**York Bus Forum – Members Monthly Meeting 17.30-19.00 Tuesday 17th September 2024, by Zoom**

Attending: Doreen Magill, Niall McFerran (Vice Chair), Roger French (Finance and Membership), Dave Merrett, Toby Hart, Flick Williams, Tony Hudson, Catherine Odell, Glen Simpson, Stuart Fillingham (EY Buses), Wayne Blackburn, Anna Courtier (First Bus), Richard Parker, David Stuart, Duncan Miller, Robert West, Eden Blyth, Diana Robinson, Tom Horner (City of York Council), John Bibby, Gordon Campbell-Thomas, Michael Nichols, William Tymms, Judy Illing, Roger Pierce and Diana Robinson.

1. Welcome and Apologies

Doreen Magill welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies had been received from , Andy D’Agorne, Gail Shuttleworth, Graham Collett, Robin Jorimann, Terry French, Mary Cannon, Jason Murgatroyd, John Hart , Ian Craven, Ian Anderson, George Wood, Nick Murray and Debby Cobbett.

1. Presentation Tom Horner, Head of Sustainable Transport, City of York Council –Update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

Tom informed members that discussions were on- going with the Department for Transport (DfT) to extend a block of the main BSIP funding of circa £17m, past 31st March 2025.

He said City of York were working on a further plan submission from 1st April 2025 which would be an update summary to link into the Combined Authority who would need to pull together a submission for the whole of North Yorkshire and York.

It would include a number of asks and initiatives to take York Bus Services to the next level and retain some of the aspirational targets from the original 2021 BSIP submission e.g. a 10 minute daytime frequency /30 minute evening frequency for core City services and 30 minute/60 minute for other routes.

The plan would give an progress update on the Park and Ride hubs, the City Centre corridor, Radial route priorities, Real Time Installation, Ticketing developments and engagement.

The DfT had asked for a funding wish list and City of York was submitting 7 Priority Areas:

1. Frequency of Service Provision to include funding for a network review, network enhancement, monitoring staff and bus wardens, rural connectivity and plans to reintroduce Community Transport and investigate Demand Responsive Transport.
2. Reliability of journey times – aspiration for a 5 year fund to develop a movement and place plan , and a corridor study,
3. Access and Information including developing on-line and on street accessibility, staffed City centre and Rail station Bus Information points and improved driver training on Accessibility.
4. Ticketing initiatives- retaining the Young Person’s Fare Support for under 19’s at £1 fare, retain the £2 fare locally if changed nationally, and ticketing incentives for employers actively investing in travel plans
5. Vehicle Quality and Sustainability – with zero emission buses for all routes, electric vehicle charging points at Park and Ride sites and potentially a multi operator depot.
6. Bus stop and shelter upgrades including further real time information and enhanced quality temporary stops.
7. Engagement – promotion of active travel, cycle / bus integration village/town alignment with City services, bus buddy initiatives and personal travel plans.

Next steps were to refine the “asks” with stakeholders, take to the Council Executive for approval and work with the Mayoral team on an integrated plan with North Yorkshire.

Questions: Doreen Magill raised experience of the inconsistency of Information Boards sited in close vicinity. Tom agreed to take away and look into the examples Doreen provided.

Flick Williams expressed concerns about the proposed Bus/Cycle interchanges and the potential impact on disabled bus users. Tom agreed that the changes needed to be handled sensitively and said the main focus would be at Park and Ride sites not all bus stops.

Eden Blyth welcomed the station information points and asked whether the City Council would make the Federation of Passenger Transport (FPT) scooter permit scheme a requirement for all buses operating into the City and Tom said the Council had a task and finish group looking into this. Eden also asked on the subject of zero emission buses whether companies relying on battery operated buses covering longer routes would be allowed into York. Tom replied that the fully zero emission aspiration was a long term ambition to be fully implemented when technology improved to make it fully practical.

Niall McFerran queried whether York was in danger of losing funding if the DfT did not allow carry forward of existing funding. Tom replied that the carry forward request was for capital funding and there were precedents in other transport authority areas.

Niall also asked how aspirational the 10 minute/30 minute frequency was and Tom said it was dependent on additional revenue funding but it was right to retain the aspiration and take a stepped approach to introducing as funds became available.

Richard Parker pointed out that the 10/30 minute aspiration was in the original BSIP and since then service frequencies had worsened. Tom pointed out that since the original submission in 2021 there had been the difficulties post covid and reduced City Council funding from Central Government but it was right to keep the aspiration and seek funding.

Roger Pierce pointed out the deficiencies of the current temporary bus stops and Tom re-emphasised that the City Council were looking into much enhanced facilities that could be moved around as required and looking at examples already in operation in other cities.

1. Minutes of the 20th August meeting and matters arising not on the Agenda.

The minutes were agreed and there were no matters arising.

1. Enhanced Partnership (EP) Meeting 11th September 2014

Niall reported that the main items discussed were:

Audio visuals screens going live on First weekend of 13/14/15 September

Public consultation to take place on Bus Priority routes in the New Year

Driver training on accessibility

Issue re no 11 service reliability

No 10 timetable not to be changed again pre-Christmas

It was agreed that all services that currently do so would continue to access the Rail station.

First Bus proposed to use a minibus to serve the Salisbury Road/Leeman Road area.

1. City of York Council issues–
2. Dial a Ride

Tom Horner reported that City of York Council officers were preparing a response to the report to go to the Scrutiny Committee.

