

# Infrastructure and Development Select Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Wednesday 19 January 2022  
10.00am, held at County Hall, Norwich

**Present:**

Cllr Barry Stone – Chair

Cllr Steffan Aquarone

Cllr James Bensly

Cllr David Bills

Cllr Chris Dawson

Cllr Lana Hemsall

Cllr Jim Moriarty

Cllr Chrissie Rumsby

Cllr Robert Savage

Cllr Vic Thomson

Cllr Maxine Webb

Cllr Tony White

**Also Present:**

Grahame Bygrave

Director of Highways and Waste, CES

Denise Saadvandi

Head of Adult Learning, CES

David Cumming

Strategic Transport Team Leader, CES

Niki Park

Head of Passenger Transport

Tom McCabe

Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services

Sarah Rhoden

Assistant Director, Performance and Governance, CES

Nicola Ledain

Committee Officer, Democratic Services

**1. Apologies and substitutions**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Claire Bowes, Cllr William Richmond (substituted by Cllr Lana Hemsall), Cllr Colleen Walker (substituted by Cllr Maxine Webb).

**2. Minutes**

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 There were no interests declared.

**4. Items of Urgent Business**

- 4.1 There were no items of urgent business.

**5. Public Question Time**

- 5.1 There were no public questions received.

## 6. Local Member Issues / Questions

6.1 There were no local Member issues or questions received.

## 7. Adult Learning Annual Plan

7.1 The Committee received the annexed report (7) which set out the annual plan. The plan reflected Norfolk County Council's strategic objectives, as detailed in the Better Together, For Norfolk Strategy 2021-2025.

7.2 During discussion, the following points were noted:

7.2.1 There was currently a national consultation being held on the adult education funding budget and how it should be used in the future. The service was heavily involved due to their position in the sector. They were discussing the future closely with DFE officers to try and influence the future.

7.2.2 The Committee asked if percentages in reports could be reflected as numbers as well.

7.2.3 The Committee were pleased to see the aspirations and felt it would be beneficial to see more delivered measures. It would also be useful to see some insight into the barriers of adult education in Norfolk. Officers confirmed that they do have more figures on delivered services but as the report concentrated on the annual plan, they were not included. There was also data and analytics about the barriers, and Officers were happy to share this information.

7.2.4 The service agreed with Members about doing some work on identifying the skills gaps by gender.

7.2.5 The service work closely with Head of Communities, who in turn works closely with district Council, and other partners such as voluntary sector to ensure system wide join up.

7.2.6 Successful outcomes in the more deprived wards were an increasing target. Having achieve well this year, the target had been increased for the future years. The achievements for those with learning disabilities was a real achievement as the team kept momentum going throughout covid and the lockdowns and gave individual support to the learners so they could get online and engage really well with zoom group meetings.

7.2.7 Officers had carried out detailed analysis to identify that by using other venues such as libraries, could achieve the target of delivering a course within 10 miles of 95% of Norfolk residents. Depending on the venue and resident need, the courses offered would differ.

7.2.8 The Committee felt that there was little emphasis on the very successful leisure courses that they offer mentioned in the plan and encouraged more detail. noted they provided a good income for the service as well as promoting social interaction for many people.

7.3 The Select Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. To note Adult Learning's exceptional performance and contribution to Norfolk priorities
2. To consider and comment on the Adult Learning Annual Plan for 2022/23 and beyond

## **8. Report of Member Task and Finish Group: Public Transport in the Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan**

- 8.1 The Committee received the annexed report (8) which set out the report from the task and finish group. The Chair of the group introduced the report and thanked the Councillors for taking part.
- 8.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the discussion of the Task and Finish Group and how this will feed into the delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan.

