

---

**Decision Session – Cabinet Member for  
Transport, Planning & Sustainability****15 January 2013****Local Bus Service Changes****Summary**

1. City of York Council procures local bus services to operate at times of the day (or week), or in parts of the Authority area, where no commercially viable bus service exists. Where commercial services do exist (i.e. those that are operated by private companies but are neither contracted nor funded by the local authority), the Council engages with the operators with the aim of enhancing service standards.
2. To ensure that York's bus service best meets the needs of its passengers, City of York Council will work with bus operators through the York Quality Bus Partnership to consult with the general public on any proposals to alter routes and in the interests of making general improvements to the bus network. Following consideration of this report, the approved recommendations will, therefore, be presented to the public for consultation in advance of any exercise to procure or to withdraw bus services.
3. This report seeks the consideration of the Cabinet member on four specific issues:
  - a) To approve the re-tendering of routes 21 (Colton–Acaster Malbis–Askham Bar–York) and 35 (Holme on Spalding Moor–Wheldrake–York).
  - b) To consider the future of two services procured on an 'emergency' basis that commenced operation on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2012. These are routes 14 (Beckfield Lane–Boroughbridge Road–York) and 15 (South Bank–Bishopthorpe Road–York).
  - c) To consider the future of routes 24 and 26 (Askham Bar–Acomb Leeman Road–York–Fordlands Road, Fulford).

- d) To consider what action the Council should take in response to four petitions lodged concerning First Group's commercially operated bus network:
  - i. Route 5 (Strensall–Huntington–York–Acomb) from Huntington residents;
  - ii. Route 12 (Woodthorpe–Tadcaster Road–York–Heworth–Monks Cross) from Woodthorpe and Dringhouses residents;
  - iii. Route 13 (Copmanthorpe–Tadcaster Road–York–Haxby–West Nooks) – two petitions have been received, one from Copmanthorpe residents, the other from Haxby residents.
- e) The report considers the performance of each of the services and provides options for the Cabinet Member to consider for the continuation, alteration or cessation of services.

## **Recommendations**

- 4. Subject to consultation, the Cabinet Member for City Strategy is provisionally recommended to:
  - a. Support the re-tendering of services on routes 21 and 35 and, subject to the resulting tenders being within budgetary constraints, agree to the award of contracts for these routes.
  - b. Support the re-tendering for replacement services on revised routes 24/26/627/637 and to provide a Monday to Saturday, hourly daytime service to the South Bank area of York. Subject to the resulting tenders being within budgetary constraints, agree to the award of contracts for these routes.
  - c. Support the withdrawal of Council subsidy for services on route 14 due to poor usage.
  - d. Continue to work with First Group to deliver reliability improvements across their network of services.
  - e. To work with First Group, Yorkshire Coastliner and the other York bus operators to increase the number of people using local bus services, to improve the commercial viability of bus services and to meet the Council's wider transport policy objectives.

- f. To consult with the general public on the recommendations listed above, both online and at a public meeting.

Reason: This course of action will allow the Council to continue to work towards its stated aim of delivering a significant improvement to the bus network whilst at the same time ensuring that resources are spent in line with the Council's stated criteria for the funding of public bus services.

## **Background**

5. The City of York and surrounds benefit from a comprehensive network of bus services, a majority of which (80%+) are operated without subsidy from the Council. All of the bus routes in York are operated by private sector companies who are free to decide how they will run any services not requiring financial support. This includes the freedom to set the bus route, where the bus will stop, the timetable and fares charged.
6. The Council has powers, contained in the 1985 and 2008 Transport Acts, to provide subsidies for bus services where, in its view, there is a transport need that is currently not being met through commercially operated services. For the services it procures, the Council defines the route, stopping points, frequency and operating hours of the service. The Council also monitors the performance of each service.
7. Under legislation laid, the Council is permitted to award a proportion of its bus services without going out to tender. This is known as 'De-minimis' funding and usually applies when the sums of money are relatively modest, or where the majority of the daily or weekly timetable is operated without subsidy, but there are a number of journeys (usually operating on an evening or Sunday) that require subsidy.
8. Over ninety five percent of local bus services currently operated under contract to the Council have been subject to an open tendering process. This ensures that, as a result of a weighted evaluation of bids, best value and quality are delivered for the residents of York.