1. City Centre Bus stop locations

Tom reported that officers were monitoring the situation following the information previously reported in July re excess waiting times in Stonebow and at the Rail station and reviewing the notes sent by Niall of the walk round City Centre stops on 2nd August

1. Bus stop information including electronic screens, bus timetables

Tom reported that one of the electronic information boards had been vandalised and there had been damage to 2 shelters caused by vehicles running into them.

1. Frequency of timetable changes

Tom reported that conversations with operators were taking place re 2025 and a process for deciding how many timetable changes there should be. Niall re-iterated the Bus Forum view that there should be no more than 2 though Tom felt this may be too few.

1. Service 412

Tom reported that the issues raised would be addressed in the next set of tenders.

1. Park and Ride tender

Tom felt that there needed to be a separate dedicated conversation re the opportunities provided by the tender, which he would arrange.

Services 3 and 4 stopping at the station

This issue was resolved at the Enhanced Partnership as reported above

Roger French asked about progress on the 12 and 14 service tender and Tom reported that the Procurement team had decided that a full tender exercise was not required and steps were being taken within Procurement rules to pull together into a single service.

Flick Williams raised the issue of damage to accessible toilets at the Park and Ride sites, citing Askham Bar and Flick also raised the difficulties at the Rail Station recently due to Rail Replacement buses hampering regular services stopping there. Tom agreed to go back to the Project team to ask them to identify an interim solution until the Station scheme was fully implemented.

Eden Blyth reported incorrect destinations shown on displays in York for the Moorsbus and x31 services. It was agreed that Eden and Tom would discuss outside the meeting.

1. First Bus issues-
2. No 11 route difficulties

Tom said that the City Council officers had been looking into the timing delays on the no 11 and 16 routes and concluded that they were as a result of the lane closure on the A64 causing drivers to look for alternative routes into the City Centre with particular issues on Tadcaster Road and the Mount and would continue to monitor the situation.

He explained that the 11 could be tracked electronically but as the 16 did not have this technology the Council had put a clerk on the bus to monitor.

Stuart Fillingham observed, as a resident of Bishopthorpe who worked in the Bus industry residents had reported overcrowding and standing on the buses as well as delays and tailbacks of traffic which he felt was due to the A64 issues.

Michael Nichols reported that as a Councillor in the area he had received more complaints on this issue than any other recently 5 or 6 a day. Michael observed that residents complained of parked cars in the narrow South Bank streets being a particular issue and he was convinced it was not just due to the A64 issues. Wayne Blackburn, as a bus driver who had driven buses on the route, agreed parked cars were an issue and there was no alternative on occasion other than to block the road until oncoming drivers backed up- which could take up to 2 minutes. Generally though, he observed that the timings for the route were tight but just doable and he confirmed that the drivers were all well apprised of the new route.

Tom promised to continue to monitor the situation and if necessary take further in discussion with First management.

Michael also raised issues with the First app not showing buses when delays occurred and also the fact that on the return journey to Bishopthorpe any disabled or persons with walking difficulties had to alight a quarter of a mile away from where they boarded.

Anna Courtier agreed to take these issues back to First management.

Diana Robinson referred to the no 2 Park and Ride and asked if the Theatre stop was set down only. Anna Courtier agreed to take away to clarify at First Bus and Tom Horner confirmed that he had observed personally the confusion at this stop.

Gordon Campbell Thomas took the opportunity to inform the meeting that a petition from residents on the 16 route was to be presented to the Council meeting later in the week by his local councillor calling upon the Council to sort out the poor running of the no 16 which included on occasion no bus turning up for 2 hours.

1. Transdev

.Doreen reported that, at last, Transdev had nominated a contact, Adam Emmott, and a meeting with him would be arranged as soon as possible.

Concerns were raised about the “useless” Transdev Go app which would be raised.

The route of the no 25 was still a concern with Transdev seemingly taking different routes at different times and Tom agreed to talk to them to ensure the correct route was followed.

Diana Robinson raised the no 19 which she said was unreliable and gave a poor service.

1. East Yorkshire.

Gordon Campbell- Thomas asked for an update on progress on Class 2 Mobility Scooters. Stuart Fillingham said training was on-going and East Yorkshire was working with CPT to accept accreditation from other operators. He would invite Tom Donnelly to give an update to the next YBF meeting and Tom would be able to provide an estimated timescale for adoption.

1. AOB

Toby Hart expressed concern at services finishing earlier on Saturdays, the busiest evening of the week, than weekdays and agreed to send Tom Horner a summary of the issues.

Doreen Magill reported on concerns in Ashley Park, including on the local Facebook site, about changes to early morning services in the area which meant difficulties for school children. Roger French reported that John Bibby had emailed on this and he would liaise with Doreen to provide information to Tom Horner and Anna Courtier.

Richard Parker reported that the timetables in Stamford Bridge Square showed the same timings as when the no 10 commenced its journey from its start point in Stamford Bridge which meant the service was always 5 minutes late at the Square. Anna agreed to add to the list of issues to take back to First Bus management.

Richard was also concerned at the lack of clear cycle lane markings on Gillygate which meant traffic strayed into the cycle lane.

Concerns were also raised by Judy Illing that the no 1a from Acomb was regularly late in the morning peak. Wayne Harrison said that the issue was traffic in Holgate on a morning.

Wayne also alerted members to changes on the University routes with the 66 and 67 being replaced by UN 1, UN2 and with UN3 and UN4 being new routes.

Niall McFerran reported that the October meeting speaker would be Louise Cheeseman on the role of women in the bus industry and her work at Transport for London (TfL).

Gordon Campbell- Thomas and Doreen Magill gave advance apologies for the meeting.

1. Date of next meeting 15th October.