

Local Transport Officer's Report - 22 April 2021.

In my 10 March report, I demonstrated that little had changed 'on the ground' since the Prime Minister's announcement of the 'Roadmap for Recovery'. Public transport changes tend to have long lead-time, so this is understandable. However, signs of future changes are beginning to appear.

Buses:

The short-term diversion of services along the B1438 due to its temporary closure for roadworks has already been publicised on Melton eNews.

With March seeing the return of schools & colleges and the revocation of the 'Stay at Home' guidance, Ipswich Park-&-Ride resumed on 12 April, to the previous timetable. It is generally understood that the local bus services shown in PLA(21)30.01 can be taken as permanent (so far as any bus service can be), *but see below*.

A New Strategy for Buses.

Of significant medium-term importance, on 15 March the Government published its long-term strategy for buses in England, outside London *Bus Back Better*. This heralds the first significant intervention in the provision of bus services in nearly 35 years. It intends to replace the almost unique system of deregulated bus services by locally determined 'enhance partnerships' and in some cases outright franchising. Recognising the barriers to bus travel, including:-

- poor / non-existent evening services;
- complex / insufficiently comprehensive multi-journey tickets;
- poor integration between buses and trains;
- different names for the same stops;
- operator-specific publicity which fails to acknowledge the existence of other operators' services.

there will be a new definition of 'socially or economically necessary services.

To incentivise local authorities and operators, there will be a £3billion fund, which will only be accessible where statutory partnerships or full franchising are in place. These must be in place by April 2022. For many local authorities with slimmed down or non-existent staffing, this will be a challenge. There will therefore be a £25million fund support partnership and franchising development.

The full document can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/969205/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf

Trains:

Greater Anglia has published its own Roadmap out of Lockdown, see <https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/travel-information/service-disruptions/latest-covid-19-timetable-changes>. These are the highlights:-

Covid-19 timetable reduction

We are still operating a reduced timetable, although we have recently increased off-peak services and added four more Intercity services, so we're running about 82 per cent of our normal timetable. Please always check before you travel. We will keep you updated about any further changes here and on our social media. [View details of our revised timetable](#).

Cross-border journeys

Coronavirus pandemic restrictions may be different in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. View our Coronavirus [\(COVID-19\) travel advice page](#) for more information – including details of what we are doing to keep you safe.

Government travel advice is still to minimise journeys and work from home if possible.

Catering.

From Monday the 12 April catering will start to return on some Liverpool Street to Norwich and Norwich to Liverpool Street intercity services. Customers are advised to check the website for individual train service information, before travel.

Longer Term.

More significant changes to the structure of the railway industry are expected with the publication of the long-awaited Williams Report, which is now delayed by pre-election purdah.

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Local Transport Officer
21 April 2021