

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Full Council Motion - ftr Concerns

Summary

- 1 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council on 29th June 2006 by Cllr. Simpson-Laing and Cllr. Merrett. The motion concerns the partnership agreement between City of York Council and First York with regard to the ftr. The motion requests that officers:-
 - Ensure that ticketing difficulties, including the issue of 'Family Tickets' and the inability of the ticket machines to give change are sorted out as a matter of urgency so that York residents are not financially penalised when using the service.
 - That City of York Council ask First to retain conductors on board or allow contact between passengers and drivers when there are payment difficulties or access / destination issues particularly for those with disabilities.
- 2 This report seeks to clarify the current position and provide an update on relevant issues as under Standing Order 11, that the motion stand referred for the preparation of an Officer report and subsequent consideration by the Executive, without substantive debate at this meeting.

Background

- 3 ftr is the new concept in public transport that was introduced by First York in partnership with City of York Council in May 2006 on the Service 4 bus route between York University, the City Centre and Acomb. ftr seeks to encourage increased use of public transport in preference to the private car by moving away from the image of a conventional bus service. Service 4 is operated on a commercial basis by First York and as such, City of York Council has no control over service operation but can seek to influence First through the Heads of Terms Agreement.
- 4 Critical to the success of ftr is changing the way that people view public transport. In order to develop a mode of transport that provides an attractive alternative to the private car it is necessary to provide comfortable, punctual and reliable services which both reduce journey times and are easy to use.

- 5 The ftr is a pilot scheme and it was inevitable that changes and improvements would be required after the launch in May 2006. City of York works in partnership with all bus operators in the city which means that we regularly discuss issues of concern and resolve difficulties.
- 6 A partnership approach was adopted for ftr in York. Prior to the introduction of ftr, City of York Council and First York signed a Heads of Terms agreement. The agreement broadly outlines the commitment and responsibilities of both parties to the project.
- 7 The council is committed to improvements in public transport through the Local Transport Plan. City of York Council is committed to ensuring that ftr is a success. Officers from the council have met and continue to meet with senior personnel within First Group and the operations team at First York on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to both service operation and policy. Regular meetings take place to monitor progress and provide feedback.
- 8 Following the introduction of ftr, council officers fully understand that issues relating to ticketing that have caused concern and have been continually working with First to resolve these issues.
- 9 In developing the ftr concept a decision was taken by First Group, following the successful Transport for London (TfL) model to encourage Pay Before You Board (PBYB) off bus ticketing. PBYB ticketing offers reduced journey times through decreasing stop dwell times and should allow for a wider range of tickets, tailored to individual need, to be offered away from the vehicle.
- 10 In developing PBYB ticketing policies it is necessary to make it more advantageous for passengers to purchase tickets before they board the vehicle. This is done through offering easily accessible tickets at a discounted rate away from the vehicle (such as at 'Paypoint' Outlets and via the mobile phone barcode ticket). There have been teething problems with some elements of the technology surrounding ticketing. Officers are currently in discussion with First Group about future ticketing availability and policy. These include the provision of on street ticketing machines allowing passengers to purchase tickets using cash. Additionally, First Group are investigating modifications to Cityspace units to accept bank card and mobile phone transactions.

Update

- 11 As part of the ftr pilot scheme a decision was taken by First Group to introduce only a limited amount of on board tickets in order to reduce the complexity of the ticket machine. Following feedback from customers and representation by City of York Council, a family ticket, priced at £6.00 is currently under development and will be available in 'Paypoint' Outlets from October 2006.

- 12 As detailed in paragraph 9, the purchase of tickets away from the vehicle is critical to the success and future development of the service. Initial teething problems are being addressed by First Group and both City of York Council and First Group are confident that PBYB ticketing will soon be commonplace. First Group have made a decision that the ticket machines will not be modified to issue change in an effort to encourage PBYB ticketing. Officers are working with First Group on publicity issues to ensure that PBYB ticketing is more effectively communicated to the public.
- 13 As detailed above, the encouragement and promotion of PBYB ticketing is critical to the success and development of ftr in the city and this process may be compromised through the use of conductors issuing tickets. The Council however have a commitment from First York that additional 'Queue Busters' will be introduced on street to issue tickets at busy stops at peak times prior to the introduction of on street ticket machines at 12 key stops. It is anticipated that ticket machines will be implemented in February 2007. The mobile phone 'M' barcode ticket will be available from October 2006 and will be heavily promoted amongst the student community.
- 14 First Group are investigating on vehicle instructions to ensure passengers are clear on how to use the service. This will reduce the need for passengers requiring instructions from the 'pilot'. Essential contact between passengers and 'pilots' when there are payment difficulties is possible via the intercom system located adjacent the ticket machine. Additionally the 'pilot' has full CCTV coverage of the vehicles and is willing (as with any other service) to assist passengers if necessary. Route information is clearly displayed throughout the vehicle along with 'Next Stop' electronic displays.

Consultation

- 15 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council No consultation has been required, or undertaken as part of this report.

Options

- 16 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council. No options have been required or considered as part of this report.

Analysis

- 17 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council. No analysis has been required or considered as part of this report.

Corporate Priorities

- 18 The ftr is contributing to the following Corporate Aims:

Corporate Aim 1: Take Pride in the City, by improving quality and sustainability, creating a clean and safe environment.

The scheme encourages modal shift to ftr, a more sustainable form of transport rather than driving into and around the city.

Corporate Aim 4: Create a safe city through transparent partnership working with other agencies and the local communities.

The scheme, implemented through effective partnership working is contributing to making York's roads safer by reducing traffic.

Corporate Aim 5: Work with others to improve the health, well-being and independence of York residents.

The scheme is improving air quality through a reduction in congestion.

Local Transport Plan (LTP) : ftr contributes to several of the aims and objectives outlined in the Council's Local Transport Plan relating to a reduction in congestion and improvement to air quality and accessibility.

Implications

Financial

- 19 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council. There are no financial implications.

Human Resources (HR)

- 20 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council. There are no human resources implications.

Equalities

- 21 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council. There are no equalities implications.

Legal

- 22 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council. There are no legal implications.

Crime and Disorder

- 23 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council. There are no issues relating to crime and disorder.

Information Technology (IT)

- 24 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council. There are no issues relating to information technology.

Property

25 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council.
There are no issues relating to property.

Other

26 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council.
There are no other issues to report.

Risk Management

27 This report has been published in response to a motion at Full Council.
There are no issues relating to risk management to report.

Recommendations

28 It is recommended that Members note the explanations detailed within the report.

Reason: In line with constitutional requirements to report back from Council.

Contact Details

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Report Approved

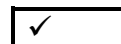


Date 04/09/2006

Specialist Implications Officer(s) None

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

None