

ELSTREE AND BOREHAMWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

TRANSPORT FORUM

MINUTES of a meeting held in Committee Rooms A and B Civic Offices, Elstree Way Borehamwood on Thursday **27th October 2011** at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr C Butchins (Chairman in the Chair)
Cllr E Butler
Cllr Ms S Maughan
Cllr Mrs S Parnell (Mayor)

In attendance: Cllr A Plancey (Hertfordshire County Council)
S Joseph (Campaign for Better Transport)
L Stack (Sullivan Buses)
J Brown (Pensioners' Rights)
J Cartledge (London Travel Watch)
C Lesser (BDIA)
A Scott Norman (Local Resident)
H Jones (Town Clerk)

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr S Rubner (Vice-Chairman) (Other Business) and Cllr J Usher (Hertfordshire County Council).

10. DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLORS' INTERESTS

There were none.

11. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21st JULY 2011

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st July 2011 were approved and duly signed as a true record by the Chairman.

Reporting on updates since the last meeting, Cllr Plancey agreed to follow up the Forum's representations to the County Council concerning the overgrowing foliage at Furzehill/Cowley Hill as tree branches were coming into contact with Double Decker buses along this route.

Members received a tabled update report prepared by J Cartledge (London Travel Watch) on Public Transport Developments since July 2011 (appended).

12. THE QUALITY BUS NETWORK

Members received a presentation from S Joseph (Campaign for Better Transport) on a project recently launched in St Albans by a partnership of local authorities, transport operators and the University of Hertfordshire (The Network St Albans, also known as the St Albans Quality Network Partnership (QNP)).

It was reported that the partnership was the first of its kind in the UK and was a national exemplar for improving public transport at the local level. Network St Albans had been developed as a result of changes outlined in the Local Transport Act 2008, which had allowed transport operators to work together alongside Local Authorities in order to enhance public transport services.

The overarching objective of Network St Albans was to provide residents of and visitors to St Albans with a real and attractive alternative for many of the journeys currently made by private car. The partnership's aim was to reduce traffic congestion and continuously improve public transport within and around the city of St Albans by implementing a variety of different measures. The partnership was underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by all members.

Aspects covered by the initiative included:

- Fares/ticketing (including mobile phone ticketing and joint ticketing framework)
- Network development
- Working with employers to develop travel plans
- Funding problems/national spending cuts
- New bus shelters
- Government Homes Growth Area funding
- Colour coded route maps
- Real time bus service information
- Park and ride

It was noted that Rupert Thacker (Hertfordshire County Council) had been involved in helping with the project and that this could be a useful contact should a similar venture be explored for Borehamwood.

It was further recognised that the Borough Council would need to be heavily involved in such an enterprise. As such, it was suggested that the matter could be considered by the relevant HBC Scrutiny Committee. Cllr E Butler agreed to take this forward at Borough level.

Mr Joseph was thanked by the Chairman for his helpful and informative presentation which provided food for thought for the forum to consider in the future.

13. TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT STIRLING CORNER (BY MORRISONS)

Further representations had been about the problems with the Traffic Lights at this location. It was noted that the petition undertaken by the Borehamwood Driving Instructors Association (B.D.I.A.) to seek to ensure that the lights were reinstated on a full time basis had received over 4,000 signatures.

The Chairman reported on a response he had received from Deputy Mayor Dedring and it was agreed that a response should be sent on behalf of the forum stating that those present were unanimous in their continuing disappointment with both the standard of communication and lack of activity from Transport for London. This included Councillors from all levels of local government and both major political parties.

Cllr E Butler reported that representations were made supporting this stance following the Hertsmere Highways Joint Members Panel (19 October 2011) where it was agreed that the issues be raised with TfL by the Leader of the Council.

In essence, the Forum did not seek to castigate TfL, but to have improvements made to traffic management at Stirling Corner – both vehicular and pedestrian.

Anecdotal evidence received by the Forum suggested that since the traffic lights were switched off this spring there had been an increase in the number of accidents and near-accidents as well as traffic congestion – especially traffic joining from the A411. Tailbacks into Furzehill Road were now much more frequent. Additionally the situation of the Morrisons Store on the corner of the junction had increased all levels of traffic since it opened.

It was further noted that statistical data on accident numbers at this site, if available, would be helpful in forwarding the initiative.