## **Routes 21 and 35**

9. This report asks the Cabinet Member to consider the re-tender of two routes, both of which were last subject to tender in 2009 and

currently operate as per table 1 below and shown on a map at Annex E:

**Table 1**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Frequency/hours of operation</b>	<b>Current operator</b>
<b>21</b>	Colton – Bolton Percy – Acaster Malbis – Bishopthorpe – Askham Bar – Dringhouses – South Bank – Rail station – Stonebow – Foss Islands Retail Park	Two hourly, Mon – Sat	Harrogate Coach Travel (Connexions – with Council subsidy)
<b>35</b>	Holme on Spalding Moor – Thorganby – Wheldrake – Fulford – York Piccadilly	Two hourly, Mon – Sat with evening journeys Fri/Sat	Yorkshire Coastliner (with Council subsidy)

10. City of York Council procures these services jointly on behalf of North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) for route 21 and jointly on behalf of both NYCC and East Riding of York Council (ERYC) for route 35. The cost of the services is split between the authorities, according to the proportion of operated mileage falling in each Authority area.

### **Routes 24 and 26**

11. Routes 24 and 26 currently operate as per table 2 below and on a map at Annex J. Services on these routes are also linked to the operation of school bus services on routes 627 and 637 and are covered by the same contract. However, these services are not directly affected by the changes outlined and the recommendations made in this report.

**Table 2**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Frequency/hours of operation</b>	<b>Current operator</b>
<b>24</b>	Fordlands Rd – Fulford Rd – Broadway – Fishergate –	Hourly, Mon – Sat	Yorkshire Coastliner

	Picadilly – Rougier Street – Leeman Road – Lindsey Avenue – Carr Lane – Green Lane (Acomb) – Cornlands Rd		(with Council subsidy)
<b>26</b>	Fordlands Rd – Fulford Rd – Broadway – Fishergate – Piccadilly – Rougier Street – Leeman Rd –Boroughbridge Rd–Beckfield Lane – Green Lane (Acomb) – Ascot Way – Cornlands Rd – Foxwood – Woodthorpe – Askham Bar	Hourly, Mon – Sat	Yorkshire Coastliner (with Council subsidy)
<b>627</b>	The Stonebow – Heworth – Ashley Park – Melrosegate – Beeswing – Heslington Hall – Fulford School	School journeys only	Yorkshire Coastliner (with Council subsidy)
<b>637</b>	The Stonebow – Heworth – Ashley Park – Tang Hall Lane – Archbishop Holgate's School	School journeys only	Yorkshire Coastliner (with Council subsidy)

12. Following an open tendering exercise in 2011, Yorkshire Coastliner (part of the Veolia Transdev group) was awarded the contract for routes 24 and 26. The annual cost to the Council of providing these two routes is £155,000.
13. During the course of late 2011 and 2012, First Group re-routed two of its commercially operated bus services and introduced a third. Following these changes, many of the roads served by routes 24 and 26 in the Leeman Road – Askham Bar area now duplicate commercial services. Services on routes 627 and 637 were not affected by these changes.

### **Route 15**

14. Routes 11, 11a and 15 currently operate as per table 3 below and shown on a map at Annex F.

*Table 3*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Frequency/hours of operation</b>	<b>Current operator</b>
<b>11</b>	Ashley Park – Heworth East Parade – York – Station – Bishopthorpe Road – Bishopthorpe	Half hourly, Mon – Sat	First Group (commercially operated)
<b>11a</b>	York – Station - Bishopthorpe Road – South Bank loop – Bishopthorpe Road – Bishopthorpe	Hourly, Sundays	Yorkshire Coastliner (with Council subsidy)
<b>15</b>	South Bank loop – Bishopthorpe Rd shops – York – Station – Bishopthorpe Rd shops – South Bank loop	Half hourly, Mon – Sat	First Group (with Council subsidy)

