



Nottingham
City Council

The Bassetlaw Experience Improving Accessibility Beacon Event The Crossing Centre, Worksop. S80 2AT 25 February 2009

Chair: Rob Crowder, Chief Executive, Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire

Keynote Speaker: The Hon Paul Clark MP,
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport

Welcome - Councillor Stella Smedley, Cabinet Member, Transport & Highways, Nottinghamshire County Council

Councillor Stella Smedley welcomed the Minister and the delegates. She highlighted the achievements of partnership working in Nottinghamshire, including:

- the development of the new Retford Bus Station
- the new Sunday service on the Robin Hood Line
- the Robin Hood Airport Link.

Councillor Smedley added that the County Council was looking to the future with the developments including:

- Sutton-in-Ashfield Bus Station
- the proposed development of Mansfield Bus Station
- a current initiative involving the introduction new technology to increase journey planning information and travel choices.

Councillor Smedley assured the delegates that the County Council would continue to consult on choices with local communities and to build on their local knowledge to develop transport solutions across Nottinghamshire.

Strategic Overview - Steve Calvert, Acting Director of Communities, Nottinghamshire County Council

Steve Calvert presented a strategic overview of the Improving Accessibility work in Nottinghamshire. He highlighted the excellent local reputation for innovation in and delivery of transport solutions and the importance of sustainable public transport in achieving the Sub-Regional Transport objectives.

Steve Calvert praised the excellent partnership working and celebrated how these effective Partnerships were overcoming tighter resources and meeting the changing demand for services.

Steve Calvert stressed that the overall objective of the continuing endeavours would be to improve the outcomes for the citizens and communities of Nottinghamshire.

Keynote Speaker – The Hon Paul Clark MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport

Paul Clark MP commended the passion for transport issues and leadership in this field being displayed by Councillor Smedley and Steve Calvert and their teams. He applauded the achievement of Beacon status by Nottinghamshire County Council and the other local Authorities and encouraged the need for Beacon Authorities to promote Access on a nationwide basis. He stressed the link between transport issues and social exclusion and the importance of people being able to access jobs and services.

Paul Clark was pleased to see partnership working in action and the innovative approaches being employed in Nottinghamshire. The Government had identified the framework for improving Access in the second phase of the Local Transport Plans and the Under Secretary of State complimented the work at local and regional level to support the Government initiative and the vital importance of ensuring access to employment in the current difficult economic climate.

The Under Secretary of State highlighted the various factors making transport work for local communities in Bassetlaw and Nottinghamshire as follows:

- improvements in transport infrastructure and provision, as highlighted by Councillor Smedley.
- leadership from Nottinghamshire County Council.
- leadership from the transport providers (and he commended the representatives from Stagecoach for their work in this area).
- the Manton Enterprise Zone on the site of the former local Colliery site, which was an example of strong partnership working in action to act as a catalyst for the local economy, encouraging inward investment and creating jobs.

He stressed the need for projects to be developed to meet identified needs and supported by good marketing to overcome preconceived ideas.

The Under Secretary of State recognised the contribution of trains, cycling and walking in providing transport solutions, but highlighted that buses were the backbone in making transport work for the 25% of the population who don't have access to a car. He quoted the contribution of Government in driving forward standards in transport as follows:

- an investment of £2.5 billion in new accessible, low emission buses
- an investment of £57 million to support marginal rural bus services.
- the previous KickStart initiatives and the recently announced further funding of £25 million for new KickStart schemes.

The Under Secretary of State recognised the contribution of demand responsive transport solutions, such as Community Transport initiatives to increase access and increase social inclusion. He applauded the work in Bassetlaw and Nottinghamshire in the Transport to Health field and commended this work as a positive contribution to help reduce the 14 million medical appointments missed on an annual basis.

The Under Secretary of State recognised the work of Nottinghamshire County Council in the implementation of national Concessionary Fares Scheme, which has increased independence and access to services for over 11 million people.

