

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE**

HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2014 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY

- Present:** Councillors D Miles (Chairman), M Patten (Vice-Chairman), C Amos, C Callender, J Hawkins, T Howard, A Pugh and I Tracey
- Also Present:** Councillors L McWilliams (Well-being and Partnerships Portfolio Holder), Broderick, Bucke and Winfield
- In Attendance:** Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), and Democratic Services Officer (Janey Nice)
- Also in Attendance:** Paul Oxley (Abellio Stakeholder Manager) and Lee Berry (Manager First Group (Clacton Depot))

35. WELCOME

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Mr Paul Oxley and Mr Lee Berry to the meeting.

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

37. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 17 November 2014, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made by Members at this time.

During consideration of Agenda Item No.4 (Public Transport Provision within Tendring) (Minute No.39 below refers), Councillor John Hawkins declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to this matter, by virtue of the fact he was a Director of Harwich Connexions.

39. PUBLIC TRANSPORT PROVISIONS WITHIN TENDRING

Abellio Greater Anglia

Mr Paul Oxley (Abellio Greater Anglia's Stakeholder Manager) provided an update on Abellio's performance update for Abellio by stating that Abellio had been going through a difficult period which had been mainly due to infrastructure failures, engineering overruns, severe weather and fatalities (up over 50% on 2013). However, he said, that Abellio Greater Anglia had recently been voted ninth out of 22 UK train operators and third out of the eight in the East of England region but was, by comparison, down on last year's placings.

Mr Oxley informed the Committee that Abellio had taken on a new short-term franchise in July 2014 which would run until October 2016 and this would entail improvements in a number of areas over the next two years, including an additional £10 million investment, with

refreshed and refurbished Class 317/6's (trains) on West Anglia and new seat covers for Class 360's (trains) on Great Eastern. In addition, he said, additional cleaners, customer service staff, maintenance staff and catering staff would be recruited. Mr Oxley said standby buses were also being made available at Norwich, Ipswich and Witham, which would mean that Abellio Greater Anglia would not need to rely on other carriers.

Mr Oxley spoke of the improvements carried out by Abellio Greater Anglia to the cycle park within Clacton Station included the launch of Bike and Go which allowed customers to hire a bicycle for a small fee. He went on to say that there was now provision at Clacton Station for "CyclePark+", which provided a more secure cycle parking facility with a gated area that could only be accessed by a key fob. Mr Oxley added that the scheme was free to all customers on payment of a refundable deposit of £25 charged for the use of the facilities.

Mr Oxley went on to say that, at the end of October, Abellio Greater Anglia had submitted 14 bids for the latest round of cycle parking funding of £15m nationally, in an attempt to provide more cycle spaces at Frinton, Harwich Town, Kirby Cross, Thorpe le Soken and Wivenhoe. He added that this bid, together with a further bid for additional cycle CCTV coverage at a number of stations, would be announced early in 2015.

In conclusion, Mr Oxley informed the Committee that the franchise re-letting process was due to start early next year, with the consultation process on franchise specification having commenced week beginning 8 December 2014 and due to finish in mid-March 2015. He stressed the importance of all stakeholders working with Network Rail and by responding to its Anglia Route Study consultation.

Members raised questions and concerns, which included:

- Negative parking policy at Manningtree Station, which was forcing passengers to park in town, which added to congestion;
- Any envisaged improvements to the pinch point at Manningtree railway bridge with only a single lane under the bridge;
- Journeys to Clacton and Harwich on branch lines and often difficulties getting home from Manningtree;
- Disabled access at Manningtree had long been an issue, along with disabled access at Thorpe-le-Soken;
- Condition of rolling stock, much better trains on other lines, no phone chargers or refreshments available and would be an improvement to have vending machines at least;
- The levels of appropriate rolling stock to run a full daily service, passenger capacity of trains and facilities for disabled passengers;
- What could Abellio provide within franchise, what was Abellio capable of delivering that was not currently being delivered and was Abellio capable of delivering a service passengers would be delighted with?;
- Lack of comfort on seats with little room;
- How would the "Norwich in 90" Norwich to London journey be achieved in 90 minutes, would key stations be missed out and how frequently would this service run?;
- Who controlled fares charged; and
- No late trains for theatre goers which meant leaving a show before it had finished.

In response to the issues raised above, Mr Oxley said that Abellio had been working with Local Authorities concerning the Manningtree area and that it had regular meetings with Essex County Council and would discuss the way forward for Manningtree. He said he would liaise with Councillor Patten to address his concerns raised with regard to problems generated at Manningtree Station. As to the issue of access for the disabled at Manningtree Station, Mr Oxley said he would find out when improvements were due to commence and would inform the Committee of the start date. He said that the issue of later trains for theatre goers was particularly difficult to resolve since the respective train operators had to allow for

maintenance working on the rail tracks (generally undertaken late at night and at weekends) and would need permission from Network Rail to operate later services.