15. In October 2012, First Group implemented a wide-ranging review of its commercially operated network of services. One of the desired outcomes of the review was to deliver improvements to a number of routes that, hitherto, had developed a reputation for poor reliability at certain times.
16. Route 11 (see Table 3, above) was one of the routes that it struggled to operate reliably. First Group advised that, to improve reliability affordably for the majority of the route (and hopefully to improve the attractiveness of the route for Bishopthorpe residents), it intended to withdraw the ‘South Bank loop’ (see Annex F) from route 11.
17. The Council, in response to significant public concern, negotiated with First Group to provide a new route 15 on a trial basis at an annual equivalent cost of £35,000.
18. First Group has advised the Council that reliability on their commercial route 11 has improved and that they do not intend to re-introduce the South Bank loop to this route.

## **Route 14**

19. Route 14 operates as per table 4 below and as shown on a map at Annex F:

*Table 4*

No.	Route	Frequency/hours of operation	Current operator
<b>14</b>	Acomb shops – Beckfield Lane – Boroughbridge Rd – Poppleton Rd – Station – York – Lawrence Street – Hull Road – York Sport Village	Half hourly, Mon – Sat daytime	First Group (commercially operated)
<b>14</b>	Acomb shops – Beckfield Lane – Boroughbridge Rd – Poppleton Rd – Station – Piccadilly	Hourly, Sundays	First Group (with Council subsidy)
<b>14</b>	Acomb shops – Beckfield Lane – Boroughbridge Rd – Poppleton Rd – Station – Piccadilly	Two early evening return journeys (Mon – Sat)	First Group (with Council subsidy)

20. Route 14 was introduced, following First Group's commercial bus service review, in October 2012. The route provided an improved frequency of service along the section of route common with route 10 (Poppleton – Stamford Bridge) to provide a combined 15 minute frequency during the daytime, Monday – Saturdays. The new route 14 also provides the only current bus link to the 'York Sport Village' at Grimston Bar.
21. As a result of First Group's service review, the Beckfield Lane area of York did, however, see an overall reduction in service. Over the past three years, the commercial bus offer has been gradually reduced with services having declined in stages from every ten to every thirty minutes. As First Group did not propose to introduce an evening or a Sunday service, Beckfield Lane had no bus service at these times.

22. The Council agreed to support evening and Sunday services on route 14 on a trial basis to gauge usage levels at an annual equivalent cost of £36k.

***Petitions concerning routes 5 and 12***

23. Routes 5 and 12 operate as per table 5 below and as shown on a map at Annex G:

***Table 5***

<b>No.</b>	<b>Route</b>	<b>Frequency/hours of operation</b>	<b>Current operator</b>
<b>5</b>	Strensall – Huntingdon – York – Leeman Road – Acomb Shops – Foxwood	Mon – Sat daytime: 15 mins  Sun daytime: 30 mins  Mon – Sun eve & : Hourly	First Group (commercially operated)
<b>12 (pre Oct 2012)</b>	Foxwood - Woodthorpe – Dringhouses – Tadcaster Rd – Station – York – Huntingdon Rd - Wigginton – Haxby West Nooks	Mon – Sat daytime: 30 mins  Sun daytime: Hourly  Mon – Sun eve: Hourly	First Group (commercially – evenings and Sundays with Council subsidy)
<b>12 (post Oct 2012)</b>	Foxwood - Woodthorpe – Dringhouses – Tadcaster Rd – Station – York – Heworth – Monks Cross	Mon – Sat daytime: 30 mins  Sun daytime: Hourly(*)  Mon – Sun eve: Hourly(*)	First Group (commercially – evenings and Sundays with Council subsidy)

(\*) Evening and Sunday journeys operate as per the pre- October 2012 route (ie From Foxwood – Haxby West Nooks)



### **Route 5**

24. A petition was presented to the meeting of all City of York Councillors on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012 by Cllr Orrell on behalf of a number of Huntington residents. The petition is presented at Annex A to this report and states:

