

Note of a Meeting with Geraint Hughes 17 April 2014 at Wivenhoe Town Council Offices

Present:

Geraint Hughes – Partnership Manager, Abellio Greater Anglia

Jane Black, Peter Hill, Cllr Neil Lodge, Dick Polom (notes) – Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Summary:

We discussed highlights from the recent WNP survey relating to rail transport. Geraint outlined Abellio's current plans and potential future direction, and very helpfully answered a range of questions from car parking to bus services and access improvement.

Key points as follows:

- Abellio now has the franchise until October 2016, with a new franchise to be let at that point. They will have input to the strategic planning for this area, currently in Control Period 5 (2014-2019), now looking at period 6.
- There is no major change planned in timetabling or frequency of trains on the Wivenhoe branch. Additional or adjusted services may be looked at in the light of continued traffic growth following the recent post-recession decline.
- Government transport long term plans run to 2043 and assume a growth of 52-75% in passenger traffic across the region.
- The likely development of a major housing project at Chelmsford with a new station north of the city should not significantly affect services to Wivenhoe. It may improve reliability and overcrowding issues due to better train movements on the main line.
- A recent announcement concerning investment <http://www.abelliogreateranglia.co.uk/about-us/news/2014/04/abellio-greater-anglia-to-deliver-significant-upgrades-for-customers-and-communities> shows that there are few changes of any significance for the Clacton line over the period. A steady programme of rolling stock improvement and general infrastructure clean will commence, together with reliability upgrades.
- Abellio own a 99 year lease on the Wivenhoe station but not the "engine shed". Includes the car park (extended area as shown on attached map) operated by NCP for which charges will remain at a commercial level. Network Rail is responsible for all other railway land.
- Geraint agreed to clarify the exact extent of ownership of the boundary around Wivenhoe Station and in particular whether this included the path behind platform 2 and tunnel access thereto.
- Whilst Abellio have no major plans in their current franchise plan for Wivenhoe station or facilities beyond the current upgrade of toilets and general refurbishment work. Limited funding is budgeted for access and environment work on stations in this area.
- However, they are very willing to discuss possible joint and collaborative initiatives to address local needs, e.g. better access to platform 2, use of retail outlet on platform 1 and rental of the station house. The WNP group should encourage development of specific proposals for further discussion in these areas.