In response to a question from the Chairman on the issue of Walton not being mentioned in bids by Abellio, Mr Oxley said consultation was based on passenger usage. Mr Oxley informed the Committee said Abellio was tackling the lack of investment in the Eastern region and that when Abellio took over the franchise for the region it was given a certain amount of rolling stock and it was difficult to get more but engineers were looking at what could be improved. He added that Abellio had enough rolling stock to run a daily service but did not have enough rolling stock to increase service and that there was an issue when trains broke down and had to go for repair and maintenance that this could mean that rolling stock was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

He then said that Abellio had a responsibility of communicating better with customers and improving the services provided by its staff. He reiterated that services were limited as to what rolling stock was available at any given time. Mr Oxley said he was aware of shortfalls of service and was pushing for investment to improve matters to complement station improvements, which were being delivered.

With regard to the setting of fares, Mr Oxley spoke about regulated fares and off-peak fares and that Abellio was under the national average for the latest increase in fares. When it was commented it was difficult to work out fares for different routes and the different tariffs, he said that the rail providers were starting to work together to make the fares' structure simpler and easier to understand.

It was suggested by Councillor Patten that a meeting be arranged with Mr Oxley, Essex County Council and the District and Parish Councillors from Lawford and Manningtree to discuss problems at Manningtree Station with regard to access for people with disabilities. Mr Oxley agreed that he would send details of the works due to be undertaken at Manningtree to Democratic Services for forwarding onto members of the Committee. Councillor Patten also asked about the usage rates for the bicycles for hire at Clacton Station after Councillor Tracey commented she had not known of the scheme or even seen any advertisements for it.

It was **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

1. With regard to the contribution made by Abellio Greater Anglia, its Stakeholder Manager should arrange to meet with Essex County Council to address traffic and congestion-related concerns at Manningtree Station and that the local Ward Member and Parish Council be invited to take part in that meeting;
2. Cabinet participated in both the franchise and Network Rail consultations; and
3. Given that planning permission and associated funding had already been approved, that Cabinet urge disability provision works at Manningtree Station be carried out and that the Council be notified as to when such works would commence.

The Chairman thanked Mr Oxley for attending the meeting and invited him to attend a future transport-themed meeting of the Committee to be held sometime over the next 12 months.

First Group

Councillor J Hawkins declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to this matter by virtue of the fact he was a Director of Harwich Connexions, although their service was not run in competition with First Group.

Mr Lee Berry, Manager of the First Group Company (Clacton Depot) spoke about the provision of buses in the Tendring area and explained subsidised fares and commercial

routes and fares and how they varied depending on routes on certain days. Mr Berry also explained why the Harwich bus depot was closed and changes to the various bus routes that ran out of Harwich to both Clacton and Colchester and the changes to the frequency of the services.

In response to a question concerning children waiting when school buses were late or did not run, Mr Berry said it did happen at times but it was infrequent. He said the waiting could not be helped especially if a bus had broken down and a driver and replacement bus had to drive some distance to wherever it was needed.

The Chairman asked if Essex County Council took any part in control of the bus companies, to which Mr Berry replied it did not unless it was a contracted service that had been put out to tender and awarded to the County Council. Councillor Patten asked about the proposed industrial site at Horsley Cross with provision for a bus service and asked if it would be a contracted service. Mr Berry mentioned Section 106 monies where developers were made to pay towards a bus service and said he would look into a bus service to Horsley Cross as it may be worthwhile to run one, however it had not been discussed at this time.

When asked a question about bus stops and shelters, Mr Berry responded that all street furniture, e.g. bus shelters, were the responsibility of Essex County Council and if it was requested that a bus stop be added to or moved from a route, that such a request would form the basis of an initial consultation and site meeting to discuss the issue. Mr Berry explained that the buses stopped at all recognised bus stops and even at stops where there were no posts but had been used historically as a bus stop, with Frinton Gates being an example.

Mr Berry informed the Committee that the Traffic Commissioners regulated First Group with regular timing checks, which meant there was a six minute window with buses allowed to not leave more than one minute early or five minutes late. He said if there were complaints about a certain route and timings, the Traffic Commissioners would send out an Inspector to time the buses and, if there was less than 95% accuracy, a report would be submitted to First Group to allow it to give an explanation why the target was not being met.

When asked, Mr Berry gave further explanations to how the routes were registered and how they were decided upon, frequency of buses on various routes, competitors and how the fares were set. He said that First Group did not deal with any specific Officer at this Council but dealt more with Essex County Council and it was suggested that Mr Berry be provided with a named Officer as a contact at Tendring District Council.

After further discussion, it was **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that, with regard to the contribution made by First Group, Cabinet look at the Transport Plan for Tendring in terms of strategic planning and that this Council actively involved itself in its input and how the outcomes were to be achieved.

The Chairman thanked Mr Berry for attending the meeting and invited him to attend a future transport-themed meeting of the Committee to be held sometime over the next 12 months.

40. HEALTH: MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2015

Councillor Howard had produced a set of questions to be considered as the basis for discussion at the Committee's health-related meeting to be held on Monday 23 February 2015, at which, senior representatives of the Colchester Hospital University Foundation Trust (CHUFT) and the NHS North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group had been invited to attend.

Given the lateness of the hour, and in thanking Councillor Howard for his time spent in identifying and collating the questions, the Chairman suggested that Members of the

Committee take the questions away and contact the Democratic Services Manager with any comments prior to these being finalised and presented for discussion and approval at the next meeting of the Committee.

The meeting was declared closed at 10.02 pm

Chairman