*'I/we are concerned that recent changes to the No 5 bus service have made it even more unreliable. We call on First to review and improve this service for local residents.'*

### **Route 12**

25. A petition was presented to the meeting of all City of York councillors on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012 by Cllr Reid on behalf of a number of Dringhouses and Woodthorpe residents. The petition is presented at Annex B to this report and states:

*'I/we, the undersigned, are concerned that recent changes to the No 12 bus service have affected its reliability. We call on First to review and improve the route and timings to help improve this service for local residents.'*

26. Both petitions were received four days after comprehensive changes were made to both the routing and timetable of services 5 and 12. The impact on reliability of the 7<sup>th</sup> October service changes is considered in the 'Analysis' section of this report.

### **Petitions concerning route 13**

27. Routes 13 operates as per table 6 below and as shown on a map at Annex G:

*Table 6*

No.	Route	Frequency/hours of operation	Current operator
<b>13 (pre Oct 2012)</b>	Copmanthorpe – Askham Bar – Tadcaster Rd – Station – Heworth – Monks Cross	Mon – Sat daytime: 30 mins  Sun daytime: Hourly(*)	First Group (commercially – evenings and Sundays with Council subsidy)

<b>13 (post Oct 2012)</b>	Copmanthorpe – Askham Bar – Tadcaster Rd – Station - Huntington Road – Wigginton – Haxby West Nooks	Mon – Sat daytime: Hourly  Sun daytime: Hourly(*)	First Group (commercially – evenings and Sundays with Council subsidy)
---------------------------------------	---	---	---

(\*)Sunday journeys operate as per the pre-October 2012 route (ie from Copmanthorpe – Monks Cross)

### ***Copmanthorpe petition***

28. The Council received a petition from the Copmanthorpe branch of the Yorkshire Countrywomen (forwarded by Copmanthorpe Parish Council) in August 2012.
29. The petition is included as Annex C to this report. The petition objects to the lack of consultation undertaken by First Group with regard to the change of route and the frequency of daytime service to Copmanthorpe (a reduction from every 30 minutes to every hour).

### ***Haxby petition***

30. Cllr Dave Merrett received a petition sent by Jean Nicholls on behalf of a number of residents of Haxby and Wigginton in November 2012. The petition is included as Annex D to this report and states:

*‘We the undersigned, as residents of Haxby & Wigginton wish to protest against the decision by First York to withdraw the No12 bus from serving Haxby & Wigginton, and replace it with a No13 service that only runs every hour.’*

### **Consultation**

#### ***Routes 21 & 35***

31. The views of ward councillors have been sought with regard to any amendments to routes 21 and 35 they may wish to make prior to the services being retendered, if this is the Cabinet Member’s wish.
32. Comments were received from Cllrs Reid, Semlyen and Galvin seeking retention of existing levels of service on route 21.

33. Cllr Hodgson commented that he had received a report of the service missing out the Middlethorpe Estate, an area which both he and Cllr Reid identified as being of importance as it is not served by any other bus. Cllr Hodgson's concern was put to the incumbent operator of route 21, Harrogate Coach Travel, who advised that they were very sorry for this having occurred and confirmed that it was certainly not an approved practice. Harrogate Coach Travel agreed to further investigate the situation and to ensure that it did not happen again.

### **Routes 24 & 26**

34. Further to changes to their commercial network in October 2012, First Group asked the Council to withdraw elements of the publically subsidised service duplicating (and potentially reducing the viability of) its commercially operated services. The operator is within its right to do this. It is at the discretion of the Council to take any action it deems necessary to correct the situation. Table 7 at paragraph 53 identifies sections of common corridor between subsidised and commercial routes.
35. Yorkshire Coastliner also requested that the Council review routes 24 and 26. This is due to the services not carrying the patronage anticipated when the contracts were awarded (due to the increased competition from First Group's services).

### **Routes to be revised/ withdrawn/ re-tendered**

36. As outlined at the outset of this report, a public consultation will be undertaken to inform the detailed service proposals in advance of the implementation of any changes.

