

Hopper Bus Team Meeting on 29 Sept 14

Hopper Bus Project Meeting 29 Sept at SPC 7-9pm

Present

Shabana Galinsky
Kelvin Smith
Sonia Lippold
Astrid Ingham Brooke
Jeff Bygrave
Keith Cameron
Charles Appleby

Purpose

This was the first meeting of a Project Team to look into a Hopper Bus for the area. This Project Team was established by the Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Group (NPDG) as part of its mission as a Community to coordinate the delivery of specific Projects in the Neighbourhood Plan for the area.

Background

Feedback to the Neighbourhood Plan Vision consultation showed that many people would like to see more frequent bus services and a greater choice of routes to/from local towns. One particular idea arose through the Ascot consultations to gain considerable support and is one which the community would like to pursue further – a bus service that works a circular route around the villages.

A Village Hopper Bus Service was included in the Neighbourhood Plan as a Project requiring further work, with the following remit: To work with local bus companies, the Parish Councils, RBWM and any other interested stakeholders to establish a “Village Hopper Bus” service, using smaller buses to work a circular route around all our village centres – Ascot and South Ascot, Sunningdale, Sunninghill, Cheapside and North Ascot, also stopping off at Ascot and Sunningdale stations. To run at regular, frequent times throughout the day and early evening, to enable its use by shoppers, workers and commuters.

Discussion

The Team discussed the Stakeholders, current transport services, the potential need for transport services in the area, and the key issues relating to transport services in the area. There was a consensus around the following:

- The Project Team needs to start from the ground up to find out from the community - including the NHS and businesses - about the need for bus services, to include what are the journeys people want to make, at what time of day, at what frequency, and what price are people willing to pay. It was agreed also to ask people about their willingness to car share.
- In terms of what might be the best solution, the Project Team is keen first of all to understand the needs of the community. There was a realisation that the best solution may not necessarily be the Hopper Bus Service as identified in the NP, and

that that the Project Team needs to be open to look at other potential solutions which may be a better fit to the requirements as they become identified.

- There was discussion of different types of solution to community transport needs, including fixed stops and dial-a-ride. There was also a realisation that different solutions may be required for different groups of users – eg the solution for transport for primary school children might be very different from the solution for patients needing to attend appointments at NHS Prospect Park facility in Reading. Team members were invited to look at the range of solutions described in the Community Transport Association paper on Guidance for Funders of Community Transport.
- The need to prepare a draft outline questionnaire to community organisations, and draft Announcement to the Press and the Community – action Charles and Keith
- The potential for improved transport as a contribution to more community spirit in the area
- The potential benefit of promoting to the community the current providers of transport services in the area.
- In principle, the approach the Team is following is:
 1. Initial investigation with organisations into what bus type services people in the area want
 2. Identification of possible options
 3. Consultation with the community

Team Members undertook to make contact with the organisations identified in the workshop to look at demand from the following:

- Kelvin to look at demand from businesses
- Astrid to look at demand from the NHS for transport for patients
- Sonia to look at demand from Care Homes for transport for their staff

Date of Next Meeting – Monday 27 Oct 7-9 pm at the Sunningdale Parish Council Office