

Report for Information

Report to	Scrutiny Committee 22 October 2009	Item
Report of	Head of Transportation and Landscape	3
Subject	Joint Scrutiny Review of Local Bus Service Provision in the Greater Norwich area – Progress Update	

Purpose

To review progress in delivering the resolutions of the Joint scrutiny Review of Local Bus Service Provision in the Greater Norwich area and consider any opportunities for public transport presented by the Local Transport Act 2008.

Recommendations

The committee is recommended to:

1. Note improvements on local bus service performance as set out in appendix 1;
2. Note the responses made by Government, bus operators, Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council to the resolutions agreed by Joint scrutiny review of local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area as set out in appendices 2 to 5;
3. Consider whether the joint scrutiny committee needs to reconvene to carry out further work to review local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area;
4. Comment on opportunities for public transport presented by the Local Transport Act 2008

Financial Consequences

There are no financial consequences arising directly from this report

Risk Assessment

There are no risk issues arising directly from this report

Contact Officers

David Cumming, Norfolk County Council	01603 224225
Ian Hydes, Norfolk County Council	01603 224357
Andy Watt, Norwich City Council	01603 213511

Background Documents

Joint scrutiny review of local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area, 2007/08

Report

Background

1. In response to a motion agreed by Norwich City Council on 28 November 2006 a joint scrutiny review of local bus service provision in the greater Norwich area was undertaken by Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk District Council. 12 Members (four from each authority) conducted the review, carried out in a series of five meetings coupled to widespread consultation with bus operators, over 400 organisations and the public more generally. The review conclusions and resolutions were published following the final review meeting in February 2008.
2. This report provides an update to the substantive resolutions of the joint scrutiny review which were directed at Government, bus operators, Norfolk County Council, as Local Transport Authority and local authorities generally.

Overall trends

3. Since February 2008, there has been an improvement in the performance of local bus services in the greater Norwich area. The enclosed report to the June 2009 Norwich Joint Highways Agency Committee (appendix 1) summarises this improvement which is found in punctuality and customer satisfaction. The work of the joint scrutiny review will have played an important role in promoting this improvement as well as other initiatives such as the joint investment partnership between First, Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council.
4. Whilst there remains for further improvement in local bus services, the responses made by different groups to the original joint scrutiny resolutions should be considered within this encouraging context.

Response to resolutions

5. Both Government and the main bus operators were written to asking for their response to the joint scrutiny's resolutions. These are presented in appendices 2 and 3. Norfolk County Council's Cabinet Scrutiny Committee considered the resolutions in August 2008 and a copy of the report and minutes is provided in appendix 4. The City Council considered the resolutions in October 2008 and a copy of the report and minutes is provided in appendix 5.

Local Transport Act 2008

6. The Local Transport Act 2008 gives local authorities the ability to take decisions on bus service operation that are right for their local circumstances and needs, in partnership with bus operators. Options available for local authorities are either
 - Quality Partnership schemes; and
 - Quality Contracts
7. The County Council is making good progress on improving bus services on a voluntary basis with all operators. It is not minded at present to use any of the new powers.

8. The act has also

- Extended the remit Passenger Focus'– the rail watchdog – to cover bus and coach issues. This will ensure there is a statutory body with a strong public role to promote the interests of public transport passengers across the country;
- Strengthened the role of the senior traffic commissioner to give guidance and direction; and
- Relaxed of rules relating to community bus services

Local bus service reliability and performance

Report by the Director of Environment, Transport and Development

Summary

This annual report provides information about performance of the major bus operators in Norfolk during 2008/9.