### **Route 5**

37. Council officers corresponded with Cllr Orrell in November to clarify when the petition had been collated. Cllr Orrell confirmed that the petition had been completed during the summer before the changes. Cllr Orrell went on to say that

*'The feedback we have so far is that the changes haven't addressed the fundamental problem of reliability & the No 5 losing buses before other routes.'*

This assertion was put to Operations staff at First Group who stated that:

*“The reliability of the service 5 has improved since the October changes, the number 5 service does not suffer from losing buses before other routes”.*

Subsequently, Cllr. Orrell has forwarded a number of emails from residents suggesting that the reliability of service 5 is still unsatisfactory. Two of the emails request enhancements to the service timetable (i.e, more frequent buses). A further email comments on the lack of waiting facilities at the St Leonard's Place bus stop towards Huntington. The facilities at this and neighbouring stops is being reviewed as part of the Better Bus Area Fund and, where possible, shelter facilities will be introduced.

### **Route 13**

38. The Council made representations to First Group prior to the 7<sup>th</sup> October network changes requesting that a half hourly frequency be instated on this route. First Group declined to take the Council's views on board and proceeded to register an hourly service.
39. Representatives from First Group attended a Haxby & Wigginton ward committee meeting in early December. At the meeting residents and ward members discussed various issues about the service. First Group agreed to review the timetable to identify whether there is a cost-effective way of providing additional peak journeys between Haxby West Nooks and the city centre. First Group is not expecting to make significant changes to its timetable as it is mindful of not causing further disruption to passengers and is unlikely to be able to reinstate the previous frequency throughout the day.

### **Options**

40. The following options are presented for the consideration of the Cabinet Member:

### **Route 21**

- a) Issue a competitive tender for route 21 broadly to the current route and timetable and, subject to the resulting tenders being within budgetary constraints, agree to the award of contracts for these routes.

- b) Issue a competitive tender for route 21 with an amended route to incorporate an hourly frequency service between South Bank/Knavesmire Road and York via Bishopthorpe Road.
- c) Cease operation of route 21.

### ***Route 35***

- a) Issue a competitive tender for route 35 broadly to the current route and timetable and, subject to the resulting tenders being within budgetary constraints, agree to the award of contracts for this route.
- b) Cease operation of route 35.

### ***Route 14***

- a) Issue a competitive tender for evening and Sunday services on route 14 and, subject to the resulting tenders being within budgetary constraints, agree to the award of a contract for this route.
- b) Continue to subsidise two evening return journeys on route 14 on a de-minimis basis, but discontinue the Sunday service due to poor usage.
- c) Cease operation of the evening and Sunday subsidised journeys on route 14.

### ***Route 15***

- a) Issue a competitive tender for a Monday – Saturday, 30 minute daytime service as per the current route 15 timetable.
- b) Issue a competitive tender for a Monday – Saturday, hourly daytime service to the South Bank area of York in place of route 15 and, subject to the resulting tenders being within budgetary constraints, agree to the award of a contract for this route.
- c) Cease operation of route 15 and decline to support the competitive tender of a replacement service.

### ***Routes 24/26***

- a) Do nothing (i.e. continue to subsidise the current service provision on these routes as per the current, live, contract).

- b) Issue a competitive tender for a replacement route 24/26 and, at the same time to issue a competitive tender to provide a Monday – Saturday, hourly daytime service to the South Bank area of York in place of route 15 (as outlined at ‘Analysis’ paragraph 52).
- c) Cease operation of route 24 and 26

### ***Routes 5 & 12***

- a) Continue to work with First Group to identify measures that will enable reliability improvements on both routes.

### ***Route 13***

- a) Continue to work with First Group to identify measures that will enable reliability improvements on route 13.
- b) Issue a competitive tender for an hourly service on route 13 to interwork with the commercial hourly service and, subject to the resulting tenders being within budgetary constraints, agree to the award of a contract for this route.

