

SEFTON AREA PARTNERSHIP OF LOCAL COUNCILS
Aintree Village-Formby-Hightown-Ince Blundell-Little Altcar
Lydiate-Maghull-Melling-Sefton-Thornton

Minutes of the Meeting of the Area Partnership held on Thursday 21st May, 2015 at Maghull Town Hall

PRESENT:

Cllrs G.Lee (Chair, Melling), B.McCann (Formby), P.Wiencke (Formby), D.Warren (Hightown), I.Cowell (Clerk, Ince Blundell), A.Ibbs (Little Altcar), R.Baker (Melling), J.Duffy (Clerk, Sefton PC), M.Duffy (Sefton PC), D.Miles (Thornton), Liam Robinson (Chair, Merseytravel)

APOLOGIES:

Cllrs M.Coles (Formby), T.Asbury (Hightown), A.Carr (Melling), C.Jones (Sefton PC), K.Hounsell (Thornton)

The Chair welcomed all present to the Meeting. Councillor Lee stated that he had a hard act to follow, taking over the Chair after all the hard work Councillor Coles had put into the group over the 6 years he was Chair, and the achievements achieved as a result of his efforts. Due to there being a number of new members, those present introduced themselves.

1. GUEST SPEAKER

Liam Robinson – Chairman, Merseytravel

1.1 Introduction

Liam thanked us for the invite and stated that he was keen to get to meet and listen to as many Stakeholders as possible, as he recognises the insight they can bring to Merseytravel's work. He then outlined the topics he intended to discuss.

- Plans for the future of the Merseyrail network & wider rail network that serves Merseyside
- The purchase of new trains
- The Bus network on Merseyside

1.2 Merseyrail Network

1.2.1 OVERVIEW

Liam explained that 11 years have passed since the power to run the rail network was devolved to Merseyrail. Since then significant improvements have been made. Although there are still improvements to be made, the derogatory term of 'Misery Rail' is certainly no longer applicable. The Merseyrail network has the best punctuality for any Operator in the Country, with an average of over 90% for reliability, and patronage is up by 50%. Any fare increases are in line with inflation, and not above it, and Booking Offices, Stations and Trains are appropriately staffed.

Merseytravel are currently looking into a long term Strategy for the entire Merseyside area, which will incorporate a potential 100% in passenger growth on the network over the next 30 years. Liam was keen to stress that Merseytravel are looking to exceed demand and not just meet it, in order to enable the economy to continue to grow in the Liverpool City Region.

1.2.2 LONG TERM KEY PROJECTS

- Re-opening of the Burscough Curve
- Expansion of Services North of Ormskirk

- Formation of the 'Rail North' group
- Development of the railway to the east of Kirkby (with potential link to Skelmersdale)
- Bring the Bootle Branch line back into use for Passenger transport
- Development of Branch lines into Wigan from Kirkby and Southport
- New Station for Maghull North subject to a successful Business Case. There is a proposed delivery date of 2018 for this project. (*£6 million has been secured so far, a further £7 million yet to be secured*)

1.2.3 HOW CAN MERSEYRAIL IMPROVE FURTHER?

This is fundamentally linked to the development and provision of new Rolling Stock, as Merseyrail currently has some of the oldest Rolling Stock in the country. A very detailed project looking into new Rolling Stock has been ongoing for the last 3 years, which has resulted in the development of a very detailed Business Case. They are looking at direct ownership as opposed to leasing the Rolling Stock, and this is an integrated project in Partnership with Network Rail; since a power upgrade will be required to accommodate the new trains, and necessary amendments to some infrastructure will be required to narrow the gap between the train and the platform to meet current safety standards.

Merseytravel is adamant that the cost of the new Rolling Stock will not be picked up by Tax Payers, so they are looking into innovative ways to avoid this. The provision of new Rolling Stock would result in faster services (*5-10 minutes could potentially be cut from the Southport to Liverpool Central journey*), and also accommodate increased patronage if the vestibule areas were opened up to provide more space. Wi-fi could also be provided, and also better onboard information systems, which could provide information regarding ongoing connections.

1.3 The Bus Network on Merseyside

1.3.1 OVERVIEW

Liam admits that the Bus Network on Merseyside is currently not as good as it should be; given some services are significantly reduced at evenings and weekends, and some flat fares are excessive (currently £2.20 adult flat fare on Stagecoach). Merseytravel are currently looking into having the powers for the Bus Network devolved to them, as is the case in London, where Transport for London (TfL) can regulate fares and services. Merseytravel are looking at crafting a Bus Network that will not only link up with other buses, but also other modes of transport too; thus better meeting passenger needs. A long term Bus Survey is being conducted to determine the needs and views of passengers.

