

## **Continued operation of route 13a**

### **Summary**

1. Route 13a is a local bus service currently operated by First York with financial support from City of York Council. The route operates from Haxby West Nooks to Acomb via Haxby, Huntington Road, The Stonebow, York Station and Hamilton Drive (Holgate) at an hourly frequency, Monday to Saturday daytimes.
2. The service currently receives subsidy of £1,000 per week. First York has given notice to the Council to terminate this arrangement from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015 and therefore to cease operation of the service. The northern section of the route (York – Haxby West Nooks) will be operated on a commercial (non-subsidised) basis by Harrogate Coach Travel. None of the York bus operators has identified a commercial opportunity in the western section of the route (York – Acomb) however and therefore it will require a new subsidy agreement if it is to continue to operate.
3. To ensure continued local bus provision for the residents of the Hamilton Drive / Holly Bank area, registration of a replacement service with the Traffic Commissioner's office and confirmation of a supplier is required as soon as possible.

### **Recommendation**

4. The Director is recommended to approve option A: to agree to continue operation of route 13a to enable a comprehensive, criteria based, assessment of bus services to be undertaken and reported on in Autumn 2015.

Reason: Route 13a is, in terms of the portfolio of subsidised bus services, comparatively well used. If savings are required, there are other bus services which could be withdrawn ahead of this route which would have a lesser impact on York's bus users.

## **Options**

5. Option A – Fund route 13a pending a full review of council support for local bus services.

Option B – Withdraw route 13a from 1<sup>st</sup> August.

## **Analysis**

### Option A

6. The Council has sought prices from bus operators for the continued operation of the west end of route 13a. The full year cost of providing this service is £45,000 (Monday – Saturday).
7. The current cost of providing route 13a is £1k per week. If the council agrees to continue with the operation of route 13a, there will be a modest reduction in the provision, from 8 down to 6 journeys per day in each direction. This is reflected in a proportional reduction in the contract cost (£825 per week from the lowest bidder).
8. Unless action is taken, route 13a will cease to operate from 1<sup>st</sup> August.
9. Route 13a carries more passengers, at a lower subsidy cost per passenger, than some other local bus services currently funded by the council. Under the current council criteria (£2 maximum subsidy per passenger and carrying at least 9 passengers per bus hour operated), this service would not be recommended for withdrawal. A report outlining alternative criteria and the levels of bus service provided will be brought for the Executive Members' consideration this Autumn. It would, therefore, potentially be premature to withdraw support for this service now.

### Option B

10. Route 13a could be withdrawn from 2<sup>nd</sup> August delivering a saving of £28k for the remainder of the financial year (2015/16). It should be noted that this reduction in expenditure would still leave an over-spend in the local bus budget which would have to be addressed in year.
11. Withdrawal of this service would leave the areas of Holly Bank and Hamilton Drive without a bus service. Department for Transport guidance advises that the maximum distance a passenger should be expected to walk to their nearest bus service is 400m. In the absence of the 13a, the furthest distance that any passenger would have to walk to their nearest bus stop would be 730m.

## **Council Plan**

12. The continued provision of this service helps to deliver the following Council Plan objectives, to 'Get York Moving', 'Protect vulnerable people' and to 'Build strong communities'.

## **Implications**

13. *This report has the following implications:*

**Financial** – The cost of providing service 13a for the remainder of 2015/16 is £28k. Further action will be required within this financial year to ensure that the subsidised bus budget is not overspent.

**Human Resources (HR)** - None

**Equalities** – None if the recommendation is adopted.

**Legal** – The City of York Council as Local Transport Authority of the area, has a responsibility under the Transport Act 1985 to provide bus services it deems 'socially necessary'. It is at the discretion of the Local Transport Authority to determine how it implements this responsibility and the level of service provided.

**Crime and Disorder** - None

**Information Technology (IT)** – None

**Property** - None

**Other** – None

## **Risk Management**

14. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy, no significant risks associated with the recommendations in this report have been identified.

## **Contact Details**

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### **Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

Neil Ferris  
Assistant Director  
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**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 30 June 2015

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

Patrick Looker, Finance Manager

**Wards Affected:**

*All*



**Guildhall, Micklegate, Holgate, Acomb,**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

***Annexes***

Annex A Route map for service 13a