1. Background

- 1.1. The local bus network in Norfolk is a mixture of commercial and subsidised services. Commercial services receive no financial support from the county council. There are over 40 operators providing local bus services across the county. These range from small business operators running one or two services or community buses, up to large national bus operators. This report contains information about the performance of the major five operators: Anglian Bus & Coach, First Eastern Counties, Konectbus, Norfolk Green and Sanders Coaches.
- 1.2. Bus operator performance is reviewed and discussed regularly with members. There is a significant data set providing robust information within Norfolk, and in particular Norwich, that can be used to identify performance trends and measure progress. The data shows that there have been improvements but we recognise that there is room for more progress towards better quality buses, increased punctuality and consistency in service delivery.
- 1.3. There were more than 30 million journeys made on buses in Norfolk during 2008/9 and an increase of 4% is expected during 2009/10. The reported national trend for bus use outside London has been falling over the past few years. However there has been growth in Norfolk recent years, most likely due to the County's investment in public transport and associated infrastructure.
- 1.4. The county's investment is part of our ongoing commitment to improve travel and transport to support residents, visitors and business across Norfolk. On an area-wide level, the council is working with partners and stakeholders to develop and implement transport strategies to meet local needs.
- 1.5. In Norwich, this investment is part of the ongoing implementation of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS). A NATS Plus implementation plan will be available for consultation in the autumn this year. The plan will include details of up to 6 proposed Bus Rapid Transit corridors to serve the City Centre, increasing capacity in the local bus network and offering high quality, fast, frequent and cashless bus

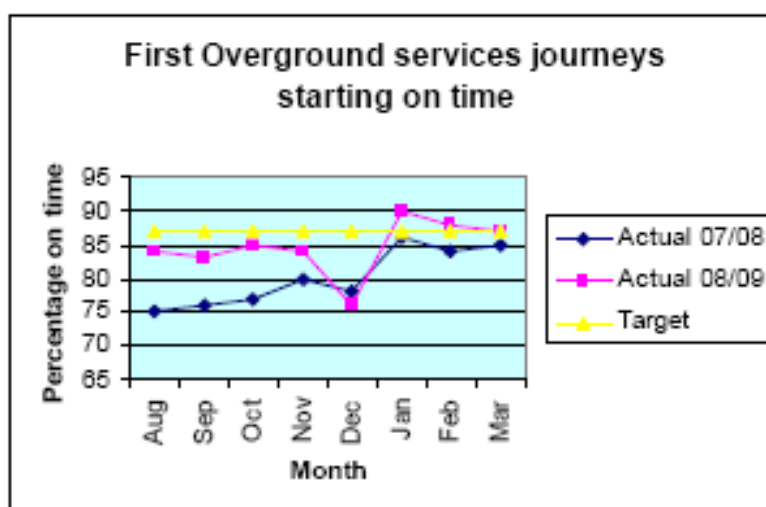
journeys. There will also be details of walking and cycling improvements and other traffic measures within the city centre to promote modal shift. The Northern Distributor Road will be a crucial element of the plans, providing the elbow room for delivery of the full package of transportation schemes to increase the capacity to meet the growth agenda.

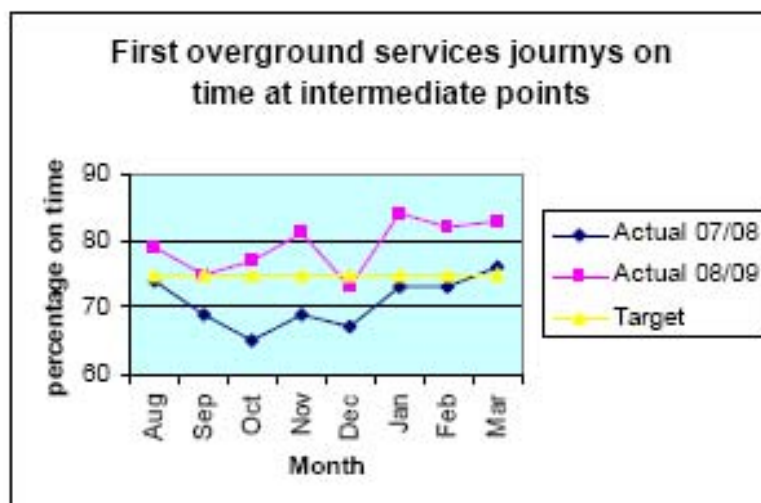
2. County Council Monitoring and the Bus Net system

- 2.1. The County Council has invested over £1m, fitting over 350 buses with the BusNet satellite tracking system. The system enables the council to monitor bus movements across the network and identify improvement areas. Bus operators have direct links to the system so they can monitor their operations in real time, making proactive changes to keep services "on time".