The Under Secretary of State recognised the existing work of Nottinghamshire County Council in the implementation of travel training schemes and endorsed the Government's additional initiatives towards the objective of encouraging more people to utilise public transport solutions and reduce congestion.

The Under Secretary of State recognised the need for an update to the existing legislation implemented in 1968 and commended the Government's Local Transport Act 2008, which provided the framework for Local Authorities to meet the new challenges ahead and deliver transport solutions with a lower carbon footprint. He outlined the objectives as follows:

- deliver transport solutions to improve the economy
- lower emissions
- increase safety and promote longer life through safer travel
- deliver transport solutions that offer equality of opportunity
- deliver transport solutions that increase the quality of life

The Under Secretary of State recognised the importance of planning in the journey process, in order that transport would work for people. He emphasised the role of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), which set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and the Local Authority, Local Strategic Partnership and other key partners at the local level. He highlighted the work of LAA's and Peterborough City Council in promoting real time information, local route branding and interactive mapping to help reduce car usage.

The Under Secretary of State provided an example of Kent County Council's Freedom Pass initiative, where for a £50 one off fee 11 to 15 year olds had access to unlimited free travel to allow them greater school and training choice with a lower reliance on car use and resulting lower carbon emissions.

The Under Secretary of State concluded by encouraging all Beacon Authorities to share their best practice, to celebrate their past achievements and future initiatives, and use the framework of the Transport Act 2008 to provide transport solutions to meet local needs.

The Role of the Third Sector – Lynn Tupling, Chief Executive, Retford Action Centre

Lynn Tupling shared her positive experiences on the role of the Third Sector in providing local solutions for local people. She highlighted the role and achievements of the Bassetlaw Local Service Partnership Transport and Accessibility Sub Group.

Lynn Tupling outlined the Bassetlaw Share a Ride Scheme, emphasising the positive reasons and real benefits of car sharing. She highlighted how the Scheme can make a real difference to local people, including a demonstration of costs savings to individuals and access to employment opportunities.

Lynne Tupling outlined the Bassetlaw Community Car Scheme and detailed the success of the Scheme in improving accessibility to such as health appointments and other essential services. She concluded by drawing attention with examples to the significant difference the Scheme made to real people's lives.

An Operator View – What's in it for Us?

Gary Nolan, Managing Director, Stagecoach East Midlands

Richard Kay, Operations Director, Stagecoach East Midlands

Gary Nolan and Richard Kay highlighted the key ingredients to increasing accessibility to bus services and shared their good practice in Bassetlaw with the delegates.

They outlined the new links, including the new service to Robin Hood Airport and the improved links in the Worksop and Retford Busabout Town services. The presentation

emphasised the need to overcome barriers or perceived barriers to the use of public transport solutions with a good network, a regular frequency of services on modern vehicles, innovative ticketing solutions, first class information and good interchange facilities.

Gary Nolan and Richard Kay highlighted the strong Partnership working with Nottinghamshire County Council on the key ingredients and the mutual benefits which were evident for both the local communities and their business.

Access & Opportunity – Mark Hudson, Head of Transport, Nottinghamshire Transport Services, Nottinghamshire County Council

Mark Hudson outlined the work of Nottinghamshire Transport Services and explained how the integrated structure had positively engaged in Partnership, Consultation and Collaboration with all key partners at the local level to improve the travel experience in Bassetlaw.

Mark Hudson highlighted the achievements to date in Bassetlaw and reiterated Councillor Smedley's commitment to future developments to face the new challenges ahead. He highlighted how work would continue to achieve better outcomes for the communities of Bassetlaw and Nottinghamshire and concluded "Where there is Mobility, there is Access to Services & Social Inclusion".

Access to Employment – Norman James, STAR (Sustainable Transport Advice & Research) Access Alliance Programme

Norman James outlined the background to the Access Alliance Programme and advised delegates of their approach to delivering real solutions for local people.

He provided examples of Access Alliance Projects in Phase 1, together with their identifiable economic outputs and other benefits. He emphasised the value of Partnership working and the contribution of the evaluation of Projects by all stakeholders.

