

**QBP Meeting Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014: 17:00-19:00**

**Present:**

John Carr (Chair, York QBP), Bob Rackley (EYMS), Ian Pearson (Utopia), Ben Gilligan (First), Mark Fenwick (Arriva), Jim Wallace (Transdev), Keith McNally (CPT), Cllr Dave Merrett, Cllr Tony Richardson, Julian Ridge, Andrew Bradley, , Sam Fryers, Sam Maynard (CYC), David Beer (Passenger Focus).

**Apologies for Absence:** Craig Temple, John Duff, David Stephenson, representative from Eddie Brown's.

**Passenger Focus – Autumn 2013 Survey**

David Beer presented findings from the Autumn 2013 survey in York. The survey was carried out 8<sup>th</sup> September-1<sup>st</sup> December 2013 with 1,064 participants rating various aspects of their experience travelling via bus around York. The results of the survey will be made public knowledge at the national launch on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March with Baroness Kramer and attendees of the meeting were asked to keep the results of the survey to themselves until the national launch.

Key points from the survey work included:

- York came 9<sup>th</sup>, around the middle of the sample, for overall satisfaction for services. This was in contrast to many individual attributes which were scored in the top quartile of the sample, some (e.g. value for money, cleanliness, top of all 19 English authorities surveyed). There was a discussion of this apparent contradiction in the results, and theories put forward included:
  - Overall satisfaction was reduced because of dissatisfaction with some element of York's bus network which was not monitored as an attribute in the survey (for example, the city having no bus station, service levels in the evenings/ on Sundays)
  - Bus passengers in York having generally high expectations, so that although they were satisfied with individual aspects of the service, the whole offer somehow did not reach their expectations
  - The discretionary nature of bus use in York meaning a greater proportion of bus users are able to compare the service with

other means of travel which they could use with similar ease – e.g. car, cycle, walk

- The impact of negative press coverage of the bus network so that, even though users were satisfied with individual aspects of the service, there remained a feeling that it was not “satisfactory” because press coverage suggested that it was not
  - Inconsistency of quality – so that whilst users may have been satisfied with the journey they were taking when surveyed, many were less satisfied overall because of poor experiences with other journeys they had made (e.g. because they had run late)
  - Historical levels of dissatisfaction – e.g. the overall perception of satisfaction with the bus service carried some historic “baggage” from a time when it was poorer than now
  - Inconsistency of product – e.g. different perceptions between park and ride and stagecarriage services, difference operators etc.
  - JR commented that this would be a focus of further work with Passenger Focus looking in greater detail at the data, and also would be a useful comparison from year to year when the surveys are carried out in Autumn 2014.
- York came first for a number of measures, within the whole sample, which included all the PTE areas (e.g. West Yorks, South Yorks, Manchester etc) and a number of big unitary authority areas (e.g. Bristol/ Bath, Reading, Tees Valley) where the size of the urban areas should, theoretically, support very high quality bus services. Some of the recognised best practice locations were not in the sample (e.g. Oxford, Brighton, Nottingham) but York’s performance overall was very good. It should be noted that York’s performance was compared to Reading Borough Transport – a municipally backed operator who were generally recognised as one of the best companies in the UK - but bested them in several measures.
  - Generally, York should be pleased with the results – they show a bus network performing well – although the survey had identified in some areas which merited attention by the QBP.
  - Lothian Transport (Edinburgh) and First Glasgow York had been surveyed, but were not reported amongst the English towns/ cities because of the generally different set up in Scotland. However, both of the Scottish companies performed very well in the sample, with Lothian particularly coming first in a number of measures.

- York came 17<sup>th</sup> for information provided, suggesting ticket price information, in particular, hasn't really been picked up by members of the public – this could be promoted using the ad spaces at bus stops. AB commented that a general project improving information available at bus stops was being progressed through BBAF.
- York came 10<sup>th</sup> for waiting time, which is often the measure used by passengers to determine whether to use the service again. It was felt that this might indicate lower frequencies on some routes, but also unreliability/ uncertainty about arrival times for services caught in traffic (although “punctuality” was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> as a contrast to this)
- 42% of passengers aren't checking arrival times as they knew it was a frequent service or knew the times already – need to consider best way to reach these people with details of service alterations - social media has been identified as a good method of communicating disruptions.
- 89% were satisfied with bus journey time, putting York higher than average. However, waiting too long at stops and passenger boarding time are a bit higher than average.
- 38% had worry or concern over other passengers' behaviour – rowdy behaviour was higher than average.
- 35% of passengers had no other option but to use the bus for their journey – so 65% are choosing to take the bus over other means of travel, this was high in the sample and identified that much of the bus travel in York is by people who have made a conscious decision to use the bus instead of other modes of transport, rather than a bus-captive ridership – this is likely to reflect York's “carrot and stick” policy approach – e.g. for many drivers it is possible to park in the centre of York, but cheaper/ easier to use park and ride instead.
- Generally digital bus stop information is proving popular across all age groups.
- Ticket sales in York is unusual because the proportions of tickets sold either through employers/ colleges and at a central enquiry point is low – suggesting that there should be scope to develop the Rail Station Bus Point to sell a greater proportion of tickets (in York, 2% of tickets bought this way compared to average for unitaries of 9%).

David Beer pointed out that the findings can be further broken down by route to give more targeted data.

**Action:** AB/ JR to arrange circulation of survey results around the group.

**Minutes from the last meeting**

Minutes from the last meeting were approved by the group.

**Action:** all to note.

**York Clear Air Zone**

Derek McCreddie, Low Emissions Officer, talked about air quality and low emissions strategies for York. He highlighted that diesel is the main contributor to poor air quality and York is currently in breach of EU air quality targets from 2010. Derek compared York to other cities in terms of air quality and pointed out that York may be among those to be fined if the air quality target is not met by 2015. Work being undertaken by CYC to meet air quality targets included electrification of the local bus network and conversion of taxis to hybrid vehicles through a grant scheme, as well as more general policies to encourage sustainable travel/ bring about mode shift.

**Action:** all to note

**Better Bus Area Board**

Julian gave a summary of the Better Bus Area Board Heads of Terms and how the board will pool knowledge to advise the QBP.

**Action:** all to note