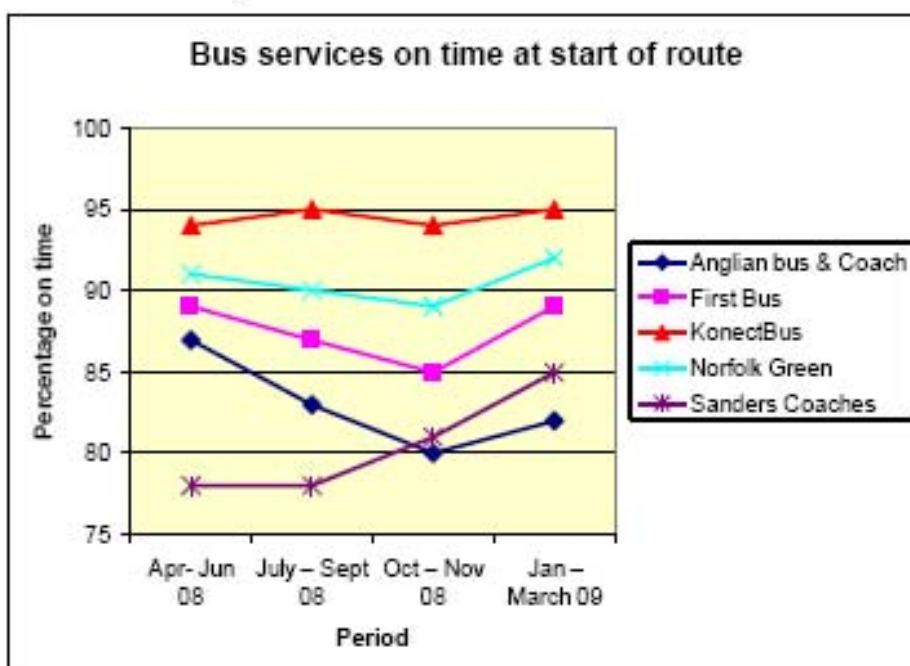
With active and efficient management control of vehicles, problems on route are identified and avoided by drivers taking remedial action via communications from bus companies' offices. Data gathered from the system is also used to review timetables and make changes that help to improve punctuality. Continued use of BusNet has delivered a sustained improvement in time keeping and we expect to improve punctuality and reliability further in 2009/10.

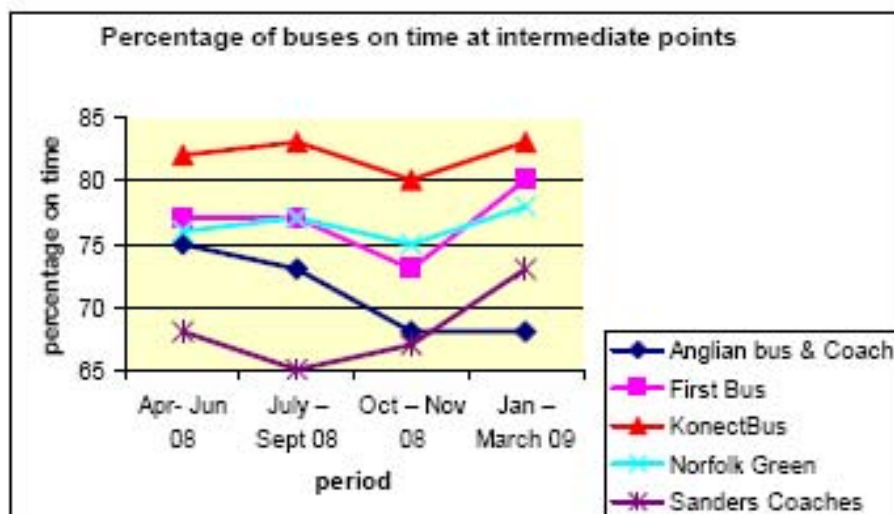
- 2.2. The latest performance report from BusNet for the period up to March 2009 for First's "Norwich" network is shown below. It can be seen that the performance in the last year has shown significant improvement and has exceeded the targets set in the Joint Investment plan.





