

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Review Committee held on
Tuesday, 22 September 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Ben Shelton – Chairman

Councillors: David Bard Henry Batchelor
Kevin Cuffley Andrew Fraser
Roger Hall Janet Lockwood

Officers: Gemma Barron Sustainable Communities & Partnerships
Manager
Ian Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Jose Hales and Councillor James Hockney sent Apologies for Absence. The Committee endorsed the Chairman's appointment of Councillor Henry Batchelor as Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2015.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from members of the public.

5. BUS SERVICES

Paul Nelson (Interim Head of Passenger Transport, Cambridgeshire County Council) and Andy Campbell (Stagecoach) attended the meeting.

The provision of bus services

Mr. Nelson summarised the process companies had to follow in order to obtain permission to operate buses, on a commercial basis, along particular routes within the County. There were no grounds upon which Cambridgeshire County Council could object to the outcome of this process. The County Council could then consider whether to provide bus services of its own along routes not served commercially. However, it was under no obligation to provide such additional services, especially in the light of diminishing budgets.

On the question of subsidised services, Members noted that, while Cambridgeshire County Council could supplement commercial routes by providing buses in otherwise unviable areas, the County Council was not allowed to compete with commercial services. Mr. Campbell explained that, in a similar way, Stagecoach could not cross-subsidise, making unviable routes viable by using money made on profitable routes.

Mr. Campbell said that Stagecoach tried to provide as comprehensive a service as possible in South Cambridgeshire by connecting groups of villages together. A problem with this though was that journey times were extended and, where people did not have the time to spare and had an alternative such as a private motor vehicle, it was very difficult to achieve modal shift.

School transport

Those present noted and discussed the basis upon which school buses were provided. Mr. Campbell highlighted the problem of trying to keep to timetable at peak times, and suggested that staggered school hours might ease congestion.

Community transport

The Partnerships and Sustainable Communities Manager summarised South Cambridgeshire District Council's Community Transport Strategy, and said that priorities were currently being reviewed. The issue of Community Transport was material to decisions made in the context of Strategic Transport. Additional funding could be sought as part of the negotiations relating to Legal Agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Possible enhancements

In response to the Chairman, Mr. Nelson said that a form of transport hub operated in key parts of the District, principally focused on the city of Cambridge. However, as the Partnerships and Sustainable Communities Manager pointed out, people in general currently wanted one mode of transport between home and place of work, for example.

Councillor David Bard raised the issues of streamlining services, interactive timetabling, and missed services. Mr. Campbell reiterated the problems caused by traffic congestion in Cambridge City. In particular, current interactive timetabling technology relied on the three previous journeys and, if any of those had been affected by congestion that would have a consequential effect. He hoped that Automatic Vehicle Location technology would solve the problem in the future.

In response to a question about making information more accessible for visually-impaired people, Mr. Campbell said that Stagecoach was currently working on an automatic **voice** messaging system, similar to the one currently in use on trains. He also referred to a smartphone app that was being developed. Such an app would fulfil the task of identifying bus stops, and also allow for a more streamlined approach to ticketing.

Zoning and fares

Those present discussed zoning, and the potential of making the fare structure fairer, including by reducing variance in fares between zones. Mr. Campbell referred to current research into the possibility of introducing smartcards and contactless debit card payments. Such innovations could lead to a three-zone system replacing the current two-zone set-up.

Evening services

Members were told that the future of evening services was dependent on their viability. Mr. Campbell said that increased housing development might make evening public

transport more viable.

The future of public transport

Mr. Campbell highlighted the need to be radical in planning public transport for the future. This could entail tunnels under Cambridge, and the availability of electric cars. He informed the Committee that the introduction of parking charges at Park & Ride sites had resulted in 500,000 fewer bus journeys being made in the first year. He acknowledged that there might be some sense in moving Park & Ride sites further away from Cambridge City Centre.

Other matters

Those present discussed a number of other issues surrounding Park & Ride, the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, and the working relationship between County Highways and public transport providers. On the question of monies available by virtue of Legal Agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Mr. Campbell said that developers were often proactive in this regard as it helped them to formulate Travel Plans that were often instrumental in securing planning permission.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Mr. Campbell and Mr. Nelson for attending the meeting.

6. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Partnerships Review Committee **received and noted** a report from Councillor Peter Johnson in respect of the Farmland Museum, Waterbeach.

7. WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

The Committee considered its Work Programme for 2015-16.

The Chairman reminded Members that they had agreed to invite the local Members of Parliament to the meeting on Friday 27 November 2015.

The Chairman and members of the Committee instructed the Partnerships and Sustainable Communities Manager to explore options for the Committee to examine, at its meeting on 21 January 2016, the provision of medical services in South Cambridgeshire.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next two Partnership Review Committee meetings would be on

- Friday 27 November 2015 at 1.00pm
- Thursday 21 January 2016 at 2.00pm

The Meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.