A key part of this work is ensuring a better deal for young people, since they are the future of the transport network. As such a £2 Young Person's day ticket for buses has recently been introduced. This is currently available for Young People upto 16 years of age, but Merseytravel hope to see this age limit increased slightly.

In November 2014 the 'Walrus' Smart Card replaced the old fashioned scratch off Saveaway tickets. This will hopefully help to eliminate Travel Fraud often associated with the old style tickets. This is like the Oyster Card system which has been in place in London for many years, and there has been good progress with this scheme since its' introduction.

1.3.2 INFORMATION

There have been significant improvements to the Journey Planner on the Merseytravel website, and a Smartphone app has also been launched. Both of these systems are linked to Real Time Information. The printed information at Bus Stops is also being redesigned to make it more user friendly.

1.4 Comments / Questions

- (a) It was queried why the 53A Service which linked up with the Railway Station has been removed? This has resulted in a long walk for those using the alternative X2 Service, and potential problems for mobility and visually impaired passengers.
- *This Service was removed as the Operator Arriva choose to no longer run it. Merseytravel can protest to an Operator but they cannot make them change. It is for this reason that Merseytravel*

wants the powers for the bus network devolving to them.

- (b) Ian Cowell (Clerk, Ince Blundell) raised the following points.
- * Many younger residents of Ince Blundell cannot go out at night in case they cannot get back, and it is a long walk to Formby Station from the alighting bus stop.
 - * It was queried whether bus service 204 was still subsidised, since many local residents rely on this service to access local shops and amenities?
 - * The need for a Car Park at Hightown Station was also raised, since it is believed the Planning Department have already agreed this is feasible.
- Liam agreed to look into these points.
- (c) How can fare control be achieved with Operators Arriva and Stagecoach?
- *If the same system was in place, like the system currently in place in London, then Bus Operators would have to deliver to conditions set out in the tender. Currently strong Bus services in urban areas make around 20% profit. Merseytravel does of course recognise that Operators do need to make a profit, but believes that Operators can still do so by offering cheaper tickets, such as the Young Person 'My Ticket'.*
- (d) Do Operators contribute towards the cost of the Rolling Stock?
- *As a Public Authority Merseytravel can borrow at much lower rates. Any profits are split 50-50 between Merseytravel and the Operators. Merseytravel then invest their profit back into the Rolling Stock.*
- (e) The fact that Formby now only has the hourly 47 Service serving the Hospital was raised.
- *Liam agreed that this can make Bus Services unappealing. Merseytravel can only argue strongly to the Operator why they should be doing something different, but added that Petitions can be a useful way of trying to get Services altered.*
- (f) To what extent are Merseytravel involved with Sefton's Local Plan?
- *Very much so. Merseytravel are committed to ensuring that local residents are within certain distances from bus stops and Services. All Local Plans are fed into the Local Plan.*
- (g) There is a need for more than 1 bus per hour from Sefton Village to Kirkby Admin Gate. Notably many school children are now picked up by Coach.
- *Admittedly Merseytravel needs to influence the Operators to do better in future to better meet people's needs. Liam urged those present to make the voice of their Communities heard as strongly as possible.*
- (h) The point was raised from a safety point of view, that more 6 car trains are needed at peak times on the Southport line, and also when there are key events like Football Matches on.
- *Liam assured us that this is a key part of the Rolling Stock Programme. Planning for key events, including train capacity and crowd management will be looked into. Admittedly in future greater capacity will be needed; hence why Merseytravel are taking a long-term future view. Liam agreed to liaise with Merseyrail about this.*
- (i) Ian Cowell complimented Merseyrail on notable improvements over the last 10 years.
- (j) What's the position on finance for Bus Shelters? Notably the new Brooms Cross Road doesn't have any.
- *Merseytravel pay for the Bus Shelters. Priority is given to busier Stops for Shelters.*
- (k) It was reported in the Liverpool Echo that Merseytravel were looking at old London Underground Stock. Is this correct?
- *This is certainly not the case as this Rolling Stock would not be fit for purpose, since it does not meet their safety standards, plus the maximum speed of this stock is only 60 mph.*

- (l) Will the Bus Lanes be reopened?
- *Some in the City Centre have already been reinstated. Merseytravel are currently looking into other methods, which use the road space more intelligently for other roads in the area.*
- (m) Comments were made about drivers on the 345 Service, which passes through Melling being rude and arrogant, and also about the lack of a direct link to nearby Hospitals and Kirkby.
- *This behaviour is totally unacceptable. If Merseytravel are notified they will do everything possible to deal with the situation. Liam also spoke about a recruitment project, which has been in place over the last few years to recruit drivers based on friendliness and professionalism.*
- (n) Concerns were raised regarding lack of CCTV installed on the refurbished Northern Trains, and also about the lack of Ticket buying facilities at unmanned Northern Stations.
- *Liam commented on the heightened Guard presence on Northern trains.*
- (o) It was queried why Staff no longer check the tickets of alighting passengers?
- *Liam agreed this was a good point, and added that Merseyrail are working hard to try and alleviate the problem of Travel Fraud. Admittedly this is an area that Northern Rail needs to work on.*

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (19/3/15)

Cllr Ibbs proposed that the Minutes of the Standard Meeting were a true and accurate record of the Meeting and John Duffy seconded this. Those present were in agreement.