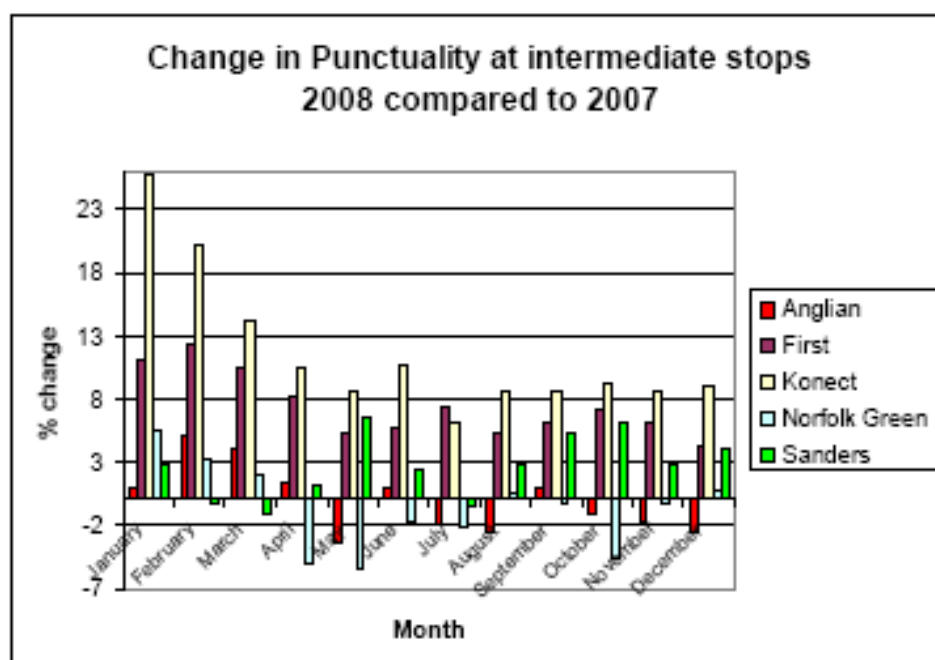
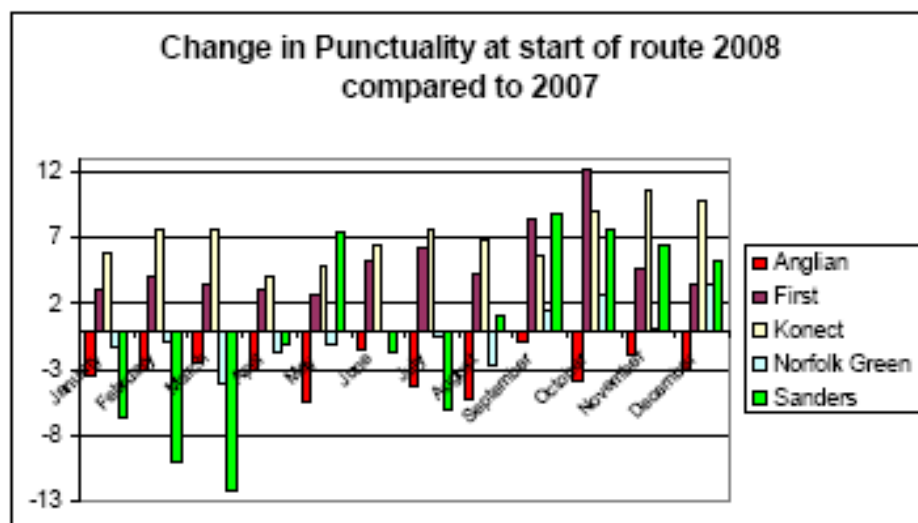
- 2.3. The majority of journeys undertaken by the five major operators were monitored to assess punctuality of the Norfolk network between April 08 and March 09 inclusive. This enables us to confidently assess performance using hard evidence and identify trends.





- 2.4. There is a trend that punctuality falls in the run up to Christmas. This is mainly due to increased traffic congestion in the city. For the run up to Christmas 2008 the Council in partnership with First funded queue marshalls to prevent traffic from blocking junctions and queuing back from car park entrance. This worked very well and resulted in improved punctuality and reliability.
- 2.5. The performance during 2008 shows that overall punctuality was better than in 2007 although Anglian in particular struggled to maintain the levels they had reached during 2007. When reviewing the graphs below it important to look at them in conjunction with the punctuality figures for 2008 as a dip in punctuality, whilst disappointing does not necessarily mean that the overall punctuality is poor.

