

## Report for Resolution

**Report to** Executive  
1 October 2008

**Report of** Head of Transportation and Landscape

**Subject** Final report on the Joint Scrutiny Committee review of local bus services in the Greater Norwich area

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### Purpose

Earlier this year a joint scrutiny review of local bus services in the Greater Norwich area took place. This report highlights questions raised by scrutiny and suggests how the Council should deal with them

### Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

1. Note the outcome of the Joint Scrutiny Committee review of local bus services in Greater Norwich and the committee's recommendations;
2. Confirm the Council's response to the committee's recommendations as set out in paragraphs 11 to 22;
3. Agree to the Council taking a lead in monitoring the outcome of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations and disseminating this to participating councils alongside bus performance monitoring information provided by the County Council.

### Financial Consequences

The actions being taken in response to the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations are funded as part of existing work streams and have no significant financial implications. The collation and dissemination of monitoring information can be met within existing work loads.

### Risk Assessment

The provision and performance of local bus services is very important for the Norwich area economy and its citizens. Failure to provide high quality public transport could stifle economic development and result in poorer transport for those without access to a car. Private car traffic would be likely to increase creating additional congestion and pollution.

### Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future" and the service plan priority to

**Executive Member:** Councillor Morrey - Sustainable City Development

**Ward:** All

**Contact Officers**

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**Background Documents**

Joint Scrutiny Review of local bus services in the Greater Norwich area

# Report

## Background

1. At the November 2006 meeting of the Council, it was agreed to invite Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk District Council to participate in a joint review of the service provided by First Eastern Counties Omnibus Company Limited in the Greater Norwich area.
2. Draft Terms of Reference, which included First and other major bus service providers in the Greater Norwich area, were agreed. Councillors Driver, Anthony Little, Lubbock and Stephenson were chosen to represent the Council on the Joint Scrutiny Committee.
3. The Joint Scrutiny Committee met five times between July 2007 and February 2008 and an extensive consultation exercise was also conducted.
4. The Committee's final report is attached at appendix 1. The Joint Scrutiny Committee concluded that bus services in the Greater Norwich area are generally performing well but there are improvements that could be made that would bring benefits to passengers. The committee's report makes a number of recommendations aimed at government, bus operators and local authorities in the Norwich area. This Council, having initiated the joint scrutiny process, is now writing to government and local bus operators accordingly. Members should note the proposal in the final report (resolution 8) to reconvene the Joint Scrutiny Committee at an appropriate time in the future.

## Local Authority responses to the Joint Scrutiny Committee

### Norfolk County Council

5. The County Council's Cabinet Scrutiny Committee considered the report on 25 August. A copy of the report is attached as appendix 2 together with the draft minutes of the meeting (appendix 3). Members' attention is drawn to the County Council's response to actions recommended to them to specifically consider, in their role as Local Transport Authority.

### South Norfolk District Council

6. South Norfolk District Council's Main Scrutiny committee received the report on 4 June and endorsed it, subject to a request that planning agreements be strictly enforced at new developments to ensure that agreed routes were provided by developers. Whilst the committee commended the creation of a Joint Bus Policy Group, it considered that a Joint Public Transport Policy Group should be established

### Broadland District Council

7. The council has not considered the findings pending consideration by the County Council's Cabinet Scrutiny Committee.

## Issues for consideration

8. The Joint Scrutiny Committee made a number of recommendations aimed at District Councils. These are commented on below.

**Setting up a Joint Bus Policy Group with similar terms of reference as the Joint Rail Policy Group (paragraph 7a of final report)**

Response:

9. The Rail Policy Group acts as a forum for partnership working on both local and national issues and can inform the Council decision-making process. Bus and rail services operate in very different ways. The rail network is nationally regulated and operates through competitive franchising arrangements. However, the bus industry is deregulated and independent bus operators can determine their networks, frequency and fares.
10. The Greater Norwich Development Partnership has a remit to look at transport issues, specifically the Norwich Area Transport Strategy. This group meets regularly and discusses strategic transport issues, including public transportation.
11. The performance and reliability of bus services is reported annually to Norwich Highways Agency Joint Committee.
12. Whilst the Joint Scrutiny Committee's concerns are acknowledged, given the above it is considered unnecessary to create a Joint Bus Policy Transport Group.

**The needs of bus operators in plans for new developments (bus lanes, width of junctions, positioning of 'street furniture' etc) (paragraph 7b of final report)**

Response:

13. This recommendation is welcome confirmation of work carried out by the Council over several years. The needs of bus operators are already taken account in policies and associated guidance contained in the present Local Plan. These policies, etc. are being taken forward as part of the development of the joint core strategy.
14. The bus Joint Investment Plan signed with Norfolk County Council and First emphasises such good practice and will be used as a mechanism to help ensure that the penetration of bus services into new housing areas is monitored and the needs of bus operators taken into account.

**Infrastructure improvements to allow maximum benefits from the use of low floor buses e.g. raised kerbs at bus stops (paragraph 7c of final report)**

Response:

15. With increasing numbers of low floor buses it is important that bus stops are also fit for purpose. The County Council has a programme to improve kerbing at bus stops. Priority is focused on routes that are already operated with low floor vehicles. The City Council implements this programme within the City as part of the Highways Agency Agreement.

**Ensuring that the Traffic Management Act Board monitors parking enforcement (Paragraph 7d of final report)**

Response:

16. The importance of parking enforcement to assist bus operations is acknowledged by the Traffic Management Act Board. Active consideration is being given to enforcement activities including the use of CCTV. There is also

a Member task and finish group considering parking enforcement stemming from work of Norwich Joint Highways Agency Committee. Parking enforcement is also a key element of the Joint Investment Plan.

17. All operators are encouraged to feed back when there are blockages on the road network, using the recently implemented web feedback facility on the transport providers' webpage of the County Council's website.

**The timings of their services (e.g. street cleaning, gully emptying, bin rounds) to ensure that they have as little impact on bus services as possible (paragraph 7e of final report)**

Response:

18. The Council has worked with CityCare to minimise disruption caused by its routing activities such as bin emptying. This means, for example, that bin emptying is not carried out on major arterial routes during peak hours.
19. Routings are influenced by the traffic sensitive streets network published by the County Council. A revised version has been recently published for consultation and the Council will take this into account in future planning. With new contracts for such activities required in 2010 there will be a further opportunity to refine routings.

**Improving communication with bus operators, including advanced notice of roadworks and other temporary obstructions (paragraph 7f of final report)**

Response:

20. Road works coordination is a major concern for operators as recognised by the Joint Scrutiny Committee. The County Council has committed, as part of its Punctuality Improvement Partnerships signed with operators, that it will give notification of works in accordance with the Traffic Management Act standards. As part of the Highways Agency Agreement this information is coordinated within the City by the Council's network management team. There is monthly discussion of major impending roadworks with operators and the County's passenger transport group.