## **Analysis**

### ***Route 35***

- 41. Route 35 provides important, well established, transport links between York and its rural hinterland. It is the only public transport service connecting York to a significant number of villages surrounding the City both within and outside the Authority’s jurisdiction and is jointly funded by East Riding (ERYC), North Yorkshire (NYCC) and City of York councils.
- 42. From 2006 to 2008, First Group ran route 35 (then numbered the 18) on a commercial basis. Unfortunately the company was unable to continue to do so and the route was subjected to competitive tender. The route has subsequently been operated by York Pullman and latterly, by Yorkshire Coastliner.
- 43. In considering whether or not to subsidise a particular bus route, City of York Council employs criteria of a maximum subsidy of £2 per passenger carried and a minimum number of 9 passengers carried per bus hour operated.
- 44. A review of patronage data over 2012 reveals that route 35 operates at a subsidy cost of £0.58 per passenger (a slight

improvement on the previous year) and with 14 passengers travelling per bus hour.

45. East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) is currently considering a possible extension of the route from Holme on Spalding Moor to Market Weighton. This would see the merger of two routes currently funded by ERYC and any such extension to the route will be funded by ERYC.
46. Subject to confirmation of support from NYCC and ERYC it is proposed that a competitive tender is issued for route 35 broadly based on the current timetable.

### **Route 21**

47. In common with route 35, route 21 provides important, well established, transport links between York and its rural hinterland and is jointly funded by North Yorkshire County and City of York councils.
48. Route 21 operates at a subsidy cost of £1.84 per passenger and with 10 passengers travelling per bus hour.
49. Option B for route 21, outlined at paragraph 40 above, would result in the introduction of a two hourly service between South Bank and York, interworked with the existing two hourly service along the whole length of the route (from York – Colton). This would deliver an hourly service on the common section of route.
50. Whilst this may appear an attractive option, it could be unattractive for the following reasons:
  - a. Unreliability on the section of route between South Bank and York may have a negative impact on the reliability of the longer journeys.
  - b. The route is currently operated using one vehicle to an efficient schedule. A 'short' variant would require an additional vehicle with which the same efficiencies could not be achieved (leaving a significant amount of time when the bus would be waiting for its next journey).

Officers would therefore propose that the hourly link between South Bank and York is tendered as a distinct contractual 'lot'. This would

provide bus operators with the opportunity to interwork with other services if the opportunity arises.

51. Subject to support from NYCC, officers therefore propose that route 21 is subject to competitive tender on the basis of the existing timetable. Any draft timetable issued as part of the tendering process for the other service to operate in South Bank should be constructed in such a way that the two services complement rather than compete with one another. Further, both of these services should seek to complement rather than compete with First Group's services on route 11 where possible.

### ***Route 24/26***

52. The background information for the current situation concerning routes 24 and 26 is outlined at paragraphs 11, 34 and 35.
53. Table 7 below summarises the sections of common route between routes 24/26 and the commercially operated network.

*Table 7*

<b>Duplicate section</b>	<b>Current route</b>	<b>Provided by?</b>
Askham Bar – Foxwood Lane	26	First – 12
Cornlands Rd – Acomb	24	First – 5
Beckfield Lane – Water End	26	First – 14
Carr Lane top – Leeman Rd - Station Road	24/26	First – 5
York – Fulford	24/26	Arriva - 415

54. Table 8 below highlights the sections of route unique to routes 24/26:



*Table 8*

<b>Unique sections</b>	<b>Current route</b>
St Stephen's Road	26
Kingsway West/ Ascot Way	26
Carr Lane	24
Lindsey Avenue – Grantham Drive	24
Broadway – Heslington Lane	24/26
Fulford, Fordlands Road	24/26

55. The constrained make up of York's road network means that it would be impossible for bus routes not to duplicate one another to some extent. Officers recommend, however, terminating the current route 24/26 contract and re-tendering for a revised contract.
56. It is proposed that the revised contract will retain the current frequency of service on the route currently enjoyed. A plan of the proposed route 24 (and of a revised route 15) is shown at Annex H. As part of the revised route, it is also possible to provide an hourly service linking Fulford to Heslington Hall (as previously provided by route 20). The routes are provisionally numbered 15, 24, and 27 on the map at Annex H. Further information concerning route 15 can be found at paragraphs 63 to 66 of this report.

