

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 1

**Held on Tuesday, 22 May 2007 at 10.00 am in
Swaffham Town Council, The Assembly Rooms, Swaffham**

PRESENT

Mr J.D. Rogers (Chairman) Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mr K. Martin Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr I.A.C. Monson

Also Present

Mr C. Morris 'One' Railways

In Attendance

Mark Broughton Scrutiny Officer

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32/07 INTRODUCTION

As new Chairman of the committee Mr J Rogers, welcomed all Members to the meeting in addition, as a point of Protocol Mr Rogers asked that Members noted that when wishing to speak during meetings they address him John, Chairman or Councillor and **not** Chair.

33/07 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2007 were confirmed as the correct record and signed by the Chairman.

34/07 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Duigan, Mr R Childerhouse and from the vacant Labour or Independent Member still to be nominated.

**35/07 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING
(AGENDA ITEM 5)**

Mrs D Irving, was in attendance for information only and did not wish to speak at the meeting.

36/07 LOCAL TRANSPORT REVIEW (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Chairman introduced Mr Clive Morris a representative from 'One' Railway who had been invited to attend the meeting.

Mr Morris, the Director of Rural Transport for the railways of the east of England, updated Members on the 'One' Railways service provision across the district and beyond. Mr Morris advised Members that 'One' Railways was part of a 10 year National Express franchise that had been running for three years. Members were advised that the railway franchise was operating at a cost of £450 million a year with a premium of £500 million being

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paid to the Government and that 'One' was running at a 2% profit margin which aimed to reach their target profit margin of 5%. A Member asked whether the Government were investing back into the rail network for the region the £500 million premium being paid by 'One' Railway. Mr Morris confirmed that although he was unsure of the percentage of money that was being paid back to the region the Government were investing all the money back into Network Rail.

Mr Morris advised Members that three years ago there were only six trains a day to Brandon and now they were thirty three trains a day which 'One' hoped would help to lift the environment of the train station. Members were informed that children in the local schools in Brandon were getting involved in smartening up the station.

Members expressed their delight that there was an hourly service to Brandon and felt that this would benefit the local people hugely with the regular service helping tourism in the area in addition; the improvement in service would encourage local people and tourists to visit the Brecks area. A member asked how the new service to Brandon was being promoted; it was confirmed that a double sided flyer with all the new service information was available highlighting the increased parking availability and the installation of CCTV and the 'Brandon Life' publication was running promotions to travel from Brandon and receive two tickets for the price of one on the 'One Day Ranger' ticket. In addition, 'One' had the Press taking photos at Brandon train station waving off the first additional train in the new service which Mr Morris hoped would help raise great awareness to local residents in turn spreading to potential tourists to the area. A Member asked whether there was any plan to expand the car park in response, Mr Morris advised Members that once it was in 'One' Railway's remit they will be increasing the parking by an additional 25 – 30 spaces.

In addition to the increased service from Brandon there were more Sunday services to Lakenheath where three trains were stopping each way on a Sunday. A Member asked whether this service on a Sunday would be stopping any more. In response, it was stated that if this service was to be increased the running and operating costs would increase for example, the timetable would have to be changed and therefore, with the increased cost it was unlikely this service would be stopping any more than it was currently.

Mr Morris confirmed that the biggest challenge for 'One' Railways was coping with growth confirming that the Norwich to Cambridge route had grown in use by 14 -15%. He confirmed that they only operated two car unit trains for this route which were running well off peak however, in peak times they were very busy and that this increase in use, meant that the car parks were extremely busy too. Mr Morris confirmed that the need to increase the amount of parking spaces at Attleborough and Thetford train stations was very important. Members were advised that 'One' were working in partnerships with Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk Council and that 'One' had very good relationships with Norfolk County Council Transport and Planning Department.

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It was expressed that increasing the parking at Thetford train station was imperative, and a Member asked that if plans were developed to increase the parking in the future that Mr Morris attend a Thetford town council meeting to update councillors and residents. Mr Morris confirmed that although this was within Network Rail's remit it was not specifically within his however, Members were informed that at the latter part of the year there were plans to have completed a new footbridge and separate entrance to the Norwich bound platform, adjacent to the allotments, giving access to wheelchairs, pushchairs and cycles.

The scope to increase the car parking at Attleborough station was discussed, with the knowledge that the land available around the station if developed would increase the parking spaces by 100%. It was confirmed that the land across the road from the station which could be developed was owned by the County Council. Mr Morris confirmed that it would be the combined responsibility of the train operator and local authority to take the responsibility to increase the car parking. Members were advised that at Wymondham station 100 car park spaces had been developed on the north side of the car park and to assist with the costs of this development they would be introducing a modest charge to their travellers. Mr Morris advised Members that they could perhaps encourage Norfolk County Council to increase the car parking at Attleborough if they used Wymondham as an example and suggested a modest charge to help with costs.

A Member asked whether 'One' Railway would have any influence on encouraging Network Rail to make unmanned stations manned and introducing barrier crossings at all stations especially in light of accidents that still occurred at station crossings. Mr Morris explained that 'One' did have influence with Network Rail however, confirmed that all of the accidents that have happened had been due to people's misuse of the crossing not an issue with the operation of the crossing. It was confirmed that on stations where there was no barrier trains have to reduce their speed down to 10-15 miles an hour.

Mr Morris confirmed that they had recently been working on a 'Route Utilisation Strategy' which had been conducted to investigate where growth was needed with the railways. Members were advised that the Government and the rail industry had highlighted the importance of ensuring the infrastructure could cope with the demand of the railways growth and that this would involve the electrification of all the lines. A Member wondered whether there would be any scope to have a train line from Norwich to King's Lynn. In response, Mr Morris confirmed that although they would be keen to get an integrated service and run a direct service it would not be sustainable and the train operator would not be able to influence an addition to a train route of this nature as it was a franchise mapping issue. Mr Morris suggested that if Members were seriously interested in adding this train route that lobbying would have more of an influence than 'One' Railway.

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The Scrutiny Officer asked whether there were any plans to integrate other modes of transport e.g. taxi/buses with the train service. In response, Mr Morris confirmed that a 'Plus Bus' service was available to travellers providing the purchase of a bus ticket in addition to a train ticket which was a 'bolt on' option available for most tickets.

Mr Morris confirmed that a partnership with a taxi service and the rail network had never been done before however, he would take the idea away from the meeting with him and look into it.

37/07 WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING SCHEDULE (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Scrutiny Officer asked Members for suggestions regarding future items they would like to review as a Panel. Members raised the following areas for review:

- Royal Mail – Mr J Rogers explained that there were 16 roads within his ward where the postal addresses were Watton however, Royal Mail had insisted were Carbrooke. The definition of the addresses being Norfolk - Watton or Carbrooke – Watton was required. Members were advised that the query of address had caused problems for pupils in Watton not being able to attend their local school and instead having to go to Carbrooke. Mr Rogers advised Members that he had taken this issue up with Trading Standards. The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that he would contact Royal Mail in the interim.
- New Planning Regulations - when developed.
- Regional Framework and how it would interrelate to the Local Development Framework to ensure that the policies run smoothly together.

Members stressed that it was imperative that Breckland had the infrastructure in place to cope with the Local Development Framework.

38/07 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday, 19 June 2007 at 10.00 am, Breckland House, Thetford were noted.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am

CHAIRMAN