## **Performance management**

21. All of the participating councils have considerable interest in the on-going improvement of the local bus services. As has been suggested by the County Council's Cabinet Scrutiny Committee there would be merit in keeping all councils appraised of progress in such improvement.
22. Therefore it is suggested that the participating Councils are updated on the outcome and development of their recommendations following consideration by the respective parties concerned. Where appropriate an update on this could be provided on a regular basis (say annually). With this Council initiating the joint scrutiny process it would be sensible for officers to undertake to provide this information. However there would be merit in combining such feedback with bus performance monitoring information collated by the County Council.
23. The anticipated performance reporting would help Council's determine if further work is needed to improve bus services and whether there might be a particular need to reconvene the Joint Scrutiny Committee.





# Joint scrutiny review of local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area

2007/08



**NORWICH**  
City Council



**Norfolk** County Council



**South Norfolk**  
COUNCIL



**Broadland**  
District Council

## **Members**

### **Broadland District Council**

Councillor Balcombe  
Councillor Debbage  
Councillor Knowles  
Councillor Teager

### **Norfolk County Council**

Councillor Boswell  
Councillor East  
Councillor Spratt  
Councillor Ward

### **Norwich City Council**

Councillor Driver  
Councillor Little (A)  
Councillor Lubbock  
Councillor Stephenson

### **South Norfolk District Council**

Councillor Lewis  
Councillor Dale

## **Transport Officers**

### **Norfolk County Council**

David Cumming, Principal Integrated Transport Planning Officer  
Ian Hydes, Network Projects Manager

### **Norwich City Council**

Andy Watt, Head of Transportation and Landscape

## **Scrutiny Committee Officers**

### **Broadland District Council**

Matthew Cross/Martin Thrower

### **Norfolk County Council**

Ian Lambert/Keith Cogdell

### **Norwich City Council**

Andy Emms/Jenny White

### **South Norfolk District Council**

Tony Fielder

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## Introduction

At its meeting on 28 November 2006, Norwich City Council agreed the following motion:-

'Council believes that despite the improvements in punctuality and performance recently, First Eastern Counties Buses Ltd is providing an inadequate and expensive service using a substandard fleet.

The recent fare increases disadvantage less well off people and deter usage of public transport to the detriment of the Council's wish to encourage alternative forms of transport other than cars.

Consequently, Council:

- (1) calls on First to moderate its charging policy to encourage greater bus use;
- (2) resolves to invite the Scrutiny Committees of the City Council, Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils to undertake a joint investigation into First bus services to the Greater Norwich Area and to ask First to cooperate in this investigation;
- (3) calls upon Norfolk County Council to work with the Greater Norwich Partnership to develop a bus strategy that has firm and as far as possible enforceable commitments to improving bus services that serve the Greater Norwich Area.'

Following the motion, Norwich City Council officers contacted Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk District Council to enquire whether they would be willing to take part in a joint investigation into local bus service provision in the Greater Norwich area. It was agreed that a joint scrutiny committee (task and finish group) of 16 members (four from each local authority) should be created. A list of members can be found on the inside of the front page of this report. Scrutiny Support Officers and transport professionals from the local authorities supported the group.

The main local bus services Anglian Bus and Coach, KonectBus and First Eastern Counties, were informed of the decision to create the joint scrutiny committee.

All agendas, reports and minutes of the joint scrutiny committee are available on Norwich City Council's website [www.norwich.gov.uk](http://www.norwich.gov.uk).

## Terms of Reference

The Scrutiny Committee Officers from the four councils created a draft terms of reference that were then considered and agreed at the first meeting of the joint scrutiny committee. The terms of reference provide an overview of the aim of the joint scrutiny committee which was to review the current level and quality of local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area and identify if

further steps could be taken to deliver the first class bus service that the area expects.

The Terms of Reference are attached at appendix A.

## **The Review**

A total of five meetings were held during the review, all of which were open to the public. The initial meetings provided members with an introduction to the relevant regulatory framework including the possible impact of impending new regulations and opportunities for and barriers against improvement. Members also received information regarding current service routes; pricing policies and procedures; and bus service reliability and performance data.

Members agreed a work programme to help direct the work of the committee and Scrutiny Officers. The work programme included a public consultation exercise; discussion with bus operators; and information from transport officers on national issues. The ultimate aim was to agree a set of recommendations regarding improvements that could be made by the government, local authorities and the bus operators, to improve local bus service provision in the Greater Norwich area. The work programme can be found at appendix B.

## **Public Consultation**

As part of the scrutiny investigation, the view of a wide range of bodies was sought. A consultation letter was sent to over 400 organisations, including community groups, Parish councils, businesses and representative groups. A list of some of the consultees can be found at appendix C. The organisations were invited to submit evidence of any general or persistent issues both good and poor relating to punctuality and reliability; customer care; current pricing and usage etc. Comments were also requested on whether any communities were not serviced by bus routes, or where more services were needed; experiences of bus services in other parts of the country and how the local services compare; and finally, whether they were a regular bus user or not. Over 50 written representations were submitted.

News Releases were issued informing members of the public about the consultation and offering them the chance to submit comments by letter, email, through a dedicated phone line, or to attend the public meeting. Over 150 responses were received.

An officer summary of the consultation responses can be found at appendix D.

At a public meeting members considered the consultation responses. The responses were also used to inform a question plan and discussion with Bus Operators.

## **Consultation with Bus Operators**

The bus operators (Anglian Bus and Coach, KonectBus and First Eastern Counties) kindly agreed to respond to a set question plan proposed and agreed by the members, which was circulated in advance of a public meeting. The Bus operators provided written responses and attended the meeting to answer supplementary questions. The Bus Operators provided a presentation on their service provision and were also able to comment on issues outside their control and what other agencies could do to help. This informative meeting was useful to identify the external factors affecting local bus service provision.

## **National Issues**

At the final meeting held in February 2008, members were updated on national issues, specifically Putting Passengers First and the Transport Innovation Fund. Some members suggested that they could have received more information on how these national issues would affect improvements/new partnerships moving forward, and there should be consideration of the opportunities that these could create. However, the majority of members considered it was necessary to come to a view on the situation in the Greater Norwich area at this time and to publish conclusions and recommendations that might help to improve services in the shorter term.

They considered that the opportunities that might accrue through the Transport Innovation Fund were matters that should be considered in the future once decisions had been made by relevant authorities. It was suggested that this joint scrutiny committee should meet again at an appropriate time in the future to discuss local bus services in light of those decisions.

## **Conclusions and Resolutions**

Members considered the draft conclusions and recommendations that had been prepared by officers based on the work undertaken and the findings of the review to date and concluded that –

- (1) the benefits of competition and choice are not sufficient to outweigh the disadvantages caused to customers regarding service coordination and through ticketing, by the present competition rules. (It was noted that Councillor Little did not agree with this conclusion);
- (2) organisations with legal powers to influence the use and design of road space should give sufficient attention to the special needs of bus services. Often the result of the use of these powers may act to disadvantage bus users and operators compared with other road users. This includes the police dealing with traffic incidents, those maintaining roads and underground services below them, and enforcing parking and delivery restrictions. This increases

the local problems of providing reliable bus services in a medieval city centre.

