

MINUTES

SWALE LOCAL BUS FORUM

Meeting held on Monday 21 April 2026 from 2pm, via Teams

Present:

- Emma Wiggins (EW)
- Alun Millard (AM)
- Cllr Dolley Wooster (DW)
- Cllr Karen Watson (KW)
- Dan Bruce (DB) – KCC
- Luke Naylor (LN) – KCC
- Steve Pay (SP) – KCC
- David Morton (DM) – Stagecoach
- Emma Casambros – Stagecoach
- Ian Harrison – SBC
- Jo Thomas
- Chris Webber
- Mike Knowles
- Roland Eglinton (RE) – Chalkwell
- Tim Lamkin (TL)
- Tony Winckless (TW)

In Attendance: Emily Aherne (EA) Minutes

Apologies: Mike Baldock (MB)

NO	ITEM	ACTION
1.	Welcome, Introduction and Apologies	
1.1	Cllr Alastair Gould (joined later), Cllr Mike Baldock.	
2.	Minutes of Local Bus Forum – 19 January 2026	
2.1	The minutes from the meeting on 19 January 2026 were agreed and the following updates given on outstanding actions:	DB + DW
2.2	DB: Funding has been allocated for bus shelter upgrades. KCC will be running a similar scheme this year.	
2.3	A commitment was noted to explore potential funding for solar initiatives. Action: SP and Cllr Wooster are to discuss the proposed relocation of the bus stop in Sheerness requested by Cllr Wooster. A meeting is scheduled for 12 May, to which Cllr Wooster has invited Steve to attend.	
2.4	Item on S106 monies and importance of utilising Planning Applications to be discussed at next meeting: this was discussed and will be a standing item on the agenda moving forward.	

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3.	KCC General Updates	
3.1	A decision is awaited regarding acceptance and the proposed delivery plan. DB provided a verbal update and confirmed that the delivery plan will be circulated following the meeting.	
3.2	It was noted that there are no plans for new bus shelters in Swale at this time. The borough has an aging stock of bus shelter assets, and those identified as being in poor condition will be replaced. MK confirmed that the shelter in Minster currently being used by an unhoused individual will be replaced with a traditional cantilever-style shelter to discourage inappropriate use.	
3.3	There is limited capacity for progressive improvements, with funding expected to continue at a similar level to that received over the past three years. It is hoped that this round of funding may allow for consideration of wider network enhancements.	
3.4	Cllr Wooster Highlighted that residents are seeking more sustainable bus services, particularly for rural areas.	
4.	Bus Companies Update	
4.1	RE: The Grovehurst scheme is nearing completion. Hopefully delays will be reduced.	
4.2	The loss of toilet facilities at the bus hub may impact on scheduling.	
4.3	EW asked about progress at the bus hub. Action: DB will follow this up by seeking an update from Remi and will circulate the information once received.	DB
4.4	RE: The dementia-friendly bus service is now back on track. The rollout of audio-visual (AV) kits for buses is continuing. Action: RE noted that he will follow up with Cllr Watson, who meets weekly with the Pathfinders group, and will provide them with an update.	RE
4.5	CW: No updates were provided.	
4.6	TL asked whether new bus shelters would be installed as part of new developments. It was confirmed that this is possible, subject to funding being available for ongoing maintenance.	
4.7	Cllr Wooster expressed concern that the Joint Transport Board may be coming to an end and that issues at Bell Road could therefore remain unresolved. DB confirmed that a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation had previously taken place regarding the creation of formalised waiting areas at Bell Road, but the outcome is currently unknown. DB will investigate this and report back.	DB
4.8	AM confirmed there is some provision for new bus stops on Barton Hill Drive.	
4.9	RG reported that the Hopper Community Bus service continues to operate. Plans are in place to introduce a Saturday service at a later date. He noted	

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	that while there was a shortage of volunteer bus drivers last year, the service now has more volunteers than required.	
5.	SBC Updates	
5.1	There are currently 27 Section 106 entries across 9 developments.	
5.2	RG advised that Perry Court was acquired last year. AM confirmed that work is progressing on a controlled pedestrian crossing between the school and the A2. The available funding budget is currently under review, and further opportunities may be considered depending on the remaining funds once this project is completed.	
5.3	IH's S106 spreadsheet will be circulated to attendees following the meeting. SP suggested that the wider group should be informed in advance of any future funding requests.	
5.4	Cllr Wooster expressed concern that some members may be acting as gatekeepers for the areas they represent. She emphasised that all councillors should have equal access to shared information and discussions.	
5.5	A proposal was presented regarding the provision of improved taxi ranks and safer public queuing spaces. Current arrangements were described as poorly lit, with associated anti-social behaviour concerns (particularly the area behind The Forum). The proposal suggests that the bus hub on St Michael's Road could operate as a taxi rank between 7:00pm and 7:00am, with loading bays used instead of active bus stops. Roland raised concerns that 7:00pm may be too early, as parts of the bus network are still operational. He suggested the earliest start time of 8:30pm and queried how enforcement would be managed. Additional concerns were raised regarding rail replacement services and the need to future-proof arrangements should bus services operate later in the future. Roland also suggested use of the loading bay at the front of the hub to avoid impacting bus stops, noting that the bay was originally designated for Travelodge use. Dan reiterated the need to future-proof any changes and advised that amendments would require a change to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). It was noted that the station taxi rank cannot be used due to permitting constraints.	
6.	Member and Residence Forum Feedback	
6.1	It was noted that KCC is undertaking a county-wide survey of all bus stops in Kent this year to assess accessibility, as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).	
7.	AOB	
7.1	Cllr Watson gave congratulations to the Community Hub bus for being nominated for a Mayor's Civic Award.	
Next meeting: - to be scheduled towards the end of July.		