

Item 3: Chairman's Notes

Robert Whittaker

GTDP Community Sub-Group Meeting, 20th March 2019

1 GTDP Board Meetings

Since the previous Sub-Group meeting on 16th January 2019, the GTDP Board will have met once on the 20th March (the same day as this Sub-Group meeting). The agenda and papers for the meeting were not available at time of writing, but should appear shortly on the website at <https://bit.ly/2EZiUmq>.

2 Answers and Updates to Public Questions and Concerns

Various issues have been raised by the public at previous Sub-Group meetings, and we have attempted to investigate and provide updates.

Railway Station Access Issues and Parking. Various issues with the station have been raised at different Community Sub-Group meetings, including the poor accessibility of the footbridge and the lack of car parking. The Board wrote to Greater Anglia back in March, but have yet to make any significant progress with them.

No further updates have been received since the last Sub-Group meeting.

Cost of Purchasing Train Tickets on the Train. At the November 2017 Sub-Group meeting, an issue was raised about passengers being charged more when buying tickets on the train compared with buying them at the station. In almost all cases, this shouldn't happen. The main exception is those travelling with East Midlands Trains, who do not give railcard discounts on the train if ticketing facilities are available at the station.

The Board wrote to East Midlands Trains about this issue in April, and have got some initial positive engagement from the company. It was reported by Sam Chapman-Allen at the January 2019 Sub-Group meeting that East Midlands Trains had now said they were not prepared to examine their ticketing policies at the moment as their current franchise would be coming to an end shortly (August 2019). The Sub-Group agreed to ask the Board to consider raising the matter with the Secretary of State for Transport. In particular, to ask that the rules about not giving railcard discounts on trains should only be applied when there are ticketing facilities at the station that have accessible access from the Boarding platform.

Health-Care Provision Concern had been expressed at various Community Sub-Group meetings about the lack of planning for expanded health-care provision for the new SUE residents. Further discussion of this matter took place at the January 2019 Sub-Group meeting. It was agreed to ask the Board to approach the GP practices in the town to enquire about the current provision and what facilities and resources they might need to improve services for patients.

Bus Provision for Kingsfleet (SUE) A member of the public raised a query about Bus provision for the new houses in the SUE at Sub-Group's May 2018 meeting, and this came up again as a correction to the draft minutes at the September 2018 meeting. As result I looked into the planning policies and provisions currently being made. It appears that Breckland's own planning policy (TAAP TH26) requires bus services to operate from

the first day of occupation of the SUE, but Breckland has not enforced this policy on the developer. There is also a question over whether the intended use of the Joe Blunt's Lane underpass for buses is consistent with another planning policy (TAAP TH11).

I asked Breckland's planning department to confirm and explain these apparent discrepancies (on 10th October and 5th November 2018), but received no response. I raised the issue at the GTDP Board Meeting on 27th November 2018, where Rob Walker (Breckland Executive Director of Place) promised to take up the matter. I asked for an update from Sam Chapman-Allen and Rob Walker before our January 2019 meeting, but none was forthcoming. However, Sam Chapman-Allen was present at that meeting and said that for legal reasons the Council was still considering its response. At time of writing I have still not received a response to the queries.

Pedestrian Access to and from Kingsfleet At the November 2018 Sub-Group meeting, a member of the public raised the issue that there appeared to be no hard-surfaced footpaths being provided to link the first phase of new houses in the Kingsfleet development to the rest of the town. This will cause difficulties for those with mobility problems. I raised the matter at the November 2018 Board meeting, and was told that officers were already aware of the issue and were looking in to what could be done. As above, no update was forthcoming for the January 2019 meeting, and I have still not had a response on this matter.

3 Community Sub-Group Cycling and Walking Report

The Sub Group's Cycling and Walking report got a positive response from the Board at its meeting in June 2018. The full report is available online at <http://www.gtdp.org.uk/cycling-walking>. The Board wanted to the relevant council officers to look at the recommendations in more detail before considering actions, and it was requested that I meet with the Officers to discuss things further.

Despite raising this several times at the Board and in emails to the Board officers, I have still not heard anything from Norfolk County Council about such a meeting.

Nevertheless, it seems that progress is being made by Norfolk County Council's "Market Town Transport Network Improvement Strategy" work, which includes looking at some walking and cycling routes in the town, in addition to considering motor vehicle congestion and connectivity issues. More details can be found in a report for the Council's Environment, Development and Transport Committee on 8th March: <https://bit.ly/2EWrf9h>. The report lists three cycle routes that are being investigated and for which high-level costings will be produced:

- Route A: London Road, from commercial area at the west of the town to the town centre
- Route B: Croxton Road, connecting the Thetford Urban Extension (west), existing residential areas, the Thetford Academy and town centre
- Route C: Kilverstone, connecting the Thetford Urban Extension (east), Kilverstone, other residential areas and the town centre.

The establishment of Routes A and B was highlighted as a priority in the Sub-Group's Cycling and Walking report. Route C may refer in part to Green Lane through the Cloverfields Estate. The need for surface improvement works on this route was included in the Sub-Group's report.