- (3) the active participation of bus operators and punctuality improvement partnership and The Traffic Management Act Working Group was welcomed.
- (4) the active participation of First Eastern Counties in the Joint Improvement Plan was welcomed.
- (5) the recent investment by bus operators in vehicles, staff training and (First) staff improvement forums was welcomed.
- (6) the evidence suggests that better communication could greatly assist potential users and overcome misunderstandings.
- (7) that the predominant business model for non-supported services is frequent services along the main radial routes into / from the city centre was noted.
- (8) that there were a number of high level and national issues which may affect local services in future.

**RESOLVED** to –

- (1) thank the public, bus operators and local organisations who responded to the consultation;
- (2) acknowledge the effort that bus operators have been making to constantly strive to improve the services they provide;
- (3) recognise that to get the best level and quality of local bus service provision in the Greater Norwich area, the bus operators, local authorities and the Government need to work together;
- (4) **ask the Government to consider –**
  - (a) the disadvantageous position that bus operators face re duty on fuel compared with rail and aviation and the effect on fares and patronage;
  - (b) the regulations which prevent bus operators discussing matters such as service / route provisions, as this seems to result in some duplication of the services;
  - (c) enhancing the role of the Traffic Commissioners and making them more local covering smaller areas.
  - (d) allowing more local discretion for local authorities to introduce arrangements tailored to local circumstances.

**(5) ask the bus operators to consider –**

- (a) partaking in a BusWatch group;
- (b) informing the councils of illegal parking / loading hotspots – so that parking enforcement can be well informed and targeted when necessary (Bus operators should be informing Norfolk County Council about these issues as part of punctuality improvement partnerships);
- (c) using their best endeavours to ensure that all vehicles comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 as soon as possible and certainly well in advanced of the legislative deadline of 2017;
- (d) extending the hours of operation of existing daytime routes to include evenings and Sundays where this is currently not provided.
- (e) consulting local people, including residents' organisations and parish councils, before making changes to routes / timetables;
- (f) review how customers are informed of changes in routes / timetables to ensure the information is readily available in a timely manner.;
- (g) promoting sections of routes that operate on a "Hail and Ride" basis and to clearly mark buses/timetables accordingly.
- (h) provide clearer information including changing the design of their timetables to show main stops along the route, not just the final destination and displaying intermediate stops on buses.
- (i) introducing multi-operator day tickets to cover all operators and services in the Greater Norwich area.
- (j) consider the scope for using fare pricing to encourage patronage and to publicise discounts / special offers more widely.

**(6) ask Norfolk County Council, as Local Transport Authority, to consider –**

- (a) creating a Bus Users Association;
- (b) acting as a channel to enable multi-operator ticketing between services provided by different operators;

- (c) the possibility of going out to tender to provide evening and Sunday services on routes where regular daytime services are already provided
- (d) preparing and publishing a map that combines all the routes serviced by all operators in the Greater Norwich area.
- (e) changing the design of timetables, including those on bus stops, to show main stops along the route, not just the final destination;

**(7) ask all local authorities to consider –**

- (a) setting up a Joint Bus Policy Group with similar terms of reference as the Joint Rail Policy Group;
- (b) the needs of bus operators in plans for new developments (bus lanes, width of junctions, positioning of “street furniture” etc);
- (c) infrastructure improvements to allow maximum benefits from the use of low floor buses e.g. lowered kerbs at bus stops;
- (d) ensuring that the Traffic Management Act Working Group monitors parking enforcement;
- (e) the timings of their services (e.g. street cleaning, gully emptying, bin rounds) to ensure that they have as little impact on bus services as possible;
- (f) improving communication with bus operators including advanced notification of road works and other temporary obstacles.

- (8) reconvene the Joint Scrutiny Committee undertaking the review of local bus service provision in the Greater Norwich area at an appropriate time in the future to consider any opportunities for public transport that are presented after the Local Transport Bill has been through Parliament.

## Appendix A

### Terms of reference for scrutiny of

**The current level and quality of local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area by First Eastern Counties Buses and other providers.**

### Scrutiny by

A Task and Finish Group of 16 members (four from each local authority) from Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils.

The group will be supported by Scrutiny Support Officers and transport professionals from the local authorities.

### Purpose and objectives of study

To review the current level and quality of local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area by First Eastern Buses and other providers, and identify if further steps could be taken to deliver the first class bus service that the area expects.

### Tasks

1. To understand the context for bus service provision (i.e. regulatory framework and current transport policies)
2. To review the performance of the local bus service with particular regard to punctuality and reliability, customer care, engineering standards and investment in the fleet
3. To review current pricing and usage.
4. To gather comparative data for similar areas
5. Identify any areas for, and barriers to, improvement in the provision of local bus services to the greater Norwich area.

### Phases of Scrutiny Work

1. Members to determine the shape and structure of the scrutiny (e.g. a whole day scrutiny session; or smaller panels etc)
2. Gather supporting information and consult with service providers and users including:
  - First Eastern Counties Ltd
  - Other service providers
  - Councillors
  - Transport officers
  - Local Businesses
  - The public
3. Undertake scrutiny
4. Develop conclusions and recommendations



## Scrutiny Bus Review Committee

## Work Programme

Date of Meeting	Topic	Objective	Method
<b>13 July 07</b> 12.30pm  City Hall	Introduction	To agree the committee's Terms of Reference; to receive a presentation on the current regulatory framework and the background of local bus service provision in Norwich; and consider the scoping of future work.	Presentation
<b>4 Nov 07</b> 5.30pm  County Hall	Consideration of Background Information	To receive information on concessionary bus fares, current service routes, pricing policies and procedures, reliability and performance; and to consider how to consult the public on service provision.	Discussion of background information
<b>16 Jan 08</b> 6pm  St Andrews Hall	Consideration of Consultation Feedback	A fact-finding session, providing the public, organisations, parish councillors and businesses with an opportunity to raise issues related to the local bus services provided.	Consultation – letters inviting either written evidence or attendance at the public meeting
<b>7 Feb 08</b> 5.30pm  County Hall	Discussion with Bus Operators	To put questions to the Bus Operators informed by the above public consultation session. This will be a two way process. The Bus Operators will also be able to comment on issues outside their control that affect service provision and what other agencies can do to help.	Questions to Bus Operators
<b>22 Feb 08</b> 5.30pm  City Hall	Summary of Review and Agreeing Recommendations	Opportunity to discuss all evidence provided with Local Authority Officers and be briefed on how these could be affected national issues (i.e. Putting Passengers First, Transport Innovation Fund, Franchising and Congestion Charging).  Scrutiny Bus Review Committee to agree recommendations.	Questions to Local Authorities/Officers