### **Route 14**

57. As outlined earlier in this report, route 14 was introduced on 7<sup>th</sup> October and operates Monday to Saturday daytimes on a commercial basis.
58. At the request of residents and local ward councillors, officers procured two early evening Monday - Saturday return trips between Beckfield Lane and York city centre and an hourly daytime service on a Sunday between the same points.
59. Officers have analysed the evening and Sunday patronage data for these journeys, based on ticket machine data supplied by First

Group and supported by on-bus patronage counts undertaken by the Council's bus monitoring clerk.

60. The evening journeys are provided at a subsidy cost of £4.18 per passenger and with 4.2 passengers travelling per bus hour both of which are outside of the Council's criteria for support and hence the service is not delivering value for money.
61. Officers recommend that the Council no longer continues to subsidise these journeys.
62. The Sunday journeys are provided at a subsidy cost of £3.45 per passenger and with 11.6 passengers travelling per bus hour. As the cost per passenger carried is outside the Council's criteria for subsidy, it is recommended that the current 'de-minimis' arrangement is ceased and that no replacement is procured.

### ***Route 15***

63. As outlined earlier in this report, services were introduced on route 15 from 7<sup>th</sup> October in response to a commercial decision by First Group to withdraw its commercial services on route 11 from the South Bank loop. The service operates Monday to Saturday daytimes. Evening and Sunday journeys are provided by routes 11 and 11a respectively.
64. Route 15 is provided at a subsidy cost of £0.75 per passenger and with 14.0 passengers travelling per bus hour. The route therefore meets both of the Council's criteria for continued subsidy.
65. Whilst the subsidy figures meet with the Council's criteria, the current level of subsidy is not sufficient for First Group to continue to operate the route on the current basis. The Council believes that a far more significant subsidy would ordinarily be required to provide a service of this order on this length of route. Officers therefore believe that the current arrangements are not sustainable in the long term.
66. The projected cost of a continued half hourly service may prove unaffordable. For this reason, officers recommend that a competitive tendering exercise is undertaken and prices are sought for an hourly service between South Bank and York in line with other contracted services but that bidders are allowed to submit prices for an enhanced frequency. This would allow the Council to continue to provide the best possible service from within its budget.

It would also allow the bidding companies the freedom to determine how to interwork the vehicles used on the South Bank loop with other routes.

### ***Route 5***

67. The route taken by service 5 was altered at its Acomb end on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2012 as part of changes undertaken by First Group to its commercially operated bus network. Route 5 has and continues to operate on a wholly commercial basis at all times and operates a 15 minute service throughout the day.
68. The real time passenger information for route 5 shows that there has been a significant improvement in the reliability of the service since the October changes, with October–December consistently showing less variation from the timetable than July–September did.

### ***Route 12***

69. In common with route 5, route 12 is also operated on a commercial basis during the daytime, Monday to Saturday. First Group altered the route in October, as outlined at table 5 earlier in the report.
70. The real time passenger information for route 12 shows that the reliability across the service has improved, particularly in the evening peak.

### ***Route 13***

71. Unlike routes 5 and 12, route 13 saw a reduction in frequency as a result of the 7<sup>th</sup> October network changes (from every 30 minutes to hourly). Following local representations, First Group is reviewing the timetable to identify whether there is a cost-effective way of providing additional peak journeys between Haxby West Nooks and the city centre. First Group is not expecting to make significant changes to its timetable as it is mindful of not causing further disruption to passengers and is unlikely to be able to reinstate the previous frequency throughout the day.
72. As route 13 is operated on a commercial basis, it is the view of officers that to provide an additional half hourly, Council subsidised service, would only serve to undermine the viability of the commercial hourly service. Although an additional subsidised service would give existing passengers more journey options, it would be unlikely to increase overall patronage as it would not serve

any new destinations. In addition, if First Group determine that route 13 is no longer commercially viable, the Council would have to step in to provide a subsidised service. It is likely that this would be operated on an hourly frequency.

