

Transport Summit – Oxfordshire Takeover Week

5th November 2009

Attendees:

Sam Hatzigeorgiou (MYP)
Helen Walker (DMYP)
James Talbot (Eynsham YC)
Cllr Rodney Rose (OCC)
Dick Helling (OCC)
Mat Cranwell (Stagecoach)
Phil Ashworth (Ox Bus Co)
Louise Chapman (OCC)
Phil Newbould (ORCC)
Lara Scott (Ox University)



Ruth Ashwell (OCC)
Karen Tolley (VWHDC)
Mike How (OCC)
Madge Harley (OCC)

Jeremy Day (film and sound)

Sam (MYP – Cherwell and West Oxfordshire) gave a presentation giving an overview of the bus pass scheme that has been introduced for young people in Kent, including:

- 'Free' unlimited off peak travel
- £50 per year cost

He outlined the advantages of having a similar card in Oxfordshire particularly the environmental benefits. He had conducted a survey in his school with 11-18 year olds and two thirds had said they would buy a pass and would support this approach.

Helen (DMYP – South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse) gave her views on home to school transport, which forms part of her manifesto and asked if when the leaving age is raised to 18 school transport will then be provided free for 16-18 year olds.

A number of comments and questions were raised by the panel:

Q. How did you select your sample of young people?

A. A range of young people were selected from Sam's school but it was a small sample.

Q How does it help to fill buses if they are not using it now?

A. If they buy the pass for £50 it will mean more people use public transport as the main reason young people don't use the bus more is the cost, it is a major barrier.

Q. Would you consider a scheme such as 'Railcard' which gives a discount when buying a ticket?

A. Yes and Sam asked if Bus Companies would consider this.

Comments:

Councillor Louise Chapman commented that the Kent scheme is provided through subsidiaries and stressed that Oxfordshire County Council do not have extra money available to do this as they are having to consider budget reductions. However she would like to explore whether there are other pots of funding which could be used such as the Youth Opportunity Fund or Chill Out to which young people could apply to do some additional research.

Lara Scott from Oxford University who is researching transport issues said you could think about those people currently not using the bus and if they pay £50 that does generate an additional income.

Ruth Ashwell suggested that a cost neutral scheme could be investigated.

Sam said he would like to do more research about how this could be achieved.

Phil Ashworth mentioned 'key card' which is currently available for under 16's in Oxford. Young people present did not know about it.. Sam asked if this helps young people in rural areas.

Q. Stage Coach asked if a bigger sample of young people could be researched to give validity to their proposal and identify the potential number of young people who would use it?

A. Sam agreed that more statistics would be required

Comments:

James said that he spoke to 150 young people on his school bus and they were all keen to buy a card.

Phillip Newbould said that more information and statistics are required to back up usage claims. However he didn't think that £50 would be feasible in Oxfordshire and that a higher level may need to be put in place if subsidies were not available.

Q. What statistics do bus companies want to know so that any research can be useful e.g. What are they using now, when, where, how?

A. Need to work with bus companies to make research relevant.

Q. Dick Helling asked if different levels of concession should be looked at, which combines card with some sort of payment?

A. This could be looked at

Q. Would bus companies help to design a relevant survey to ensure they get the information they want.

A. Yes they would be involved.

Helen asked if their email addresses could be circulated to her and Sam to progress this. They could run surveys in schools or via 'survey monkey' using contacts through UK Youth Parliament representatives in Oxfordshire.

Agreed to look at all options including how bus companies will benefit e.g. £50 card and £1 per journey or half fare. The Oyster scheme in London was mentioned. Sam agreed to look at other schemes. Cllr Chapman thought this should be facilitated through youth parliament and suggested they put together a proposal to the Youth Opportunity Fund to do some proper research to get enough data to support their proposal.

Sam mentioned the national UKYP campaign 'Get on Board' which is requesting half fares for young people nationally.

Actions:

- Sam to set up an e-group with everyone's emails to keep in touch and arrange future meeting
- Need to agree the specific parameters with bus companies for a survey as part of the proposal
- Oxford University (Lara Scott) happy to support research and give advice
- Stagecoach will contact counterpart in Kent to get more information about their scheme from the perspective of the Company – Matt Cranwell
- Young people to Apply to Chill Out or Youth Opportunity Fund immediately to help fund research
- Meet back in 6 months to assess progress
- Attend a Children's Trust meeting to present findings to other partners
- Home to school transport – await guidance on funding from Government
- MYPs to send letter to the Government to lobby on transport for young people (older people get concessions)

Sam concluded that he and Helen will build on this meeting by planning a scheme, based on research, which is realistic.

Karen Tolley