### List of Consultees

A&P Transport	Connexions Norfolk
ABD Representative for Norfolk	Consignia Property Holdings
Access to Music	Costessey High School
Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities	Costessey Junior School
Age Concern (Norfolk)	Cotman Housing Association
Age Concern Norwich	Council for National Parks
Angel Road First School	Craft Guild
Angel Road Middle School	Creative Arts East
Anglia Television	Diocese of Norwich
Anglian Water	Distribution Centre
Anglian Water Services Ltd	Dowson First School
Art Architecture	Earlham High School
Arup Transport Planning	Earlham Nursery School
Association of British Drivers	East Anglia Art Foundation
Association of Town and Parish Councils	East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust
Avenue Middle School	East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust
BBC East	East Anglian Business Environment Club
Bignold First School and Nursery	East of England Development Agency
Bignold Middle School	East of England Tourist Board
Blackdale Middle School	Easton College
Bowthorpe Community Partnership	Eaton Hall School
British Horse Society	Eaton Rise
British Motorcyclists Federation	EEDA
British Trust of Conservation Volunteers	Energy Saving Trust
Broadland Housing Association	English Heritage
Broads Authority	English Nature
Burning Shed	English Regions Cycling Development Team
Bus and Coach Council	English Welsh and Scottish Railway
Business and Professional Women (BPW)	Environment Agency
Campus Services Manager	Fairway First School
Camriders	Fairway Middle School
Catton Grove First School	Federation of Small Businesses
Catton Grove Middle School	Financial Industry Group
Cavalier Travel	Flagship Housing Group
Cavell First and Nursery School	FPDSavills Ltd
Central Norwich Citizens Forum	George White Middle School
CGNU (Norwich Union)	Go-East
Chapel Break First School	Go-East
Chapelfields	Government Office East
Church Commissioners for England	Group Lotus PLC
Churches Council Forum	Hainford First School
City College Norwich	Hall School
City of Norwich School	Harford Manor School
CityCare	Harvey & Co
Civil Aviation Authority	Heartsease Community Middle School
Clover Hill First School and Nursery	Heartsease First School
Clydesdale Bank PLC	Heartsease High School
Coach Services Ltd	Heigham Park School
Colman First School	Hellesdon County High School
Colman Middle School	Help the Aged
Community Music East	Housebuilders Federation
Confederation of Norfolk PTAs	Housing Corporation (Regional)
Confederation of Passenger Transport	HSBC

Hudson Architects  
Iceni Partnership  
Inland Waterways Association  
Inspire  
Inspire East (EEDA)  
Institute of Food Research  
Jarrold & Sons Ltd  
Jarrold Department Store  
JobCentre Plus  
John Innes Centre  
John Innes Foundation  
John Lewis  
Julian Housing  
Kettle Foods Ltd  
Knowland Grove Community First School  
Lakenham First School  
Lakenham Middle School  
Larkman First and Middle Schools  
Learning & Skills Council Norfolk  
Learning Skills Council  
Leeway Norwich Women's Aid  
liftshare.com  
Light Rail Transit Association  
Living Streets  
Lloyds TSB Bank plc  
Lowestoft and Waveney Chamber of Commerce  
LSI Architects LLP  
Magdalen Gates First School  
Mancroft Advice Project  
Marsh  
Mass Market Renewables  
May Gurney Integrated Services plc  
Member of European Parliament  
Mile Cross Community Middle School  
Mill View Middle School  
Mills & Reeve  
MIND  
Moonraker Motorcycles  
Mott MacDonald  
Mousehold First & Nursery School  
Multicultural Consortium  
National Car Parks  
National Farmers Union  
National Federation of Bus Users  
Natwest & Royal Bank of Scotland  
NELM Development Trust  
Nelson First School  
Network Rail  
New Museum of Contemporary Art  
New Writing Partnership  
Norfolk & Norwich Race Equality Council  
Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust  
Norfolk & Waveney Mental Health Partnership  
Norfolk 21  
Norfolk Accident Reduction Partnership  
Norfolk Ambulance Service  
Norfolk and Norwich Transport Action Group (NNTAG)

Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Partnership  
Norfolk Association for the Disabled  
Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and Industry  
Norfolk Children's Services  
Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People  
Norfolk Constabulary  
Norfolk Dance  
Norfolk Environmental Waste Services  
Norfolk Federation of Womens Institutes  
Norfolk Fire Service  
Norfolk Gardens Trust  
Norfolk Group of Advanced Motorists  
Norfolk Health Authority  
Norfolk Landscape Archaeology  
Norfolk Local Access Forum  
Norfolk Motorcycle Action Group  
Norfolk Older Peoples Forum  
Norfolk Primary Care Trust  
Norfolk Probation Board  
Norfolk Rail  
Norfolk Rural Community Council  
Norfolk School Governors Network  
Norfolk Tourism Management Partnership  
Norfolk Tourist Attractions Association  
Norfolk Wildlife Trust  
Norfolk Youth Offending Team  
Norman First and Nursery School  
Northfields First and Nursery School  
Norwich & District Citizens Advice Bureau  
Norwich & Norfolk Against Climate Change Coalition  
Norwich & Norfolk Association for the Blind  
Norwich & Norfolk Community Arts  
Norwich & Norfolk Pensioners Association  
Norwich & Norfolk Voluntary Services  
Norwich 21  
Norwich Access Group  
Norwich Agelink  
Norwich Airport  
Norwich and Districts Trade Union Council  
Norwich and Norfolk Transport Action Group  
Norwich Area Development Agency  
Norwich City Football Club  
Norwich Consolidated Charities & Anguishses Educational Foundation  
Norwich Cycling Campaign  
Norwich Friends of the Earth  
Norwich Fringe Project  
Norwich Hackney Trade Association  
Norwich Heritage Economic & Regen. Trust  
Norwich Historic Churches Trust  
Norwich International Airport  
Norwich Primary Care Trust  
Norwich Puppet Theatre  
Norwich River Valleys Strategy  
Norwich Road Action Group  
Norwich School of Art & Design  
Norwich Society  
Norwich Union

Norwich Youth Voice  
Notre Dame High School  
NRP Enterprise Ltd  
NVS  
One  
Orbit Housing Association  
Peterborough - Norwich Rail Users  
Pricewaterhouse Coopers  
RAC  
Rail Passengers Council  
Railfuture  
Ranworth First School  
Regional Cities East  
Royal National Institute for the Blind  
RSPB  
Scarnell Road  
Securicor Cash Services  
Shaping the Future (Transport Group)  
Soup Ltd  
South Harford Community Middle School  
South Norfolk Council  
Sprowston Community High School & Arts College  
St Andrew Bridewell Alley  
St Johns RC First School  
St Lukes and St Augustines Churches  
St Martins Housing Trust  
St Michaels VA Middle School  
St Thomas More RC Middle School  
St. Stephens Community Partnership  
Steeles  
STEER (Sustainable Transport & Env. Eastern  
Region)  
Sustrans  
Targetfollow Estates Ltd  
Targetfollow Group Limited  
Taverham High School  
Tenant and Resident Associations  
The Blyth Jex School  
The Broads Society  
The Bure Centre  
The Castle Mall Management  
The Clare School  
The Countyside Agency  
The Department of Transport  
The EV Group  
The Forum Trust Ltd  
The Hewett School  
The Housing Corporation  
The Norwich Society  
The Old Drill Hall  
The Parkside School  
The Ramblers Association  
The Sportspark  
The Vauxhall Centre  
The Wherry Housing Association Ltd  
Theatre Royal  
Thorpe & Felthorpe Trust  
Thorpe Hamlet First & Nursery School