73. In common with routes 5 and 12 above, officers propose to monitor the routes and to assist First Group in any way possible to continue to improve bus punctuality. Further, it is proposed that the Council should work with First to identify measures which might enable the reinstatement of a higher frequency service on the route (e.g. improvements delivering more efficient traffic signals along the line of route or support for campaigns to encourage greater usage of route 13).

### **Corporate Objectives**

74. Support for bus services in York 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 retention of sustainable bus routes across York increases access to opportunities and facilities by a wider (and potentially cheaper) range of travel choices.
75. Local Transport Plan 2011- 2015 (LTP3): Support for the services outlined above would contribute to several of the aims of the third Local Transport Plan, namely:
- To provide quality alternatives to the car to provide more choice and enable more trips to be undertaken by sustainable means
  - Improving Strategic Links to enhance the wider connections with the key residential and employment areas in and around York, and beyond
  - Tackling Transport Emissions to reduce the release of pollutants harmful to health and the environment.

### **Implications**

- **Financial**

The total projected expenditure on local bus services for 2012/13 is £765k and for 2013/14 is £835k (the increase resulting from the full cost of new contracts introduced in 2012/13 as well as full year costs for the operation of routes 14 and 15).

The annual budget for subsidised bus services is £774k. Whilst the 2013/14 expenditure will be subject to the outcome of a competitive tendering exercise, the current contract prices would result in a budgetary shortfall of £61k.

The following table outlines those elements of service which may be subject to either cost increases or reductions depending on the option chosen. The third column outlines whether the cost will be increased or decreased.

<b><i>Route no.</i></b>	<b><i>Current annual cost</i></b>	<b><i>Projected increase/decrease</i></b>
14	£40,600	Decrease
15	£35,500	Decrease
21	£38,200 (cost to CYC net of NYCC contribution)	Increase
24/26	£153,900	Flat
35	£14,168 (cost to CYC net of NYCC & ERYC contributions)	Increase

It is anticipated that it will be possible to incorporate all of the amendments in the current budget for local bus services for 2013/14, subject to the outcome of an open tendering competition, withdrawal of subsidised route 14 and a reduction of frequency on route 15.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

There are no HR implications

- **Equalities**

An Equalities Impact Assessment to support the Council's support of local bus services was produced earlier in 2011.

- **Legal**

There are no Legal implications

- **Crime and Disorder**

The withdrawal of evening bus services where no public transport exists may require people to make journeys by foot in the dark which they wouldn't otherwise make, possibly increasing the risk to vulnerable members to the community.

- **Information Technology (IT)**

There are no IT implications

- **Property** (*Contact – Property*)

There are no Property implications

- **Other**

There are no other implications

## **Risk Management**

76. Any tender exercise would be conducted in line with OJEU guidelines under the close supervision of the Council's Procurement team. Any new contract awards (or the continuation of existing services beyond March 2013) will be subject to the necessary funding being made available through the Council's budget process in February 2013.
77. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for all risks has been assessed at less than 16. This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

## **Contact Details**

### **Author:**

Andrew Bradley  
Sustainable Transport  
Operations Manager

Ext. 1404

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

Richard Wood  
Assistant Director (Strategic Planning & Transport)

**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 14.01.13

**Wards Affected:**

**All**



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

## **Annexes**

**Annex A:** Petition received concerning route 5

**Annex B:** Petition received concerning route 12

**Annex C:** Petition received concerning route 13 from residents of Copmanthorpe

**Annex D:** Petition received concerning route 13 from residents of Haxby/ Wigginton

**Annex E:** Map showing services 21 and 35

**Annex F:** Map showing services 11, 14 and 15

**Annex G:** Map showing services 5, 12 and 13

**Annex H:** Map showing proposed services 15, 24 and 27

**Annex J:** Map showing services 24 and 26