stanbury@forest-heath.gov.uk	
Lead officer:	Christine Brain Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) Tel: 01638 719729 Email: Christine.brain@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
Purpose of report:	<p>This is the second in a series of meetings looking at the disjointed and unpredictable way of public transport connections in Forest Heath, particularly in the case of Red Lodge.</p> <p>For this meeting, four public transport operators have been invited to the meeting to discuss the rural transport services they provide; and their integration in Red Lodge, and to listen to the Committee's concerns.</p>	
Recommendations:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee questions the public transport operators on public transport connections in Forest Heath. 2) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolves to decide the next steps. 	

Key Decision: <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that do not apply.)</i>		<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Consultation:		• N/A	
Alternative option(s):		• N/A	
Implications:			
<i>Are there any financial implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any staffing implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any ICT implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any legal and/or policy implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
<i>Are there any equality implications? If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> •	
Risk/opportunity assessment:		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
	Low/Medium/ High*		Low/Medium/ High*
None associated with this report.			
Ward(s) affected:		All	
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		OAS FH 16 002 - Appendix 2A - Lack of Integrated Transport	
Documents attached:		Appendix 1 – Responses received from public transport providers	

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Committee at its meeting held on 14 January 2016, received a Work Programme Suggestion from Councillor Lance Stanbury regarding rural transport. The Committee was advised that residents in his ward of Red Lodge did not use public transport as it was not convenient. Public transport across the District was not joined up and Councillor Stanbury wished to get the various providers together to discuss how transport could be more integrated.
- 1.1.2 The Committee felt it needed to gain a better understanding of the transport issues in Forest Heath, such as the co-ordination of public transport (buses and trains) and the weight of traffic in Forest Heath. The Council is eager to see improvements in the quality and integration of the rural transport system serving its District in general.
- 1.1.3 The Committee acknowledged that the District Council was not the responsible authority for transport and suggested before contacting the various bus and rail operators that Suffolk County Council (SCC) be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to listen to the Committee's concerns regarding transport issues in Red Lodge and to answer questions from the Committee.
- 1.1.4 The Committee on 14 January 2016, resolved to include the issue in its work programme and to invite the Suffolk County Council (SCC) Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport to a future meeting of the Committee.

1.2 Meeting 1 – Suffolk County Council

- 1.2.1 On the 9 June 2016, the Committee heard from Mr Phill Magill (Passenger and Transport Operations Manager) from Suffolk County Council (SCC).
- 1.2.2 Discussions took place on the need for synchronising the busses and trains to improve the economic development of the area and what surveys SCC carried out to monitor the transport market.

1.3 Meeting 2 - Public Transport Providers

- 1.3.1 The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in consultation with Councillor Lance Stanbury Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth selected four public transport providers (Abellio Greater Anglia; Coach Services Limited; Mulleys Motorways Limited and Stephenson's of Essex), to invite to the Committee's Extraordinary meeting on 20 October 2016.
- 1.3.2 The aim of the meeting is to hear from the transport providers regarding the rural transport services they provide; their integration in Red Lodge, and for the Committee to discuss its concerns.
- 1.3.3 In advance of the meeting, each of the four providers were invited to respond to a series of questions, and responses are attached at **Appendix 1**.

1.4 Proposal

- 1.4.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask questions of the transport provider(s) on rural public transport connections in Forest Heath.

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Abellio Greater Anglia

Responses Received to Questions

Questions	Response
<p>1) What help have you received from Suffolk County Council, or other public bodies, and has this worked?</p>	<p>We have worked closely with Suffolk County Council to try and improve stations - a notable project being a partnership project to improve facilities at Newmarket station, which was jointly funded with other parties including Suffolk County Council.</p> <p>The main opportunities for joint working are focused on stations and service promotion as the County is not currently in a position to fund extra trains or services.</p> <p>However, we have worked together to build the business case for additional services in the future e.g. an hourly Ipswich to Peterborough service.</p>
<p>2) What routes do you operate and how did you acquire them, for example, Section 106 monies; start-up; bought from another competitor, commercial viable?</p>	<p>Abellio Greater Anglia are the primary passenger train operator for much of East Anglia</p> <p>We have held two short franchises from February 2012 to July 2014 and then the current one from July 2014 to October 2016. The next East Anglia franchise is due to be awarded shortly and is planned to run for 9 years.</p> <p>In the Forest Heath District Council area we operate Norwich to Cambridge, Ipswich to Cambridge and Ipswich to Peterborough services. These were all included in the specification for the franchises by the Department for Transport.</p> <p>These train services themselves have not been funded in any way by Suffolk County Council.</p> <p>The partnership projects in this area have been focused on station upgrades and integrated transport facilities.</p>
<p>3) Apart from profitability, what drive the decision making process for routes, timetabling and frequency?</p>	<p>Primarily the franchise specification, but then passenger demand, stakeholder aspirations, the wider business case, the space available (or not) to run extra trains (the rail infrastructure capacity), the size of the train fleet we operate (have we any more trains?), the other services in place on the route, the cost of additional services, the costs (if needed) to upgrade rail infrastructure and the wider financial implications of operating any additional services.</p>

