
Decision Session - Executive Member for City Strategy

2nd June 2009

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Petition for Bus Service along Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe

Summary

1. The report considers a petition presented to Council earlier this year seeking retention of a bus service along Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe.

Recommendation

2. The Executive Member is asked to consider taking no action, other than to continue to seek to persuade First York Ltd. to extend their commercial Bus Service 13 beyond its current terminus into Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe.

Reason: That this potentially offers the most cost effective means of providing a more convenient bus service for the residents of the Temple Lane area of Copmanthorpe than currently exists, as it is unlikely to involve the Council in additional expenditure disproportionate to the scale of the problem.

Background

3. The Council has provided limited subsidised bus services along Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe since March 1997, following the withdrawal of bus services run commercially by the then main provider of bus services in the City, Rider York Ltd. These have run infrequently, during off peak periods only, to cater for the travel needs of people who would otherwise have suffered social exclusion and have been combined with similar provision for Acaster Malbis.
4. Acaster Malbis has (with Appleton Roebuck & Bolton Percy in North Yorkshire), been linked, historically, via Bishopthorpe to York. Originally, this service was run commercially at infrequent intervals but, since the mid 1990's, has been jointly subsidised by City of York Council and North Yorkshire County Council. People in these villages have predominantly looked towards York & Bishopthorpe for access to local facilities and this is still borne out in the pattern of journeys on the current service.
5. In 2004, the Council decided to withdraw the bus service to Acaster Malbis via Copmanthorpe, which also served Middlethorpe Drive/Middlethorpe Grove, due to budgetary pressures, low patronage volumes, and the availability of alternative services for Acaster Malbis, which met the villagers travel needs

better. This led to a petition containing 135 signatures seeking reinstatement of the service. The outcome was an unpopular Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday only infrequent feeder service (C4) between Acaster Malbis, Temple Lane, and Askham Bar Park & Ride. This in turn was replaced by a through service to York in May 2005 running at similar times. The Executive in July 2008 approved a proposal to withdraw this service (21) in April 2009, in conjunction with improvements to the Bolton Percy – Appleton Roebuck – Acaster Malbis – York service (formerly C1 and now renumbered 21 to reflect its incorporation of the old Service 21 route between Askham Bar and the City Centre).

6. A further petition has now been received, containing 177 signatures from 98 addresses in the Temple Lane area, seeking continuation of bus service provision along Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe. The petitioners case, together with a letter of support from Copmanthorpe Parish Council, accompanies this report as Annex A.
7. Temple Lane runs south eastwards from Copmanthorpe towards Acaster Malbis and extends 2 kilometres (1.25 miles) beyond the terminus of First York Bus Service 13 in Station Road. There are around 120 residential properties in the Temple Lane area, with the majority being in Temple Garth & Drome Road, up to 0.9 kilometres (0.56 miles) away from the First York terminus. The road rises to cross the East Coast Main Line between Temple Garth & Station Road.

Consultation

8. Prior to proposals for change being considered at July 2008 Executive, Parish Councils in villages affected by the planned changes to Services C1 and 21 were consulted. Acaster Malbis responded, indicating it wished both services to remain unchanged, despite being advised that retention of two separate services to the village was considered untenable. Copmanthorpe Parish Council responded, expressing concerns that the proposal for a revised service does not cater for residents of the Temple Lane area of the village. The proposals were developed in conjunction with North Yorkshire County Council, which shares funding for the route to Appleton Roebuck and Bolton Percy.
9. Officers attended a public meeting arranged at a house in Temple Garth on 23 March 2009, with one of the three Ward Councillors, to discuss the revised service and its effect on the local community. The reasoning for the Council decision was explained, but not accepted, and a number of suggested alternative ways of providing a bus service along Temple Lane was put forward by residents. Most of these are considered under “Options” below.
10. Councillors for Rural West York Ward have been invited to comment on this report, but have not yet responded. Any comments received will be reported at the meeting.

Options

11. A bus service could be provided along Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe in one of the following ways, with each option having a cost attached:

- Continue to provide a 2 or 3 day a week link from Acaster Malbis to either Askham Bar or York City Centre
- Extend First York Service 13, either in whole or part, to a new terminus in Temple Lane
- Join First York Service 13 (Monks Cross – Copmanthorpe) to Service 11 (Ashley Park – Bishopthorpe) via Temple Lane and Appleton Road
- Divert some or all Yorkshire Coastliner services from Hallcroft Lane/Top Lane via Copmanthorpe and Bishopthorpe to & from Tadcaster Road
- Revise the new Service 21 to run along Temple Lane and return between Acaster Malbis and Bishopthorpe
- Revise the new Service 21 to run some journeys each day via Bishopthorpe and some journeys via Copmanthorpe
- Revise the new Service 21 to run via Bishopthorpe on some days and Copmanthorpe on others

Alternatively, the Council could decide to take no action to reinstate bus service provision along Temple Lane.