Whilst the performance of Norfolk Green has dipped at intermediate points in a number of months it should be noted their high starting point and that their bus services were affected by a significant number of roadworks in the west of the County during 2008. The Council is working closely with Norfolk Green mitigate the impact of roadworks on their services.



- 2.6 The information captured by BusNet forms a reliable tool for operators to recast schedules (where appropriate) to improve punctuality and reliability. An example of this is the change made to First service 26 in September 2008. The number of buses on time at intermediate points on this route has improved from 75.2% in March 08 to 86.5% in March 09. Analysis of the data from the revised timetable will take place later this year to see if additional minor changes could further improve punctuality.
- 2.7 Recent monitoring of bus services in Cambridgeshire shows that overall the number of buses on time is 70%. In Thurrock 78.1% of buses were on time at

the punctuality and reliability of bus services.

- More vehicle replacements to reduce the average age of the fleet and increase the number of low floor easy access vehicles in operation.

4 Punctuality Improvement Partnerships (PIPs)

4.1 The Council has successfully introduced Punctuality Improvement Partnerships with major bus companies and a number of smaller companies. PIPs are identified within the Local Transport Plan as a way of working with operators to improve and maintain punctuality and reliability of bus services. Norfolk is a leading authority in the development of PIP's and has more than any other shire County. We are also recognised as very proactive in this area and hold regular forums with operators which the Senior Traffic Commissioner has attended.

4.2 The PIP is a voluntary agreement and represents a "joint commitment to achieve continuous improvement in punctuality and overall reliability of bus services".

Under the terms of the agreement both parties agree to:

- monitor and collate information using BusNet to measure reliability against targets;
- to jointly validate the data with on-road surveys where necessary;
- to meet quarterly to identify trends and mutually agree actions to improve punctuality.

Planned actions will result from the information gathered and include:

- identifying areas for bus priority measures
- revision of or recasting of timetables to improve punctuality and reliability, First are currently working with us to review running times of services in the Norwich area
- better communication of planned road works and closures across the network
- improved planning of engineering and staff resources

5 Resource Implications

5.1 Finance : Funding of over £1m has been provided through the capital programme for the BusNet system. The ongoing revenue costs for the system of £257K in 2008/9 were met by a 50:50 split between the County Council and bus operators. Staff resource has been met from the existing staff budgets in P & T. Any expansion of the system will be funded from the existing Local Transport Capital programme and revenue contributions made from bus operators.

The County is expecting to spend around £8.3m on bus services in 2009/10 and (including around £2m for Norwich park and ride). A realistic choice of travel options is important for the communities of Norfolk, in particular where social exclusion and deprivation is a key factor. Any reduction in performance and reliability of public transport could have a negative effect on passenger numbers

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

8 Risk Implications/Assessment

- 8.1 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.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1
- The performance data suggests that reliability and punctuality continues to improve and service standards have got better.
 - The BusNet system is providing robust data and provides a good platform for improvement of bus services in Norfolk and in particular our major urban areas.
 - The Council is working collaboratively with bus operators to drive up performance and the use of voluntary agreements (e.g. Punctuality Improvement Partnerships and the Joint Investment plan) is a valuable mechanism to maintain the momentum.

All parties recognise there is room for continued improvement and that we strive to improve timekeeping performance and seek to promote best practice amongst operators for the benefit of the travelling public. The bus strategy within our Local Transport Plan provides the mechanism to do this.

Action Required

The Committee is invited to note and comment on the annual report

Background Papers

Officer Contact

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

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Ian Hydes	01603 224357	ian.hydes@norfolk.gov.uk

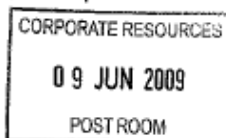


If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Ian Hydes on 01603 224357 or textphone 0844 8008011 and we will do our best to help.

Response from the Department for Transport

Department for
Transport

Andy Watt
Head of Transport and Landscape
Norwich City Council
NORWICH
NR2 1NH



3/11 Buses and Taxis Division
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR

Direct Line: 0207 944 3706
Email: Anthony.Ferguson@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk

Your Ref: TR/3/1/AW/EA

8 June 2009

Dear Andy,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 April regarding a review of local bus service provision in the Norwich area.