Thorpe Hamlet Middle School  
Thorpe St Andrew High School  
Tops Property Services Ltd  
Transport & General Workers Union  
Transport 2000  
Tuckswood First School  
Tyndall Centre  
Unilever Bestfoods UK  
Union of UEA Students  
University of East Anglia  
Visit Norwich  
Voices Against Violence  
Wellesley First School  
Wensum Middle School  
West Earlham Community First School  
West Earlham Middle School  
Whitlingham Charitable Trust  
Women's Employment, Enterprise & Training Unit  
Woodland Trust  
Woodside First and Nursery Community School  
Yare Valley Society  
YMCA Norfolk  
Youth Work Development Unit



## **Joint Review of Local Bus Service Provision in the Greater Norwich Area**

**Wednesday, 16 January 2008**

Officer comments relating to the consultation responses received from organisations and the general public.

### **1. Punctuality and Reliability:**

Punctuality and reliability are important issues for passengers. Poor punctuality and reliability can result in a loss of passenger confidence in the service. Feedback from passengers tends to indicate that they feel First perform worse than Anglian and Konect. The county council has to report on bus punctuality for the Local transport plan and there is a new bus punctuality indicator in the new set of indicators for the Local Area Agreements from April. Bus companies and the county council monitor punctuality by using the ACIS BusNet system and undertaking roadside monitoring. The roadside monitoring allows other things, such as destination displays, to be checked.

The Traffic Commissioner sets standards for bus services and expects that a minimum of 70% of buses are on time (no more than one minute early or five minutes late) at timing points along a route. The county council has set up punctuality improvement partnerships with all major operators with the aim of working together to improve punctuality. The draft local transport bill allows the Traffic Commissioner to hold the local transport authority accountable for poor punctuality as well as bus operators.

### **2. Customer Care:**

The main feedback from passengers is that drivers often do not understand customer needs and can be rude. This comment is aimed mainly at First, feedback about Anglian and Konect drivers is positive. All drivers will have to hold a certificate of professional competence from September 2008 and this should help to improve driver standards. First have committed as part of the recently signed joint investment plan, to improve driver training, to invest in customer services and employing on street supervisors.

### **3. Fares:**

Passenger are generally concerned about perceived high fares, the withdrawal of ten trip ticket by First and the fact that tickets are, in the main, not available on the services of other operators.

Bus companies are free to set fares at whatever level they deem appropriate. First withdrew their ten trip tickets because they believed fraudulent use was taking place. The comments also demonstrate there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of what is available which could be addressed by improved

publicity. The county council could, with operator agreement, introduce a ticket available on all services and this is something that will be pursued.

#### **4. Communities Serviced/Not Serviced:**

This section of the summary sheet details feedback from customers about areas not served by buses or that do not have services at certain times such as evenings and weekends. A number of the areas which people perceived did not have a service actually do have one.

Under current legislation bus companies are free to run what services they like, they set the route and determine the timetable and fares. The county council can provide a subsidy for services in areas not served but cannot subsidise services where a commercial service exists. At the present time the county provides around £4.5M/year subsidy for bus services (including Park and Ride).

The county council works with bus companies to encourage them to change their network in light of customer demand.

#### **5. Comparison of Services to other Areas of UK:**

Passengers perceive services in Norwich to be worse and more expensive than those in other areas of the country particularly London. It is difficult to comment on this as a wide range of issues can affect service level and fares such as demographics, car ownership, quality of road network, congestion and subsidy provided by the local authority to provide services. In London the operating regime is different.

#### **6. Accessibility to Information:**

Passenger feedback indicates that it is sometimes difficult to find out about what buses run, information about fares and service changes. Also, that information is hard to understand and sometimes out of date.

The county council produces timetable information for services operated under contract and bus companies produce information for services run commercially. This information is available from the bus station, tourist information centre, libraries and other key locations. The county is also looking at the way it provides information to make it easier to understand.

Information is also available on bus company and Traveline websites. Bus companies will also give out timetable information to callers or for impartial advice on all services, users can call Traveline. The county council has also provided at SMS code at many stops and this work is ongoing to provide a code at all stops. This will enable customers to text the code to a number in order to receive the times of the next three buses to depart from that stop.

Future developments could include e-mail or text alerts of service changes etc.

#### **7. Condition of Buses:**

The main theme of passenger feedback was that buses are old, dirty and not easy to get on and off. The majority of Anglian and Konect buses are easy

access vehicles. First have recently signed a joint investment plan with the county and city councils which will see an investment of £10.6m in new vehicles by 2010. Newer vehicles will also be cascaded from other parts of the country. Legislation requires all buses to be fully accessible by 2017.

#### **8. Other:**

Passenger feedback covers a range of issues including suggested routes and infrastructure improvements.

Ian Hydes, Network Project Manager, Norfolk County Council

A more detailed analysis of each of the consultation responses received from organisations and the general public are available via the 'Council Meetings' link on the Norwich City Council website [www.norwich.gov.uk](http://www.norwich.gov.uk)



**NORWICH**  
City Council



**Norfolk** County Council



**Broadland**  
District Council

Joint scrutiny review of local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area

## **Final report on the joint scrutiny review of local bus services in the Greater Norwich area**

Report by the Scrutiny Support Manager and Director of Planning and  
Transportation

### **Summary**

Earlier this year a joint scrutiny review of local bus services in the Greater Norwich area took place. This report highlights questions raised by scrutiny and suggests how the Council should deal with them.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. At its meeting in December 2006, this Committee received a request from Norwich City Council inviting the County Council to participate, together with South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils, in a joint review of the service provided by First Eastern Counties Omnibus Company Limited in the Greater Norwich area.
- 1.2. The Committee agreed in principle to participate in this joint investigation and asked that the Scrutiny Support Team to liaise with the City Council and South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils to formulate terms of reference for the scrutiny.
- 1.3. Draft Terms of Reference, which included First and other major bus service providers in the Greater Norwich area, were agreed by the Committee in March 2007. Councillors Boswell, East, Spratt and Ward were chosen to represent the County Council on the Joint Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.4. The Joint Scrutiny Committee met five times between July 2007 and February 2008 and an extensive consultation exercise was also conducted.
- 1.5. The Committee's final report is attached at Appendix 1 and a map of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy Study Area is available at Appendix 2.

