

Public Transport Working Group Meeting 16 November 2023 14:00

Present: Cllrs Wendy Brooks and Keith Patience, Non-Councillor member John Sillett

In Attendance: Taylor Williams (Committee Clerk)

The purpose of this Working Group was established to be engagement with Greater Anglia and First Bus networks to improve the rail and bus services for Lowestoft. An aspirational goal was to develop the existing public transport infrastructure of the town by working with groups such as the East Suffolk Travel Association (ESTA) and engaging with East Suffolk Council (ESC) and Suffolk County Council (SCC).

Issues that had been highlighted included the limited services, particularly at the weekend, in terms of the routes and limited access to certain areas in the region, the constant bus replacements on Greater Anglia train services, and the poor timetabling that restricted travel in the evening and was often unreliable.

The poor state of Lowestoft Bus Station was also highlighted as it had no waiting room, no information office and was an overall poorly designed building.

These issues were connected to the regeneration of Lowestoft, the feasibility of which should be queried without an effective public transport infrastructure.

It was suggested to produce a report detailing the issues with the current systems and contact organisations such as the Travellers Association, Anglia Pensioners Association, Peter Aldous MP, Labour Party etc. to seek support.

ESTA had previously mentioned a plan by Suffolk County Council (SCC) to meet with the communities to understand where funding should be provided. Officers were asked to contact Suffolk County Council to clarify if any funding was available for public transport and their plan on its use.

After some preparatory work LTC could organise a public meeting in 2024 to discuss the state of buses and trains and engage with the different groups such as Greater Anglia, First Bus, ESTA, Peter Aldous MP, SCC and ESC.

It was acknowledged that LTC had no jurisdiction in public transport and the aim was to engage with interested parties to push for a change that would be part of the overall net zero carbon emission goal. Particularly as recent changes in the climate, such as the flooding caused by storms, had demonstrated the vulnerability of public transport.

Prior to arranging the public meeting, officers would contact ESTA and East Coast College (who had highlighted the issue of public transport to LTC) and arrange a meeting (in person or via zoom) to discuss the issues and receive their opinion on hosting a joint public meeting. In the meantime, John Sillett would write up a report on the issues with the current infrastructure and share with other Councillors for their input.