I am happy to respond to the points you raise and apologise for not having done so sooner. I found the document attached to your letter very interesting; we are very keen to keep abreast of developments of this kind around the country.

Point 1: The disadvantageous position that bus operators face regarding duty on fuel

I understand your concerns and this is an area we are looking into; however, it may help if I explain the system that is currently in place and our considerations for the future.

Called the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), this is a payment made to bus operators by Government that offsets a high proportion of the fuel duty paid on fuel consumed (around 80%). It is an important source of subsidy from central Government which allows commercial bus operators to run a wider network of services than would otherwise be the case. Payments last year were around £430 million.

BSOG payments are based on the amount of fuel consumed. As such, the grant is not well targeted on economic and social objectives and is poorly linked to environmental objectives, particularly climate change. Given the challenge of the Climate Change Act to reduce UK carbon emissions, automatic uprating of BSOG is no longer appropriate and gives good cause for changing the grant to focus it more effectively on Government objectives – particularly in relation to the environment and climate change.

The Chancellor's Pre-Budget Report on 24 November and the Secretary of State for Transport's statement on 16 December announced that the Government would be introducing changes to BSOG ending the link whereby changes in fuel duty were matched by changes in BSOG rates.

Instead, the Secretary of State announced in April that operators who improve their fuel efficiency by 6% compared with the "base year" will receive a 3% increase in BSOG from 1 April 2010. Also, an additional payment of 6p per kilometre will be paid for all kilometres operated by a Low Carbon and Emission Bus (LCEB); this began on 1 April 2009.

As part of the drive to improve fuel efficiency in the bus industry, the Department will also be running a Safe And Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED) demonstration programme. Results indicate that by employing SAFED-style driving techniques, the bus industry could improve their fuel efficiency by around 12%.

It is estimated that bus patronage is 6.7% higher than it would be if BSOG was withdrawn and that fares are 6.5% lower. In reaching their commercial judgement on fares, bus operators will take account of a range of factors. Fuel costs are one element but are likely to be fairly marginal when considered in the context of an operator's overall outgoings. Some of the most significant costs include staffing, training, vehicle and technology procurement and maintenance, and insurance.

I would like to answer points 2 & 4 together: **The regulations which prevent bus operators discussing matters & allowing more local discretion for Local Authorities**

The Local Transport Act 2008 empowers local authorities to develop tailored solutions to the local issues they face and is aimed at achieving precisely the things you describe. Provisions include a mix of powers for local authorities to exert greater influence over the standard of bus services that are provided in their areas – in particular through voluntary partnership agreements, quality partnership schemes and quality contracts (ie bus franchising) schemes. In relation to voluntary agreements, the Act includes reforms aimed at removing some of the perceived obstacles that competition law has previously presented to bus operators and local authorities seeking to work together to coordinate routes or timetables.

The Department has consulted on, and now published, guidance relating to voluntary partnership agreements and quality partnership schemes. This is available at www.dft.gov.uk/localtransportact. We also expect to be publishing draft guidance relating to quality contracts schemes for full public consultation in the coming weeks.

Regarding point 3: **Enhancing the role of Traffic Commissioners**

The regulation of bus services is a relatively small activity, compared to the regulation of around 110,000 bus and lorry operators and some 450,000 vehicles. Of course, any regulatory system must be proportionate and we feel the current structure of the traffic areas strikes the right balance between cost effectiveness and local accountability.

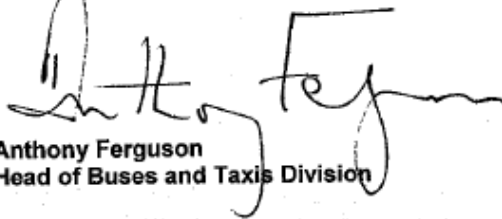
As the traffic commissioners are paid wholly by the industry through fees we must ensure - particularly in the current financial climate - that any additional burdens are kept to a minimum.

The Local Transport Act does allow for more Traffic Commissioners to be appointed and for them to specialise, for example on local bus matters. However, the additional cost would need to be funded by local bus operators.

The Act also created a statutory post of Senior Traffic Commissioner (STC), and enables the removal of most of the legislative barriers to the flexible deployment of Traffic Commissioners. In future it will be for the STC to determine how and where the individual Traffic Commissioners exercise their statutory functions, although there will be special arrangements in Scotland. This will provide additional flexibility to apply resources where they are most needed as well as allowing the overall workload to be spread more evenly across the commissioners themselves.