## **2 Local Authority responses to scrutiny**

### **2.1 Norwich City Council**

The final report from the scrutiny process was discussed at Norwich City Council's full Council meeting on 3 June and was referred to their Cabinet for final approval, which is likely to be on 1 October.

## South Norfolk District Council

- 2.2 South Norfolk District Council's Main Scrutiny committee received the report on 4 June and endorsed it, subject to a request that planning agreements be strictly enforced at new developments to ensure that agreed routes were provided by developers. Whilst the committee commended the creation of a Joint Bus Policy Group, it considered that a Joint Public Transport Policy Group should be established.

## Broadland District Council

- 2.3 On 17 June, the report was considered by Broadland's Scrutiny Committee, which agreed to consider it further following today's Cabinet Scrutiny Committee meeting, as they recognised that most of the issues were more relevant to the County Council than the Districts.

## 3 Issues for consideration

- 3.1 The Joint Bus Scrutiny agreed a number of actions for the County Council to consider in its role as the Local Transport Authority and further actions for consideration by all councils involved. These are listed below, together with a response from the County Council

### **Actions for Norfolk County Council, as Local Transport Authority, to consider:**

- 3.2 Creating a Bus Users Association (para. 6(a) of final report)

#### County Council Response to the proposal:

There is already a national bus users association, Bus Users UK. The association represents the interest of bus users by helping set up local bus users groups and organising local bus users surgeries, where passengers can talk to staff from bus companies and local government officers.

The government announced in April that bus passenger representation will be strengthened following consultation by widening the remit of the existing rail passenger champion, Passenger Focus, to take on the new role of bus passenger champion.

Passenger Focus already does a good job representing rail passengers across the country. It will now champion the interests of bus users too, making sure their voices are heard and influencing the way local bus services operate. It is unclear as yet when the role of Passenger Focus will be widened to take on this new responsibility but it is likely to follow the passage of the current Local Transport Bill through Parliament.

It is not clear what the aim of a local association would be in Norfolk and if it would add any further value for bus users.

The County Council would need to consider a more detailed proposal, setting out the aims of such an association, so that it can decide whether it would be prepared to support the administrative costs involved.

3.3 Acting as a channel to enable multi-operator ticketing between services provided by different operators (para. 6(b) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The County Council recognises that passengers would like to be able to purchase tickets that would enable them to undertake journeys using the services of more than one operator. In April this year a free English National Concessionary Fares scheme was introduced which allows those aged 60 and over as well as passengers with certain disabilities to travel free of charge with any operator.

However, fare paying passengers still face difficulties and officers are investigating ways of improving availability of tickets between services within the current legislative framework. Changes to legislation in the current Transport Bill are intended make the introduction of such ticketing arrangements easier and therefore we would suggest examining options when the Transport Bill is enacted.

3.4 The possibility of going out to tender to provide evening and Sunday services on routes where regular daytime services are already provided (para. 6(c) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The County Council recognises that there may be demand for additional services. Whilst prices can be sought to determine the costs of providing additional services, the overall funding gap and shift in transport policy would need to be considered by members.

As bus companies introduce low floor vehicles on all routes throughout the Greater Norwich area in the coming years, it is expected that passenger numbers will increase. A consequence of this may be that bus companies are able to run evening and Sunday services on a commercial basis.

3.5 Preparing and publishing a map that combines all the routes serviced by all operators in the Greater Norwich area (para. 6(d) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

Maps can quickly become out of date due to service changes. The County Council last produced a countywide map, which included a detailed map of services in Norwich, in 2005. The maps cost around 25p each based on a print run of 100,000. The importance of such information is recognised and the County Council is investigating a web-based solution which would not only provide better value for money, but would also be readily available and easy to update when changes to services took place. A web-based solution also fits in

with the introduction of information kiosks at key locations such as Norwich bus station.

3.6 Changing the design of timetables including those on bus stops to show main stops and not just the final destination (para. 6(e) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The County Council currently provides wayside displays that give route information of services serving a stop at the top of the display and then lists the departures from that stop, in time order. Because of the number of services serving some stops it is impractical to put the full timetable in the display board.

The County Council supports Traveline, whose number is shown on most stops, which passengers can call to get detailed information. There is also increasing use of Real Time Information displays which the County Council funds. These displays can show route variations.

The County Council has recently consulted with various stakeholders with regard to the information that is made available. The results of this consultation are being evaluated and new designs will be developed based on the feedback received.

The Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers has published a good practice guide for public transport information and the County Council will use this good practice as far as local circumstances allow when producing roadside publicity.

**Actions which all local authorities involved in the Joint Scrutiny were asked to consider –**

3.7 Setting up a Joint Bus Policy Group with similar terms of reference as the Joint Rail Policy Group(para. 7(a) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The Rail Policy Group acts as a forum for partnership working on both local and national issues and can inform the Council decision-making process. Bus and rail services operate in very different ways. The rail network is nationally regulated and operates through competitive franchising arrangements. However, the bus industry is deregulated and independent bus operators can determine their networks, frequency and fares.

The Greater Norwich Development Partnership has a remit to look at transport issues, specifically the Norwich Area Transport Strategy. This group meets regularly and discusses strategic transport issues, including public transportation.

Given the above, the County Council does not consider it necessary to create a

Joint Public Transport Group.

- 3.8 The needs of bus operators in plans for new developments (bus lanes, width of junctions, positioning of 'street furniture' etc) (para. 7(b) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The Joint Investment Plan signed with Norwich City Council and First reemphasises the good practice that already exists will ensure that the penetration of bus services into new housing areas is monitored and the needs of bus operators taken into account.

- 3.9 Infrastructure improvements to allow maximum benefits from the use of low floor buses e.g. lowered kerbs at bus stops(para. 7(c) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The County Council has a programme to improve kerbing at bus stops. Priority is focused on routes that are already operated with low floor vehicles.

- 3.10 Ensuring that the Traffic Management Act Board monitors parking enforcement(para. 7(d) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The Traffic Management Act Board is considering our parking enforcement practices, including the use of cameras. Parking enforcement is also a key element of the Joint Investment Plan. All operators are encouraged to feed back when there are blockages on the road network, using the recently implemented web feedback facility on the transport providers' webpage of the County Council's website.

- 3.11 The timings of their services (e.g. street cleaning, gully emptying, bin rounds) to ensure that they have as little impact on bus services as possible(para. 7(e) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The County Council has a Traffic Sensitive Streets network which specifies times of the day when works such as refuse collection and street cleaning should not take place. This has recently been updated and sent to stakeholders, including bus operators, for consultation.

- 3.12 Improving communication with bus operators, including advanced notice of roadworks and other temporary obstructions(para. 7(f) of final report)

County Council Response to the proposal:

The County Council has committed, as part of the Punctuality Improvement Partnerships signed with operators, that it will notify of works in accordance with the Traffic Management Act standards, and this was reiterated to operators at a Punctuality Improvement Forum in May. The Council has also

introduced a web feedback form for operators to report issues which affect services. This is proving successful in terms of both operators reporting issues and enabling the Council to deal with them in an efficient and effective manner.