The Forum supported this initiative and reaffirmed its stance calling for the following objectives:

1) Lights on 24/7;

2) Erect signals at Barnet Lane (Borehamwood side), A1 Southbound and exit from supermarket; and

3) Improve road markings which currently do not go round the entire roundabout.

14. ITEMS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION BY THE FORUM

A Scott Norman raised the issue of affordable school bus provision from Borehamwood to St Albans and suggested that there was scope for a dialogue between Hertfordshire School Governors to improve the situation.

Following a question by J Brown, Members discussed 20mph speed restrictions in Borehamwood and it was acknowledged that there were mixed views on the desirability of further speed limit restrictions and that other forms of traffic calming measures (e.g. speed bumps on Brook Road) were perhaps more effective.

L Stack brought to the forum's attention the fact that bus route maps required updating at the Borehamwood station and provided photographic evidence (appended) of parking problems at the station where the rear door of larger buses did not reach the unloading platform.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the date of the next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 1st March 2011 at 7.00 pm, Hertsmere Civic Offices.

[Post Meeting Note: A Special Meeting of the Forum to discuss the Stirling Corner Lights issue together with stakeholders was agreed for Wednesday 7 December 2011 at 8.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Hertsmere Civic Offices].

16. CLOSURE

The Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Date:..... CHAIRMAN.....

ELSTREE & BOREHAMWOOD TOWN COUNCIL TRANSPORT & ROAD SAFETY FORUM

27 OCTOBER 2011

NOTE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENTS SINCE JULY 2011

Buses

The “tweaking” of the timetables for the B network and route 398 (operated by Sullivan Buses), forecast at the last meeting, have now come into effect. There have been no other major changes to routes or times, but the situation remains unstable and the likelihood of further reductions remains high. There are a number of reasons for this.

One is that the government has announced a 20% cut in the level of Bus Service Operators’ Grant, paid to offset the cost of duty on diesel fuel. This loss of income is reflected in turn in the tender prices charged by bus companies to local authorities.

Another is that county councils have replaced district councils as the authorities responsible for funding the English National Concessionary Bus Pass scheme, though in Hertfordshire the districts continue to act as agents for pass issuing. There are continuing disputes between the county councils and both the government (over the level of funding provided to them) and the bus industry (over the level of reimbursement for journeys made). But because participation in the scheme is obligatory, councils which have under-budgeted for it are seeking economies in other areas, notably support for “socially necessary” (and therefore subsidised) bus routes. Virtually all of the routes in Borehamwood receive revenue support from Herts county council, and are therefore at risk of reductions in frequency and/or operating hours, or of above-inflation fares increases.

Rail

The reconfiguration of the “station interchange” is now complete, with the installation of more cycle racks and of the “Made in Elstree” silhouette mural on the wall of the bin store near the bridge. New information screens and ticket machines are now operational.



The Thameslink project continues with the redevelopment of Farringdon and Blackfriars stations now well advanced, the order for new trains announced, and plans for the redevelopment of London Bridge published. Farringdon's importance will be further enhanced by the Crossrail project (on which construction work has also started) because it will become the intersection between these two cross-London routes.

The Mayor of London has announced that in January the price of a one-day zones 1-6 Travelcard will increase from £15.00 to £16.00 (peak) or from £8.00 to £8.60 (off-peak), both 7.5% increases, with slightly higher pro-rata increases in the cost of weekly and longer-period season tickets.

Regulated National Rail fares (i.e. day returns and weekly seasons) will rise by an average of around 8%, i.e. 3% ahead of inflation, as part of the government's policy of shifting a larger part of the cost of funding the rail system from taxpayers to farepayers. This formula has been applied uniformly to all franchised operators, including First Capital Connect, although uniquely amongst such companies FCC's fares revenue exceeds its operating costs, including track access charges and the allocated share of Network Rail's block grant. Users of other rail routes are therefore, in effect, being cross-subsidised by FCC's passengers.

On a more welcome note, it has been agreed that Oyster card availability is to be extended as far as St Albans on the Thameslink route. Its extension to non-TfL (Transport for London) buses is more problematic, as it depends on bus companies' take-up of electronic fare-collection technology, but the minister responsible for bus issues has spoken strongly of his desire to see progress towards this.

The government has announced that the current Thameslink franchise will be terminated in September 2013, when the contract will be re-let for a term yet to be determined as it is related to the delivery of the upgrade programme including the introduction of new trains.

John Cartledge

27.10.11