## **9. Norfolk's Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators**

- 9.1 The Select Committee received the annexed report (9) which set out the Bus Service Improvement Plan which had been developed following the government's announcement of a new national bus strategy called Bus Back Better, which would allow the Council to apply for funding to achieve the aims of the plan. The report also set out the plan and the scheme of the Enhanced Partnership and what that meant, what initial commitments were being made by the County Council and bus operators to improve public transport, what the next steps are, and how the commitments could be increased once the funding amount was known.
- 9.2 The following points were noted in response to questions from the Committee:
  - 9.2.1 The Enhanced Partnership was currently out for consultation, and it was hoped that the Bus Service Improvement Plan would be put out for consultation in early March once the funding level is known
  - 9.2.2 Although the plan was aspirational, the funding could potentially be less than what was hoped for, due to the total amount available for all the Councils having been reduced by approximately one fifth. The consultation would show what residents' and stakeholders' priorities were to be able to make an informed choice about which improvements to make.
  - 9.2.3 The target was to increase passenger levels of 1% per year which was reasonable considering passenger figures were at 60% of pre-covid levels. In comparison, Essex County Council had applied for considerably more funding and their target was only to achieve passenger figures of pre-covid levels.
  - 9.2.4 There would be members engagement and involvement in the further work of the improvement plan. An update would be brought to the committee if they so wished which could feed into the ultimate decision making of Cabinet. There would also be member working groups under the enhanced partnership management board.
  - 9.2.5 Bus operators themselves were also putting funding towards electric buses such as the ZEBRA bid which First are also contributing towards.

- 9.2.6 The Enhanced Partnership Board consists of bus operators and NCC representatives, which there is a good working relationship between. The agreements in the Plan and Scheme would be legally binding, but it was felt that through the good working relationship that existed, any issues would be easily resolved.
- 9.2.7 Once the consultation on the Bus Service Improvement Plan had been completed, priorities would be known, and then working groups could be set up to look at specific ideas, such as multi-ticketing operating. It was unknown what the priorities would be as yet, but there would be further member involvement.
- 9.2.8 Members asked if, with reference to fares on page 64, it would be possible to look at discounted fares for families, with more encouragement and incentive for families and tourists to travel to the coast and the city by bus.
- 9.2.9 If the amount of funding asked for was received, then a concessionary travel scheme up to age of 25 could be implemented, but if the relevant funding is not received it is unlikely that operators would extend their current fare discounts beyond the age of 19.
- 9.2.10 All buses were already accessible, but it was an aim that the bus stops were made more accessible by making them hard standing especially in the rural areas. Surveys had already been carried out on the bus stops, so will be able to identify which ones would need work.
- 9.2.11 Officers agreed that a concessionary fare scheme for those on low income is a good aspiration but would rely on appropriate funding being received.
- 9.2.12 Councillors felt that school buses needed to change to Euro V or VI to help achieve the carbon reduction targets that the County Council wanted. However, it was acknowledged that this would increase costs for the Council and that currently the market is such that it is difficult to cover all contract requirements with what is currently available.
- 9.3 The Committee **RESOLVED**;
1. Note and consider the aims and aspirations in the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
  2. Note the commitments in the initial Enhanced Partnership Scheme and agree that this Plan and Scheme should be formally adopted by the deadline of 31 March 2022.
  3. Note that there will be a public consultation on the Bus Service Improvement Plan in early 2022, so that feedback can help to prioritise where funding is spent once it is received and the Enhanced Partnership Scheme can then be varied.

## 10. Forward Work Programme

- 10.1 The Select Committee received the annexed report (10) by the Executive Director of Community and Environmental Services setting out the Forward Work Programme to enable the Committee to review and agree it.

- 10.2 It was noted that a forward item on sustainable energy productivity, as previously requested, would be added to the forward plan.
- 10.3 The Bus, Back, Better update would be added because of today's discussion.
- 10.4 The Select Committee reviewed the report and **RESOLVED** to
  - 1. review and agree the Forward Work Programme for the Select Committee set out in Appendix A

The meeting closed at 11.30pm

**Chair**



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