- 3.13 Members should note the proposal in the final report (Resolution 8, page 8) to reconvene the Joint Scrutiny Committee “at an appropriate time in the future to consider any opportunities for public transport that are presented after the Local Transport Bill has been through Parliament.”

The performance and reliability of bus services is reported annually in May to the Planning, Transportation, Environment and Waste Review Panel and the Norwich Highways Agency Joint Committee.

## 4 **Resource Implications**

- 4.1 **Finance:** Any actions agreed would need to be costed and a business case developed for implementation
- 4.2 **Staff:** Any actions agreed would need to be costed and a business case developed for implementation
- 4.3 **Property:** None
- 4.4 **IT:** None

## 5 **Other Implications**

- 5.1 **Legal Implications:** None
- 5.2 **Human Rights:** None
- 5.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA):** Local bus services are exempt as under current legislation vehicles do not have to be fully accessible until 2017. However, we are working with operators to increase the rate at which low floor vehicles are provided across Norfolk.
- 5.4 **Communications:** None

## 6 **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act**

- 6.1 The local bus network helps to tackle social exclusion, and access to services enhances opportunities for people in employment and education.

## 7 **Risk Implications/Assessment**

- 7.1 The provision and performance of local bus services is very important for the Norfolk economy and our citizens. Supporting and enhancing public transport is therefore essential in meeting our targets set within the Local Transport Plan, new National Indicator targets and delivering on area transport strategies.

## 8 **Conclusion**

- 8.1 The joint scrutiny review concluded that bus services in the Greater Norwich area are generally performing well but there are improvements that could be made that would bring benefits to passengers.

## Recommendation or Action Required

The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee is asked to

- (i) Consider the final report of the Joint Scrutiny Committee
- (ii) Consider and endorse the County Council's response to the final report
- (iii) Consider whether the Joint Scrutiny Committee should reconvene at an appropriate time in the future once the Local Transport Bill has passed through Parliament.

## Background Papers

Joint Scrutiny Review of local bus services in the Greater Norwich area.

## Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper please get in touch with:

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# Norfolk County Council at your service

## Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

### Minutes of the Meeting Held on 26 August 2008

#### Present:

Mr A Adams  
Mr J Baskerville  
Dr A Boswell  
Mr B Collins  
Mr D Harrison  
Mr C Jordan  
Mr C Joyce  
Mr B Morrey

Mr P Morse  
Mr G Nobbs  
Mr J Shrimplin  
Mr B Spratt  
Mr T Tomkinson  
Ms S Whitaker (Chair)  
Mr A White

#### Also Present:

Mr C Walton, Interim Head of Democratic Services

#### 1. Apologies for Absence:

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Lloyd Owen (Mr T Tomkinson substituted) and Mr T Wainwright (Mr C Joyce substituted).

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

Mr B Morrey declared a personal interest with reference to Item 7 – Final Report on the Joint Scrutiny Review of Local Bus Services in the Greater Norwich area - as Norwich City Council's Executive Member for Sustainable Development.

#### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2008 were confirmed by the Committee and signed by the Chair, subject to a correction to confirm the name Marilyn Farrington.

#### 4. Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

#### 5. Call-in Items(s)

No items were called-in from the 11 August Cabinet meeting.

#### 6. Report of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Working Group 'The Scrutiny Process at Norfolk County Council'

- 6.1 The Committee received the annexed report and suggested approach to the scrutiny undertaken by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee Working Group.

#### 6.2 Conclusion

Following discussion, it was proposed and **agreed** that the following amendments be made to the recommendations presented by the Working Group:

- Recommendation 16 - At Cabinet meetings, the Chair should clearly ask Portfolio Holders whether they have anything to report back from the Review Panels
- Recommendation 23 - A Member/officer working group should be set up as soon as possible to undertake further work to identify the advantages and disadvantages of different models of scrutiny support and make recommendations for future arrangements across the County Council.

The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee **approved** the report and the 23 recommendations of the Working Group, as amended above, and **agreed** that the report be submitted to the Cabinet for approval and action.

## **7. Final Report on the Joint Scrutiny Review of Local Bus Services in the Greater Norwich Area**

7.1 The Committee received the annexed report and suggested approach to the scrutiny undertaken by the Scrutiny Support Manager and Director of Planning and Transportation.

7.2 The Chair welcomed Mr A Gunson, Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation, Mr I Hydes and Mr D Cumming to the meeting.

7.3 During discussion the following points were noted:

- A weakness in the report was the lack of any action plan setting out who would progress and monitor further work identified by the report's recommendations. In reply, it was commented that the assumption had been made that as Norwich City Council had instigated the scrutiny that they would pursue the actions. Mr Morrey, having declared a personal interest as a Norwich City Council Executive Member with responsibility for transportation issues, commented that he would ensure that Norwich followed up this issue of preparing an action plan.
- It was commented that the report was unfocussed in relation to policy and did not specify how a Joint Bus Policy Group could influence matters nor whether it would cover the whole of Norfolk or just Norwich. In reply, it was reaffirmed that the rail and bus industries operated very differently; one being a regulated body and the other entirely commercially run by individual bus companies. The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) had a remit to discuss public transportation and was the better forum for the strategic planning of such services. In response to the proposal to set up a Joint Bus Policy Group, members **agreed** that the best way forward was to support the work being undertaken on this issue by the GNDP.
- Reference was made to the Punctuality Improvement Partnerships and it was confirmed that these were partnership agreements between the County Council and bus companies around punctuality which had, in recent years, seen significant improvements.
- It was noted that there was a Disability Discrimination Act requirement for buses to give disabled passengers kerb level access by 2017. Progress was regularly monitored and officers were confident that this requirement would be met.
- It was agreed that this had been a difficult and lengthy first attempt at getting together a Working Group comprising members across four different local authorities. Nevertheless, there had been positive lessons learned and the outcome and report were welcomed overall.