Cllr Ibbs also proposed that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting were a true and accurate record of the Meeting and Cllr Warren seconded this.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Update – Parish Charter

Raised under point 1.2(f) on the Previous Minutes, concerns about the poor relationship between SMBC Planning Department and the Parish/Town Councils. The representatives from Sefton Parish Council were keen to stress that this comment does not reflect their relationship or the experience they have had with the SMBC Planning Team, who they have always found very helpful, and always willing to turn out to discuss their issues with them.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

- * Cllr Mike Coles, Formby PC - 20/3/15
- Sefton's Monthly Tracker
- * Cllr Bill Honeyman, Aintree Village PC - 21/3/15
- Advising us of his decision to Stand Down from this Committee
- * Noel James, Historic Towns Forum - 23/3/15
- Spring + May Newsletters 19/5/15
- * The Hope Centre - 24/3/15
- Confirmation of Costs for Annual Event
- * Cllr David Warren, Hightown PC - 26/3/15
- Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting
- * Cllr Mike Coles, Formby PC - 28/3/15
- Copy of email sent to Glyn Harris thanking him for his kind comments on his 'retirement' as Chair
- * Ali Skinner (PA to Margaret Carney, SMBC) - 30/3/15
- Confirming date for Annual Event

- * Liam Robinson, Chair - Merseytravel - 31/3/15
- Confirmation of attendance for our Meeting on 21/5/15
- * SMBC Planning Department - 7/4/15, 21/4/15
- Weekly Planning List + 13/5/15
- * Paul Fraser, SMBC Senior Democratic Services Officer - 9/4/15
- Council Year Book 2015/16
- * Steve Pearce, SMBC Democratic Services Officer - 17/4/15
- Request for names of 3 Reps for SMBC Audit & Governance Standards Sub-Committee
- * Mark Mackin, Aintree Racecourse - 18/4/15
- Annual Event
- * Eileen Fawcett, Marie Curie - 23/4/15
- Free Will Scheme
- * Olaf Hansen, SMBC Democratic Services Officer - 23/4/15
- Requesting name of Rep for Central Sefton Area Committee
- * Cllr Mike Coles, Formby PC - 24/4/15
- "Playing Pitch Strategy". SMBC have commissioned Management Consultants Knight Kavanagh & Page to carry out a needs assessment re:current & future Play pitch facilities for the area. A Borough wide Strategy will be produced as a result of this work. Reps from KKP will contact local Clubs to conduct a short survey to determine supply and demand issues and needs. Contact details for this are, matthew.walton@kkp.co.uk or david.robinson@sefton.gov.uk / (0151) 934 3598.
- * Johnny Duffy, Clerk – Sefton PC - 9/5/15
- Chair – Maria Duffy, Vice Chair – Barry Draper
Councillors – Carol Jones, Julie Williams, McKeating & Farmers Rushton & White
- * Cllr Mike Coles, Formby PC - 10/5/15
- Re-elected onto Formby PC although he won't be standing for Chair
- * Jayne Byrne (PA to Fiona Clark, South Sefton CCG) - 11/5/15
- Requesting alternate date to attend our Meeting
- * Johnny Duffy, Clerk – Sefton PC - 13/5/15
- Advising that Reps for this Committee are Cllr Carol Jones & himself
- * Cllr Steve Kermode, Maghull Town Council - 18/5/15
- Advising of his resignation from MTC following a 4 year term
- * Glyn Harris, Clerk – Aintree Village PC - 18/5/15
- Advising that donation cheque signed August 2014 was presented & also of Reps' names: Jack Colbert, Godfrey Downey and Stephen Gent
- * Jeanette Jones, Clerk – Thornton PC - 18/5/15
- Reps' names: Ken Hounsell and David Miles
- * Ian Cowell, Clerk – Ince Blundell PC - 18/5/15
- Their Representatives for this group will be decided at their AGM on 28/5/15
- * Johnny Duffy, Clerk Sefton PC - 18/5/15
- Apologies from Carol Jones for 21/5/15
- * Claire Jenkins, Clerk – Formby PC - 18/5/15
- Their Representatives for this group will be decided at their AGM on 26/5/15
- * Fiona Clark, Chief Officer Southport & Formby + South Sefton CCG - 19/5/15
- Advising that she will also invite NHS England to our Meeting on 2/7/15

