

**Decision Session –
Executive Member for City Strategy**

5th January 2010

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**Petition from Holgate residents calling on First York to amend the
Nos. 5 Bus Route**

Summary

1. The report considers a petition presented to the Council earlier this year calling on the Council to make representations to alter the route taken by the number 5 bus service through central York and on to Monks Cross (rather than Strensall). The petition requests that the service travels via Stonebow and not St Leonard's Place with it reverting to the route used by the former number 16 which incorporated the Hollybank Loop.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member for City Strategy is recommended to:
 - i) Note the content of the petition.
 - ii) Do nothing, acknowledging that whilst the break in this service is an inconvenience, it is not possible to provide direct bus routes between all points of the City and alternative services.

Reason: A number of bus services connect with route 5 from Acomb at both the railway station and on Blossom Street offering a good level of interchange. Officers will continue to work with bus operators to develop the level of service to this part of York.

Background

3. The Council has received a petition signed by 237 residents concerning the route taken by the number 5 service from Acomb once it reaches York.
4. Prior to February 2008, service 16 operated on a commercial basis (without Council subsidy) and took the following route:

Acomb – Green Lane – Hamilton Drive – Holgate Road – Rail station – Rougier Street – Stonebow – Monkgate – Heworth Green – Dodsworth Avenue – Huntington Road – Byland Avenue – Elmfield Avenue – Malton Road – New Jockey Lane – Monks Cross.

5. The service was operated by First Group on a half hour frequency.
6. First Group expressed concerns that the route could no longer be operated on a commercial basis. Council officers worked with First Group to ensure that the area still received a bus service (there was a possibility that there would be no bus service along Hamilton Drive at one point) and proposed that route 5, which had previously terminated in the City Centre having travelled from Strensall, be extended to Acomb via Hamilton Drive.
7. First Group agreed to this proposal, with the resulting network of a 15 minute service between Strensall and York and every second bus travelling on to Acomb (providing a half hourly service along Hamilton Drive as per the former route 16 between Green Lane and the City Centre).
8. Service 5 is operated commercially (without Council subsidy) and takes the following route:

Acomb – Green Lane – Hamilton Drive – Holgate Road – Rail station – Theatre Royal – Gillygate – Haxby Road – Haley’s Terrace – Huntington Road – Strensall
9. Whilst there is no longer a direct bus service between Holgate and Stonebow, the following interchange opportunities remain:

Change at Blossom Street or York Station for service 11 (every 30mins), service 12 (every 30 mins), 13 (every 30 mins) or any Coastliner service (every 15 mins)
10. There is also no direct bus service between Holgate and Monks Cross but the following interchange opportunities remain:
 - Change at Blossom Street or York Station for service 13 (every 30 mins Mon - Sat, hourly on Sundays)
 - Alight at Station Avenue and walk to Rougier Street to connect with Park & Ride service 9 (every 10 mins, seven days)
 - Change at Theatre Royal (or all points to New Lane) for service 55 (hourly, Monday - Friday)
 - Change at all points on Huntington Road between the Link Road and New Lane for service 20 (hourly, seven days)
11. Any alteration of the route taken by service 5 through the City would potentially inconvenience those passengers travelling to Huntington, Strensall and all points in between who have grown accustomed to the current stopping arrangements and would potentially be disadvantaged by any alterations.
12. There are two inconveniences resulting from these network changes for Holgate residents wishing to travel through to Stonebow or Monks Cross:

- a. The inconvenience of having to change bus and the resulting time penalties
- b. The additional cost for fare paying passengers who will either have to buy two single / return tickets, or if travelling wholly on First buses, purchase a First period pass. Concessionary pass holders are not subject to this penalty.

Consultation

13. Ward councillors have been consulted to understand the principal concerns of residents. Councillor Bowgett confirmed that the petitioners are unhappy that they no longer have a bus service linking Hamilton Drive and Stonebow. Service 1 (which is the alternative bus but not so convenient) also travels via St Leonards Place and not via Stonebow. Some petitioners did mention Monk's Cross but the link to Stonebow seemed to be the main concern. The reason for this is that many people without transport go to shops and stalls in the Stonebow area to do their shopping and then they like to hop on the bus back home. Going to St Leonards with heavy bags is a struggle for them.
14. First Group were consulted regarding the possibility of amending the routeing of service 5 to re-direct half of the journeys via Stonebow instead of St Leonard's Place. Their comments are shown at paragraph 18 below.
15. Transdev York were consulted regarding the possibility of extending route 20 to provide a loop working along Acomb Lane, Hamilton Drive and Green Lane in order to create an alternative link to Monks Cross via Clifton Moor. Their comments are outlined at paragraph 23 below.