- A proposal was made, and the Committee **agreed**, that the annual report to the Planning, Transportation, Environment and Waste Management Review Panel on the performance and reliability of bus services should also be sent to Norwich City Council, South Norfolk District Council and Broadland District Council for information.
- The proposal, put by the Joint Bus Scrutiny, for a Bus Users Association (BUA) was discussed, and it was noted that a national body already existed. However, members were keen to use such a forum to feed in views to the current Local Transport Bill. The Committee, therefore, **agreed** to write to Bus Users UK seeking their views on setting up a local group for Norfolk.
- There was discussion on the proposal for the County Council to act as a channel to enable multi-operator ticketing between services provided by different operators. Members noted that this issue tied in with work being undertaken by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership on bus rapid transit. Operators still have concerns about possible action from the Office of Fair Trading regarding joint ticketing issues and it is hoped changes in legislation will provide greater clarity in this area. Members, therefore, **agreed** that the best way forward was to report progress via the annual report to the Planning, Transportation, Environment and Waste Review Panel on the performance and reliability of bus services.
- The Committee **agreed** the County Council's response, set out in the report, to the possibility of going out to tender to provide evening and Sunday services on routes where regular daytime services are already provided.
- With regard to the proposal to prepare and publish a map that combined all routes serviced by all operators in the Greater Norwich Area, members **agreed** that the web based approach was the best means of ensuring accurate and timely information. However, they also **agreed** that printouts of the latest web based maps could be held in Tourist Information Centres, Bus Stations etc for those who did not have easy access to the web.
- Members noted the proposal being put forward by the Joint Bus Scrutiny to change the design of timetables including those on bus stops to show main stops and not just the final destination. They noted too that consultation was currently underway on the information made available to passengers, organised by the County Council. The Committee, therefore, **agreed** that feedback on the outcome of this consultation be included in a future Planning & Transportation Member Briefing Note.
- Members **agreed** that the needs of bus operators, in plans for new developments (bus lanes, width of junctions, positioning of 'street furniture' etc), should be taken into account and noted too that this already operated via the Joint Investment Plan signed with Norwich City Council and First.
- Members **noted** that the County Council had in place a programme of infrastructure improvements to allow maximum benefits from the use of low floor buses e.g. lowered kerbs at bus stops.
- Members **noted** that the Traffic Management Act Board did monitor parking enforcement practices, it being a key element of the Council's Joint Investment Plan.
- Members **noted** that the Council's Traffic Sensitive Streets network had recently been updated and would address the timings of services (e.g. street cleaning, gully

emptying, bin rounds) to ensure that they had as little impact on bus services as possible.

- Members **noted** the improving communication with bus operators, including advanced notice of roadworks and other temporary obstructions, as part of the Council's Punctuality Improvement Partnerships.
- Members **agreed** that there was no need to reconvene the Joint Scrutiny Committee as any progress or commentary on future opportunities for public transport, presented after the Local Transport Bill had been through Parliament, would be included in the annual report to the Planning, Transportation, Environment and Waste Review Panel on the performance and reliability of bus services.

### 7.3 Conclusion

The Committee commented, as set out above, on the County Council's responses to recommendations in the final report of the Joint Bus Scrutiny.

Having considered the Joint Bus Scrutiny's resolutions seeking government consideration, the Committee **agreed** that all four authorities who participated in the scrutiny be co-signatories, with Norwich City Council acting as the lead authority and preparing letters which invited the government to consider:

1. the disadvantageous position that bus operators face re duty on fuel compared with rail and aviation and the effect on fares and patronage
2. the regulations which prevent bus operators discussing matters such as service/ route provisions, as this seems to result in some duplication of services
3. enhancing the role of Traffic Commissioners and making them more local covering smaller areas
4. allowing more local discretion for local authorities to introduce arrangements tailored to local circumstances.

The Committee also **agreed** that Norwich City Council, acting as the lead authority, prepare letters which invited the bus companies to consider:

- (a) partaking in a BusWatch group;
- (b) informing the councils of illegal parking / loading hotspots – so that parking enforcement can be well informed and targeted when necessary (Bus operators should be informing Norfolk County Council about these issues as part of Punctuality Improvement Partnerships);
- (c) complying with the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 as soon as possible and certainly well in advanced of the legislative deadline of 2017;
- (d) extending the hours of operation of existing daytime routes to include evenings and Sundays where this is currently not provided.
- (e) consulting local people, including residents' organisations and parish councils, before making changes to routes / timetables;
- (f) reviewing how customers are informed of changes in routes / timetables to ensure the information is readily available in a timely manner.;
- (g) promoting sections of routes that operate on a "Hail and Ride" basis and to clearly mark buses/timetables accordingly.

- (h) providing clearer information including changing the design of their timetables to show main stops along the route, not just the final destination and displaying intermediate stops on buses.
- (i) introducing multi-operator day tickets to cover all operators and services in the Greater Norwich area.
- (j) considering the scope for using fare pricing to encourage patronage and to publicise discounts / special offers more widely.

## 8. Partnership Working

8.1 The Committee received the annexed report by the Cabinet Scrutiny Group Leads.

8.2 During discussion, the following comments were noted:

- Members now had more confidence in the ability of the County Council to be assured of the robustness of the partnerships it worked with, their democratic processes and effectiveness.
- It was proposed that the list of partnerships be circulated to each of the Review Panels, inviting them to continue to regularly monitor the effectiveness of those most relevant to them. The Committee **agreed** with this suggestion.
- It was noted that the Planning, Transportation, Environment and Waste Management Review Panel had already created a helpful two year rolling plan for monitoring their partnerships and suggestion was made that this be adopted for all Review Panels. The Committee **supported** this proposal.

## 8.3 Conclusion

The Committee **agreed** to:

- 1) Recognise the success of the self-assessment questionnaire, both as a tool for partnership officers and Members to ensure the continued effectiveness of partnership working, and offer it to other authorities (via the Centre for Public Scrutiny) as a tested and proven method of assessing the effectiveness of partnership working.
- 2) Acknowledge the relative strength of the County Council's partnership working, evidenced by the strengths and areas of good practice established by Review Panels. The common themes will inform Phase 2 of the corporate approach, but the strengths and areas of good practice should be shared through the corporate "Good Governance in Partnerships Guidelines".
- 3) Acknowledge that some common themes have arisen around areas for improvement (listed below). Again, the common themes will inform Phase 2 of the corporate approach. Each Review Panel should satisfy itself that individual partnerships are addressing areas for improvement, where they have been identified.

The common themes for improvement include the potential need to:

- Introduce a structured challenge process for small- and medium-sized partnerships, e.g. a three-yearly review
- Ensure engagement with the formal risk management process, proportionate to the size, complexity and budget

- Ensure that partnerships have a formal communications strategy, even though it is clear that the majority demonstrate effective use of communication
- 4) Circulate a copy of the report to Review Panel Chairmen, so these points may be borne in mind in any future partnership review that Review Panels decide to conduct
- 5) Conclude the scrutiny exercise and confirm that these findings be used to inform the next stage of the corporate approach to improving governance in partnerships.
- 6) Circulate the list of partnerships to each of the Review Panels, inviting them to continue to regularly monitor the effectiveness of those most relevant to them.
- 7) Promote the Planning, Transportation, Environment and Waste Management Review Panel two year rolling plan for monitoring as a model for partnership reviews, to be adopted by all Review Panels.

**9. Cabinet Scrutiny Working Groups: Update**

9.1 The annexed report was received and noted.

**10. Forward Work Programme**

10.1 The Committee received and noted the Forward Work Programme.

10.2 Members noted that a Scrutiny Awayday would be held on 1 September which included an agenda item on scrutiny topics for the coming year.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am ended at 12.20pm

**MS SUE WHITAKER, CHAIR**



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