- * Cllr Ken Hounsell, Thornton PC - 19/5/15
- Tendering his Apologies for Meetings on 21/5/15 & 9/7/15. Advising Cllr David Miles to attend Meeting on 21/5/15
- * Cllr Geoff Gaskin, Formby PC - 19/5/15
- Advising us that he did not stand for re-election, and thanking the Secretary for her hard work over the years. He also commented on changes in FPC, and about the informative and friendly meetings of the 10, where the interests of the Community of Central Sefton are a priority and not politics.
- * Pam Crilly, Clerk – Melling PC - 19/5/15
- Advising that cheque number 101424 was cashed on 8/10/14 & names of Reps for this group are Gerry Lee, Tony Carr & Ron Baker
- * Ian Cowell, Clerk – Ince Blundell PC - 19/5/15
- Advising that cheque number 100083 for £65 was cashed on 8/10/14
- * Johnny Duffy, Clerk – Sefton PC - 21/5/15
- A new donation cheque will be sent as soon as his name is on the cheque book

A draft copy of a letter from Cllr David Warren to Mr Gregg Clark, the Communities Secretary entitled "Planning Consultations" was referred to. In this letter Cllr Warren refers to 3 unsuccessful occasions when he has requested to meet with Ward Councillors to discuss the allocation of S.106 monies. Cllr Warren adds that Ward Councillors are generally unhelpful, and visibly absent in the Hightown area, and they fail to consult with Parish Councillors who know best about what's happening in their respective areas. Cllr Warren stressed that if Parish Councillors are not consulted about important Planning issues, such as the allocation of S.106 monies to Hightown Station, it is imperative that Parish Councillors make their voice heard at Planning Meetings.

- Ian Cowell stated that Ward Councillors do attend Meetings in Ince Blundell.
- Johnny Duffy commented on a friend of his who'd done his dissertation on Parish Councils and had clearly noted their benefit.

5. FUTURE SPEAKERS

- * Deputy to Fiona Clark, South Sefton CCG - 2/7/15
- * Representative of Peel Holdings

6. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES

SMBC Audit & Governance Standards Sub-Committee:-

- Councillor Jack Colbert - Aintree Village Parish Council
- Councillor David Warren - Hightown Parish Council
- Councillor Gerry Lee - Melling Parish Council

Central Sefton Area Committee:-

- Councillor Gerry Lee - Melling Parish Council

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

7.1 Annual Event

This year's Annual Event with SMBC will take place on Thursday 9th July, 2015 at the HOPE CENTRE on Aintree Lane, and will run from 6.45pm to 9.15pm. Margaret Carney and Andrea Watts of SMBC have confirmed their attendance, and was agreed that MP Bill Esterson should also be invited.

Out of respect for our former Chair, Cllr Mike Coles, Cllr Lee expressed his wish to use the presentation Cllr Coles had already prepared for this year's Annual Event. Those present were in agreement. The Chair and the Secretary will meet up to discuss the arrangements for the Event.

7.2 Budget Review

The Budget for the group has been reviewed. Although some costs have reduced, i.e. photocopying and postage, it has been noted that previously there was nothing in the Budget to cover the cost of printer ink. This has now been amended, and as such the annual running costs for the group are now predicted to be £840/year. This also better reflects the number of meetings we now hold. Since the donation is now calculated according to the number of residents per member Council, the Secretary will contact all Clerks to obtain this information.

7.3 Parish Council Accounts

Parish Councils Accounts currently have to be inspected by both an Internal and External Auditor. From next year if your Council's annual income is less than £25k then the Accounts will no longer need to be inspected by an External Auditor, although there will be a requirement to advertise any precept expenditure on a website. A contact of Dave Cookson at the Electoral Office of (0151) 934 2307 / dave.cookson@sefton.gov.uk was provided for any queries in relation to this.

8. AREA ROUND UP

8.1 Fly Tipping – Sefton Village

Problems with Fly Tipping of household items in ditches surrounding Sefton Village were brought to the group's attention. On Good Friday alone, 3 x SMBC Wagons attended to remove items included discarded beds and bedroom furniture. Clearly had these items not been removed they could have posed a potential flooding risk. The issue of SMBC charging to collect Bulky Waste items was raised. The Chair has agreed to raise this matter at the next CSAC meeting, and also reminded those present to submit any other items they wish to be raised at this meeting via the Secretary.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Ordinary meeting of this group will be held on Thursday 2nd July, 2015 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber at Maghull Town Hall.

The Annual Event with Sefton MBC will be held on Thursday 9th July, 2015 commencing at 6.45pm in the Hope Centre in Aintree.