I hope that you find this response helpful. If you would like to discuss any of the issues in more detail my colleagues and I would be happy to do so.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Ferguson', written over a horizontal line.

Anthony Ferguson
Head of Buses and Taxis Division

Response from First



Andrew Watt
Norwich City Council
City Hall
Norwich
NR2 1NH

20th May 2009

Dear Andy



Rouen House
Rouen Road
Norwich NR1 1RB
Tel: 08456 020 121
Fax: 01603 615439

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

Thank you for your letter of 27 April 2009 with regard to the above, which I received on 11 May 2009. Given that the date of the Joint Scrutiny Committee was 28 November 2006, I must say that I was disappointed to read the comments in your letter and the accompanying document, which appears to take no account of the considerable work and effort that First are carrying out, in partnership with Norfolk County Council (NCC). Since my arrival at First, I have had several conversations and discussions with a variety of stakeholders, all of which have acknowledged that First has made improvement on all fronts since the end of 2006. Whilst I am happy to supply comments and feedback on the questions raised in your letter, I am somewhat surprised at the timing, given the good work and the progress that I believe has been made in partnership with NCC and other stakeholders.

1. BusWatch group. In principle First are happy to partake in such a group, which can take many forms. It is worth noting that First worked with BusUsersUK at the recent operators surgery, where members of BusUsersUK commented at length on the huge difference in feedback from customers this year compared with the previous meeting. I would be interested in understanding what format you envisage the group taking and would be happy to add further comments once I understand this.
2. Illegal parking / loading hotspots. First are happy to work with the local authorities in order to target illegal parking / loading hot spots. However, it is clear that for this to be successful it needs to be implemented via a coordinated mechanism and process agreed between all parties. Actions and responsibilities need to be understood and documented as part of this. This may be something that the Punctuality Improvement Partnerships (PIPs) could incorporate. A noteworthy point is the proactive approach that First took with both NCC and Norwich on the Christmas car park problem through the use of Event Guard Security. First were the only operator who contributed to this innovative approach and again recently were the only operator to attend the post implementation review held with all the relevant stakeholders. I would be happy to discuss a coordinated approach to illegal parking, hotspots and enforcement with yourself and NCC.
3. You will be aware, as identified within the Joint Scrutiny Review documentation, that First are signed up to a Joint Investment Partnership with NCC and Norwich City Council (Norwich), that has targets for capital investment which are quite significant. In addition to the new vehicles deployed recently onto the X1 service and the low floor refurbished single decks which First acquired last year, we are currently feeding in a further 33 refurbished Trident double deck vehicles into Norwich. All vehicles are now in our control and 13 have already undergone refurbishment and are now in service. First is clearly committed to investing in its fleet and I believe that this should be clearly recognised.



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First Eastern Counties Buses Limited
Registered in England number 257815
Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RB