Options

16. The following options are presented for the Executive Member's consideration:
 - a. Revive a variant on the old service 16, providing a direct link between Acomb and Monks Cross via Stonebow or re-direct half of the route 5 services via Stonebow, with the other half travelling via St Leonard's Place.
 - b. Extend service 20 from York Road to provide a loop along Acomb Road – Hamilton Drive – Green Lane and provide a suburban service to Monks Cross via Clifton Moor (not via York City Centre)
 - c. Do nothing, acknowledging that whilst the break in this service is an inconvenience, it is not possible to provide direct bus routes between all points of the City and alternative services

Analysis

17. **Option a.** Officers have worked with bus operators to identify possible improvements which might be made (specifically, to the route 5 timetable/routeing).

18. First Group considered the possible re-routeing of half of the journeys on route 5 to travel via Stonebow but concluded that the commercial viability of the service was reliant on all journeys taking the same route through the city centre. This would also enable passengers for Huntington/ Strensall areas to take advantage of the fifteen minute frequency from one City Centre stop.
19. The operator highlighted the fact that connections were available at either Blossom Street or the Station for passengers wishing to travel from Acomb to Stonebow / Monks Cross, and that those in possession of day/period tickets would not be penalised financially by changing buses and that, overall, they considered altering the route would not benefit a majority of passengers.
20. It is unlikely that First Group would be willing to re-introduce the former route 16 without Council subsidy. The re-introduction of service 16 (as was), considered in isolation, is thought likely to cost the Council in the region of £150,000 per annum. The introduction of such a service would almost certainly result in the termination of the current, commercially operated, route 5 service (from Strensall to Acomb) in the City Centre.
21. **Option b.** Service 20 currently operates on a suburban route from Monks Cross, via Haxby, Clifton Moor, Rawcliffe, Poppleton and terminates on York Road, Acomb. The service is operated with subsidy from the Council.
22. Extension of service 20 around Hamilton Drive would not only provide the area with a link to Monks Cross but would also provide a link to Clifton Moor. This service would have a journey time of approximately one hour to reach Monks Cross as opposed to the former route 16 journey through town with a journey time of approximately 45 minutes.
23. The extension of this service would be likely to cost £25,000 per annum
24. A response concerning the proposed route extension was received from Transdev York. The company was not in favour of extending route 20 to perform a loop along Acomb Road, Hamilton Drive and Green Lane as such a move would have an adverse effect on reliability and timekeeping on what is already a tightly timed route. The only way such an extension could be practically incorporated into the route would be by reducing the service frequency from every 60 to every 75 minutes, which would make the service unattractive and have a negative effect on ridership and revenue.
25. **Option c.** Service 5 provides the best possible opportunity for a viable bus service between Holgate and York. Council financial support would almost inevitably be required to seek to re-route service 5 or to re-introduce service 16 and at a time when Council resources are under pressure, this would be unlikely to be a priority. As outlined in paragraphs 9 and 10, there are a number of relatively convenient options linking Holgate and Stonebow as well as Monks Cross and whilst the demise of this direct link is unfortunate, there are still travel options available to link the destinations.
26. Any action to re-route service 5 would undoubtedly cause inconvenience to the passengers currently boarding and alighting the service in St Leonard's

Place who would either experience a reduction or complete withdrawal of their service.

27. It is also important to stress that the current route provides good connections to York Minster, the Central Post Office, Council Offices at St Leonard's Place, the Theatre Royal, the Central library and City Art Gallery, to name but a few. Any change to the route would make these destinations less easily accessible.

Corporate Priorities

28. Support for the bus services in this area would contribute to the following Corporate priorities:
- **Sustainable City** - There is considerable scope for reducing vehicle congestion delay on the overall network through greater bus use, thereby reducing the associated adverse affects, such as air pollution.
 - **Inclusive city** – The introduction of a range of sustainable bus routes across South Bank and Bishopthorpe Road increases access to opportunities and facilities by a wider (and potentially cheaper) range of travel choices.
29. Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2): Support for the services outlined above would contribute to several of the aims of the second Local Transport Plan, namely:
- To tackle congestion
 - To improve economic performance in a sustainable manner;
 - To enhance opportunities for all community members, including disadvantaged groups, to play an active part in society;
 - To reduce the impact of traffic and travel on the environment, including air quality, noise and the use of non-renewable resources.

Implications

- **Financial**

There are no financial implications with regard to the recommended option. There is no budget available to support any new service that would require a subsidy.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

There are no HR implications

- **Equalities**

There are no equalities issues except to note that the Council cannot force a bus operator (whether First or any other) to introduce or enhance bus services.

- **Legal**
There are no Legal implications
- **Crime and Disorder**
There are no Crime and Disorder implications
- **Information Technology (IT)**
There are no IT implications
- **Property**
There are no Property implications
- **Other**
There are no other implications

Risk Management

30. There are no known risks.

Contact Details

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Report Approved



Date

17 December 2009

Wards Affected: Holgate, Guildhall, Micklegate, Heworth, Huntington & New Earswick, Strensall

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Front cover of the submitted petition