

ANNEX B - Responses from ward members

The following email was sent to all of the councillors representing wards in the York Outer constituency:

Dear Councillors,

A petition was received by the Council shortly before the general election signed by 529 residents of the York Outer constituency. The petition made three requests:

- 1) For a freeze in First York bus fares until June 2011*
- 2) For an end to First York bus cuts*
- 3) For a review to be undertaken of all bus services to ensure that villages in Outer York have sufficient access to bus routes.*

The first two issues are largely a matter for First York to address but, as is usual practice when a petition is received, a report is presented to the relevant Executive Member.

To this end, your views on bus service provision to your area of Outer York would be much appreciated. Next year the Council will be re-tendering a majority of its subsidised bus network. Do you believe that a review of services which informs the tender process would be the best approach, or are you of the view that there are specific circumstances where action needs to be taken more swiftly?

Many thanks,

*Andrew Bradley,
Principal Transport Planner (Operations),
Transport Planning,
City of York Council*

The following responses have been received:

- 1) Cllr. K Hyman, Huntington & New Earswick

The main service for Huntington is the number 5 and has been a constant source of complaints for the last few years. The main service through New Earswick has not attracted any as far as I am aware.

The 5 was set up a few years ago as a 10 minute service which was subsequently changed to 12 and then to the current 15. Despite this there are regular complaints about buses not turning up or running late or 2 arriving at the same time. I have suffered all 3 of these incidents and yet I rarely use the service as I cannot rely on it to get me to my destination on time. Currently the service is being cut back further. Firstly it only runs hourly after, I'm not 100% sure of the time but it's around, 8.00pm and the last service was after midnight and is now 1 hour earlier.

In the mornings during school term time the buses are overcrowded and difficult for commuters to use as they are full of children who cannot get to the largest school in York any other way.

The text service for arrival of the next bus certainly didn't work when I tried it. I was informed that the next bus was at 3.30am. I then rang for a taxi only for a bus to arrive late even when it was the last one of the evening.

The other major complaint, which has been partially addressed, is that the bus didn't go to the station. Now 2 an hour do but people don't know which ones they are and if they are running late or out of sequence it is still unsatisfactory.

Overall this service fails.

The removal of the number 13 has caused inconvenience to older members of the community who used it from New Lane into the city centre. They are not all strong enough to walk to Huntington Road in the hope of getting the number 15.

The other bus, whose number escapes me, is currently subsidised by COYC and is due to be withdrawn when the contract ends next year.

The Park & Ride proves popular with those who are able to drive there from fairly short distances and this has no doubt reduced the usage of the New Lane routes.

Hope this helps

2) Cllr. K Orrell, Huntington & New Earswick

'I agree with all of that'. (With reference to Cllr. Hyman's email)

3) Cllr. J Watt, Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton

'My concern relates to the number 22 Pullman service that serves Skelton. Notwithstanding we also have a limited service from 2 other operators down the A19, the current 22 service is adequate and swift review action is not required, provided the 22 service is secure pending the tender review.

The 22 covers the daily commute periods, mornings and afternoons. This is a vital service for our rural community and although, as I understand it, this is the most subsidised service in York, it must be maintained. When the 22 service was partially restored following its withdrawal by First York, I did have complaints from residents in the Rawcliffe area who wanted buses either earlier in the day or throughout the evenings. I do not support this - the Council cannot be expected to subsidise the work travel, for example, of someone with an early start in Leeds or a few individuals who want cheap travel for their social arrangements in York centre one or 2 nights per week. If we did this we really would have an empty bus running too often.

Focus should be on the forthcoming tender review. It is frustrating that Skelton has a Park & Ride just one mile down the A19. It would be useful if the review could examine extending some of the service from the P&R up to the village. A loop round Skelton once or twice per hour would reduce the number of Skelton residents driving to the P&R and could remove the need for the subsidised 22 service. You'll tell me there is some rule against this?'

4) Cllr. A Reid, Dringhouses & Woodthorpe

Generally the bus service for Dringhouses and Woodthorpe is acceptable.

Tadcaster Rd is very well served. Changes to the service that serves the Middlethorpe estate area to ensure that it is retained are welcome. This is a much appreciated service by those who use it.

Part of the ward is covered by service 4.

Woodthorpe is reasonably well served with the only concerns expressed from time to time being should the service go via Stonebow or the Theatre.

Alness Drive area is the worse served but even that now has the 26.

Residents make use of both the P & R service and the Coastliner, either walking, cycling or driving to Tesco.

I have had no particular complaints about the service recently although there are usually some grumblings when the fares rise. Being part of the urban area we have a better service than the villages.

Cllr Sunderland is a regular bus user herself and might have some comments from a user perspective.

5) Cllr. I Gillies, Rural West York

'I am happy that the 20 continues to be subsidised, although a further alteration to the route, from Clifton Moor, down Wigginton Road past the hospital, and back up Haxby Road, would be welcomed, to service those in Poppleton, Rawcliffe, and Haxby, plus the Rawcliffe Park and Ride, to access the Hospital easily.

The only other issue is the diversion of the Ripon bus through Upper Poppleton to serve Station Road.

It is still annoying that having promised a 15 minute number 10 service, First have reduced it to 30 minute frequency, and still stand for up to 10 minutes at the Lord Nelson.'

6) Cllr. J Galvin, Bishopthorpe

'Thank you for email, I would have thought that a review of services which informs the tender process would be the best approach.'

7) Cllr. P Healey, Rural West York

'The critical wording in point 3 would be 'sufficient!' I'm sure Temple Lane and Drome Rd wouldn't agree that no service was adequate but is Dial-A-Ride sufficient. In my opinion it probably is and increasingly in theirs too.

So in conclusion I'd have to agree that current services are sufficient given their affordability.'

8) Cllr. S Wiseman, Strensall

'With regard to the No. 5 route I would favour a review of this service as it is sporadic (certainly not to timetable) during the day. Rush hours are apparently covered quite well but reports of waiting times between services is sometimes up to 40minutes during the day and often two busses will arrive together.

As the Ward Councillor I find it increasingly inconvenient to rely on the bus to bring me to the Guildhall and therefore made reliant on my car which is not in line with our policies of keeping cars out of the city.

The population of villages such as Strensall has multiplied enormously over the past decade with many elderly residents who rely on the bus to bring them to York's facilities.

As an example. This morning I waited 30minutes for a bus in Strensall and it was full and remained full into the city centre. Many occupants had waited a long time for this service.

I would support an in-depth review before the tendering process takes place.'

9) Cllr. M. Kirk, Strensall

'As a ward councillor who lives in Strensall and uses the bus from time to time I, and residents are generally very happy with the service. Exceptions to this are delays in buses arriving due to traffic delays from the City. It would be useful to have arrival signs such as that on Water End which advise passengers of the time of the next bus. Is this something that could be funded from ward committee funding?'