Analysis

12. Surveys carried out on the old Service 21 in 2005, showed 9 passengers out of a total of 44 in a sample day travelling between Temple Lane and York. In June 2006, 4 out of 38 passengers travelled between Temple Lane and Askham Bar. Further surveys carried out in November 2007, showed 8 passengers out of 37 boarding or alighting in Temple Lane, with 6 travelling to or from York and 2 travelling to Copmanthorpe. By contrast, 23 out of 89 passengers in a survey of Service C1 in 2007/8 travelled to or from Bishopthorpe (15 to or from the villages and 8 to or from Askham Bar). Local residents claim that about a dozen residents in the Temple Lane area need to use the bus service to meet their travel needs.
13. Prior to the rationalisation of bus services C1 and 21 implemented in April 2009, based on 2008/9 out-turn data, C1 was catering for 6.1 passengers per bus hour at £1.96 per passenger trip whilst 21 was catering for 10.5 passengers per bus hour at £2.70 subsidy per passenger trip. These figures compare with Council guidelines that services should carry a minimum of 11 passengers per bus hour at not more than £2 per passenger trip to justify continued support. To put these figures into context, the summary table for all subsidised services is attached to this report as Annex C. An independent review of subsidised bus services carried out by Halcrow and reported to Executive in January 2009, identified both of these services as representing questionable value for money.
14. A price has been sought from a supplier with resources available to provide a limited serviced between Acaster Malbis and Askham Bar. This is similar to the saving made by discontinuation of the old service 21 (£22,000 per annum). This

could be reduced pro rata by provision on two rather than three days. Alternative quotations sought recently from taxi/minibus operators for an off-peak public transport service elsewhere in the City were significantly more expensive than the price quoted by the same bus service operator. The price quoted is not considered to offer good value for money due to the small number of passengers likely to use the service, which would largely replicate the former unpopular C4 Park & Ride feeder. Using available information, it is estimated that subsidy per passenger journey is likely to be well over £20.

15. First York has been asked to consider extension of Service 13 into Temple Lane. It has reservations about the effects on timekeeping and on passengers boarding in Flaxman Croft on outward journeys for onward travel to York (buses do not call at Flaxman Croft York-bound). It also has reservations about terminal arrangements, which may involve reversing into Moor Lane. A decision on whether or not this is acceptable or avoidable is still awaited. It has also not been made clear what, if any, payment by the Council would be needed to secure the route extension.
16. Joining Services 11 and 13 together would require additional resources, which First York would certainly expect the Council to fund. The original decision to break this link in 1997 was to reduce the resources employed, which were not generating enough income to cover their costs. The issue about serving Flaxman Croft and similar issues for Keble Park in Bishopthorpe would also need to be resolved.
17. Yorkshire Coastliner has been asked to consider diversion of some of its commercial services via Temple Lane and has emphatically refused to do so. It is competing with rail services, and more recently First York, for York to Leeds passengers and with rail services for Leeds to Malton and East Coast passengers and does not want to risk loss of competitive edge for the business it is likely to gain by the diversion.
18. None of the three proposals to modify the new Service 21 are considered to be in the best interests of the services. A diversion along Temple Lane and back would add time to the schedule, which could not be accommodated without abandoning another part of the route. The least damaging withdrawal would probably be between Stonebow/Piccadilly and Foss Bank. However, the opportunity to travel to Sainsbury's or Morrisons is already attracting interest and some journeys. The diversion would also lengthen journey times with the risk of making the service less attractive to some passengers and potential passengers elsewhere on the route. Either of the two alternate route options would also detract from the provision of a straightforward service, and reduce its convenience for journeys which occur demonstrably more often than journeys to and from Temple Lane.
19. If no action is taken, Temple Lane will have no conventional local bus service. This is likely to cause some hardship and inconvenience for the small number of, mainly elderly, residents who rely on the bus service to maintain an independent lifestyle. The Council's Dial & Ride Service is available to help them meet some of their travel needs. The available journey options are shown in Annex B to this report. There has been resistance in the local community to acceptance of Dial & Ride as a satisfactory alternative to a regular bus service

and one resident who has used the service has expressed dissatisfaction with the experience of using it. It was felt that the driver was struggling with the schedule, due to the number and distribution of calls to pick up and set down passengers, there was not enough time allowed in the City Centre to complete all intended business, and the return journey, in the rear seats, was considered uncomfortable.

Corporate Priorities

20. Support for the bus services contributes 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 provision of a range of sustainable bus routes increases access to opportunities and facilities by a wider (and potentially cheaper) range of travel choices.
21. Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2): Support for bus services contributes 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

- 22.
- **Financial** – Any action taken, which incurs additional cost for the Council will erode the planned saving of £22,000 per annum achieved by the bus service rationalisation. Depending on which option, if any, is progressed, the cost could easily exceed the original saving on a budget which has been subject recently to severe upward pressure.
 - **Human Resources (HR)** – Any action recommended to provide a replacement bus service will add unplanned activity to the workload in the Council's Transport Planning Unit.
 - **Equalities** – Taking no action will lead to a small number of people experiencing increased social exclusion.
 - **Other** – There are no other known implications.

Risk Management

23. The risk/s associated with the recommendation of this report are assessed at a net level below 16.

Contact Details

Terry Walker
Public Transport Planner
Directorate of City Strategy
Ext. 1403

Damon Copperthwaite
Assistant Director (City Development & Transport)
Directorate of City Strategy
Report Approved **Date** 19.05.09

Specialist Implications Officer

Financial
Patrick Looker
Finance Manager – Env & Develop, Resources & Business Management, City Strategy

Tel No.Ext. 1633

Wards Affected: Rural York West

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Ticket sales data provided by contractors providing bus services C1 and 21

Sample passenger surveys carried out on bus services C1 and 21 by Council staff.

Service C1 and 21 Contract files

Annexes

Annex A – Petition Header Sheets

Annex B – Council Dial & Ride Service timetable for Copmanthorpe Area

Annex C – Summary of cost & performance, All Council Subsidised Bus Services July 2008.

Annex D – Sample Passenger Data

Annex E - Passenger Journey Analysis for a sample day