4. First runs its services on a commercial basis unless the passenger numbers dictate that it isn't economically viable, in which case NCC may decide to support a service for a variety of reasons. The basis for whether a service is deemed appropriate for tender support will be around specific criteria set by NCC. It should be acknowledged however, that First tends to run its services longer commercially in Norfolk than most other operators, which often goes unrecognised by many parties. First continually examines its services and passenger numbers to ascertain whether there are any opportunities for development. Where this indicates an opportunity to further lengthen the day we would certainly consider doing so.
5. First consult with NCC in advance of potential service changes to gain input into suggestions. This also allows NCC to take a coordinated approach to bus services as part of its public transport strategy. Through working with NCC in this way, it allows potential stakeholder issues or sensitivity to be raised and discussed between the parties whilst still preserving commercial confidentiality. First will enter into such discussions as far in advance as practicable.
6. First already work with NCC to provide information to its customers and stakeholder on a timely basis. Timetable information is supplied a minimum of 10 days prior to the changes in line with the JIP agreement. First also provides information on its website and on buses in advance of alterations.
7. First are happy to discuss with its partners where hail and ride sections may be of use. However, this needs to take into account both the safety of customers, our staff and other road users. Some areas may be inappropriate on these grounds. There is also the question of appropriate boarding facilities, including raised kerbs, for example, whose absence on hail and ride sections may create separate issues with some customers.
8. First has already changed its timetable styles, as requested, providing a mix of booklets and individual timetables. First's timetables do not just show the final destination, as main stops along the route are also shown. First continues to look at service information provided both on its buses and timetables as well as available through partners and the internet. We are happy to copy good practice from elsewhere; this has recently been demonstrated by the fresher look to our recent timetables.
9. First have instigated discussions with operators in Norfolk in order to launch a multi-operator travelcard (MTC) covering the Greater Norwich area. These discussions are progressing well and we anticipate a successful conclusion with a MTC being available in the short to medium term. NCC have also been involved in these discussions. It is disappointing that our efforts have not been recognised or appreciated.
10. First provides the vast majority of its services on a commercial basis. There is a careful balance that has to be made between ticket types and their relative ratios. Through different season tickets First already rewards its customers with discounted travel. We continue to examine alternative ticket types and approaches to see if there are any market segments or groups of customers or travel patterns that aren't adequately provided for. This led to the reintroduction of 10 trip tickets in the Norwich area last year, our recently proposed changes on family tickets and the introduction of a short hop ticket on a trial basis in areas of Norfolk and Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Pilbeam', written over a horizontal line.

Alan Pilbeam
Managing Director
First East England

CC: Tracy Jessop, Norfolk County Council

Response from Konectbus

Dear Andy

I do apologise for the delay in responding to the above but having considered the points raised would comment as follows.

1. We would have no objections to taking part in a Bus Watch Group although we have been invited to join Bus Users UK.
2. Illegal parking is not a major issue for us except when queues form at car park entrances particularly at Chapelfield which I believe was agreed at the planning stage.
3. Our vehicles are mostly DDA compliant all buses in Norwich apart from route 4 are DDA.
4. As far as extending the hours of operation is concerned service 5 is covered by 16a and Sunday service by First on other routes.
5. Consultation is not easy in a commercial environment but is in our interest to consider any suggestions.
6. All our timetables are available on bus two weeks prior to any changes and two to three weeks on our website.
7. We do not have hail and ride in the City due to the volume of dedicated stops and difficulties of continually stop start with its adverse affect on traffic and safety.
8. All our timetables show the main stops it would be impractical to show all stops.
9. A Multi operator ticket is in the discussion and set up stage at present.
10. Fare pricing is always under review as in any commercial operation the aim is to encourage more customers to travel.

I hope these points are helpful and should you require further clarification do not hesitate to get back to me.

Yours sincerely

Steve

Stephen Challis
Director
Konectbus
7 John Goshawk Road
Dereham
NR19 1SJ
mobile: 07775 753 236
email: stephen.challis@btconnect.com
office no: 01362 851 210

**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.

2.2 South Norfolk District Council

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.

2.3 Broadland District Council

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:

Name	Telephone Number	Email address
Keith Cogdell	01603 222785	keith.cogdell@norfolk.gov.uk
Ian Hydes	01603 224357	ian.hydes@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Keith Cogdell on 01603 222785 or textphone 0844 8008011 and we will do our best to help.

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

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

6

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

Andy Watt

01603 213511

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.



NORWICH
City Council

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE

5.30 p.m. – 6.15 p.m.

1 October 2008

Present: Councillor Morphew (Chair), Morrey (Vice Chair), Arthur, Blakeway, Bremner and Sands

Also present: Councillors Jago and Stephenson

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton and Waters

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2008

2. EVERY CHILD MATTERS

...

3. FINAL REPORT ON THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF LOCAL BUS SERVICES IN THE GREATER NORWICH AREA

The Head of Transportation and Landscape presented the report and explained that following the Joint Scrutiny Committee's review of local bus services it was concluded that the bus services were performing well, but there were improvements that could be made that would bring benefits to passengers.

Councillor Stephenson considered it would be beneficial for people using the buses if there were a bus user group. Councillor Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development, said although Norfolk County Council were against a policy group they were in support of a user group.

The Chair congratulated everyone involved and said there was a need to put together an action plan. He said this had been an extremely good exercise and the first time there had been a Joint Scrutiny with other authorities.

RESOLVED 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.