Norman James highlighted areas of focus for Phase 2 of the Alliance Access Programme and a number of suggested future Project areas.

**Workshop – Journey Planning Information
Paul Wilson, Senior Officer, Information & Publicity, Nottinghamshire Transport Services, Nottinghamshire County Council**

Paul Wilson outlined both the theory and practice of Journey Planning. He highlighted the various information solutions available to aid effective Journey Planning and offered an insight into two new technology based solutions – East Midlands Traveline and Google Maps - being launched to complement the other information sources.

Questions & Discussions

Question – A delegate queried the impact of the proposed A46 improvement works on the local environment. He queried why there had been a large increase in the scale and cost of the Project and would the funding have been better utilised in an investment in public transport?

Answer – N/A

As the Under Secretary of State and all senior representatives from Nottinghamshire Council were longer present at the event, Rob Crowder proposed that the question was referred to the appropriate contact at Nottinghamshire County Council.

Question – The question was raised as now that the A1 improvements had been completed, were there proposals to extend car sharing schemes in North Nottinghamshire?

Answer 1 – Elspeth Mallowan, Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire

EM advised that she was an advocate of “carrots” rather than “sticks” to encourage modal shifts in transport behaviour. She would like to encourage real incentives, including financial, to encourage more participation and involvement amongst employers and employees. EM advocated the increase of taxibuses in rural areas throughout the County.

Answer 2 – Gary Nolan, Managing Director, Stagecoach East Midlands

GN advised that Stagecoach East Midlands were keen to promote green travel plans with tax incentives. He outlined a current pilot scheme with Royal Bank of Scotland, whereby the employer received a discounted ticketing structure to encourage a shift in transport behaviour amongst their employees. He also highlighted Stagecoach’s own experience in relation to a new depot they had established a Skegness. A green travel plan had been established for the depot, whereby attempts to arrange shift patterns had been facilitated to allow car sharing by employees from similar geographical locations.

He emphasised that Stagecoach were pro the use of alternatives to car usage, where a viable alternative travel choice was available to the customer.

Question – Delegate advised of his experience of the Transport Direct website (www.transportdirect.info). He queried the differences between this existing information access point and the new Traveline website (www.traveline.org.uk) and whether there was a duplication of resources.

Answer – Paul Wilson, Nottinghamshire County Council

PW advised that Transport Direct was a multi modal site covering a national basis, which actually displays information from the regional Traveline. He advocated that more sources of information in this format was beneficial to encourage use and ease of access to this quality information.

Question – A delegate asked about the problems experienced with accessibility to employment sites.

Answer 1 – Elspeth Mallowan, Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire

EM advised of the Wheels to Work transport solution – essentially a moped loan service to access jobs and service in rural areas. EM described the evolution of the scheme to encompass town to country and country to town journeys in rural areas. She outlined the scheme’s original target focus as younger people and highlighted the local successes and application in Bassetlaw e.g. access to employment at Manton Enterprise Zone on shift patterns inaccessible by normal public transport services. EM also highlighted the use of taxibuses in rural areas and demand responsive Community Transport.

Answer 2 – Norman James, STAR

NJ endorsed EM’s comments and advised that this topic was at the heart of the Alliance Access Programme (www.accessalliance.co.uk). He advocated a forthcoming Access to Employment event on Thursday 19 March as of interest to delegates – see website for details.

Question - Will the Alliance Access Programme be proposed to be extended to all areas of Nottinghamshire?

Answer – Norman James, STAR

NJ advised there were no current proposals for this extension.

Question – One delegate wondered why a rail link to Ollerton / Manton is not being considered rather than additional bus routes? If bus routes radiate from railway stations, a case exists to re-open the rail link.

Answer – Gary Nolan, Managing Director, Stagecoach East Midlands

GN advised of previous experience with bus / rail feeder systems at Newark and Bradford, which had failed. He briefly explained the significant passenger volumes required to make such systems viable.

The delegate is to ask NCC for further consideration and response to his question after the event.