4) What timetabling co-ordination do you pursue with other public transport providers?	<p>We coordinate with other operators, but the congested nature of the rail network means there is invariably no scope for us to move our services around in response to other operators, but we do provide details to enable them to plan their services to link in with rail services more easily.</p> <p>All rail timetable bidding is coordinated through Network Rail (the national rail infrastructure owner and operator).</p>
5) Is there anything that the County Council / District Council could do, within reason, to help improve rural transport in the Red Lodge vicinity?	<p>Yes - if additional train services can be funded, clearly that would help but, even if that's not possible, help in building the business case for services or improvements with a wider regional, local, business or stakeholder benefit, plus help in lobbying for them would be very helpful.</p> <p>Working with us and jointly funding station improvements, integrated transport initiatives, station travel plan schemes and community rail partnership projects (where appropriate), plus joint promotion of rail services and coordinating with us on the longer term rail agenda would also be very useful.</p>

Coach Services Limited

Responses Received to Questions

Questions	Response
1) What help have you received from Suffolk County Council, or other public bodies, and has this worked?	We have only dealt with Suffolk County Council (SCC) with regards to our routes into Mildenhall. They have helped not only with the subsidies but also with publicities, wayside timetable cases an a few years back they assisted with us investing in new Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation (ITSO) smart card enabled ticket machines to allow multi-operator ticketing over routes.
2) What routes do you operate and how did you acquire them, for example, Section 106 monies; start-up; bought from another competitor, commercial viable?	<p>We acquired the routes into Mildenhall through a round of tendering. In the last few years we have invested in the route and grown patronage to a point where we can reduce the subsidy that is paid to us by SCC. Due to the rural nature of the services they are not commercially viable.</p> <p>This is why minimum subsidy works, it gives the operator a reason to grow and invest in the service, as opposed to running it for a fixed daily cost.</p>
3) Apart from profitability, what drive the decision making process for routes, timetabling and frequency?	<p>Frequency grows as the route grows in patronage. Unless a service is taken over from another operator and there is scope for immediate growth, frequency on new routes will start relatively low and become higher as the operator gets a feel for the service.</p> <p>Timetables are configured to correspond with the working days, school/college opening times, hospital visiting times etc. Also planning a bay allocation in bus stations to reduce congestion and bunching between other services.</p>
4) What timetabling co-ordination do you pursue with other public transport providers?	<p>Currently none but this is something I feel should be addressed, especially in Mildenhall. Mildenhall is well served by public transport but connections could be better.</p> <p>I believe there needs to be stricter rules in getting operators on board with multi-ticketing. If operators claim Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) or any other subsidies from SCC, then it should be mandatory that they have ITSO ready Smart Card enabled ticketing software.</p>
5) Is there anything that the County Council / District Council could do, within reason, to help improve rural transport in the Red Lodge vicinity?	I believe there needs to be stricter rules in getting operators on board with multi-ticketing. If operators claim BSOG or any other subsidies from SCC, then it should be mandatory that they have ITSO ready Smart Card enabled ticketing software.

Stephensons of Essex

Responses Received to Questions

Questions	Response
1) What help have you received from Suffolk County Council, or other public bodies, and has this worked?	<p>We work closely with Suffolk County Council to integrate local bus services with education flows, and similarly receive "deminimus" funding to divert certain journeys via small villages.</p> <p>In the case of Service 16 through Red Lodge, it is only this combination of funding streams which has enabled us to provide the service.</p>
2) What routes do you operate and how did you acquire them, for example, Section 106 monies; start-up; bought from another competitor, commercial viable?	<p>Our current Service 16/16a is a largely commercial route which was a combination of a commercial Bury-Mildenhall service (inherited from Burtons coaches when they went into administration), and a Suffolk County Council tendered route 400/401 between Mildenhall and Newmarket.</p> <p>Suffolk County Council provides funding for diverting some journeys via the villages, and the Saturday service.</p>
3) Apart from profitability, what drive the decision making process for routes, timetabling and frequency?	Profitability, but also potential profitability based on likely demand and growth.
4) What timetabling co-ordination do you pursue with other public transport providers?	We try to connect with other modes (for example trains) where possible, but receive no notice of changes, and when headways are irregular this is often impossible.
5) Is there anything that the County Council / District Council could do, within reason, to help improve rural transport in the Red Lodge vicinity?	Local authorities can help by provision of better waiting facilities at stops, higher car parking charges in town centres (to reflect the true cost of provision), better management of roadworks to aid reliability – and in the larger towns, bus priority measures.