
**Decision Session –
Executive Member for City Strategy**

1st September 2009

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Public Transport Provision for Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe

Summary

1. This report considers a number of options for reinstatement of a public transport service along Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe.

Recommendation

2. The Executive Member is asked to

Either (i) Approve introduction of an additional two return journey car or Community Transport vehicle service between Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe Village, and York on two days a week. This recommendation is included as option (a) in paragraph 10 with analysis in paragraphs 14 - 15.

Or (ii) Approve revision of Service 21 to run via Bishopthorpe four days a week instead of the current six and via Copmanthorpe on two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday), provided acceptable terms can be negotiated with the service provider. This recommendation is included as option (g) in paragraph 10.

Reason: That these potentially offer the most cost effective achievable means of providing a public transport service to meet the unmet travel demands of the residents of the Temple Lane area of Copmanthorpe.

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 ran 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. The following table outlines changes made to the bus service in the area:

| | |
|------------|---|
| 2004 | Council decision taken to withdraw the infrequent (but daily) 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. |
| 2004 | A residents' petition (135 signatories) resulted in the introduction of an unpopular Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday only infrequent (two hourly, off-peak only) feeder service between Acaster Malbis, Temple Lane, and Askham Bar Park & Ride. |
| 2005 | The service was extended from Askham Bar to York at similar times. |
| July 2008 | Executive approval given to withdraw the service (route 21) from April 2009 in conjunction with improvements to the service now operating Bolton Percy – Appleton Roebuck – Acaster Malbis – York. Again, this decision was taken as a result of budgetary pressures and low patronage volumes. |
| April 2009 | Service changes applied. Old route 21 via Temple Lane withdrawn, new route 21 introduced. |

5. A further petition, containing 177 signatures from 98 addresses in the Temple Lane area, seeking continuation of bus service provision along Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe, was considered by the Executive Member at the Decision Session meeting on 2 June 2009. The petitioners' case, together with a letter of support from Copmanthorpe Parish Council, accompanies this report as Annex A. A number of optional solutions were presented for consideration, but the Executive Member asked for more detailed investigation of some of the options before deciding on the appropriate course of action.
6. 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 Service 13 terminus. The road rises to cross the East Coast Main Line between Temple Garth & Station Road.

Consultation

7. 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 did 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.

8. 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 alternative ways of providing a bus service along Temple Lane were suggested by residents. These are considered under "Options" below.

9. Councillors for Rural West York Ward were invited to comment on the June 2009 Executive member Decision Session report. Councillor Healey asked for Dial & Ride to be modified to provide, additionally, the facility to travel to and from Copmanthorpe. Unfortunately this is not feasible with the limited resources currently available to this service. Return pick up times would be impossible to predict and commitment to such pick ups would prevent route optimisation to cover all booked journeys as quickly and efficiently as possible. Councillor Gillies asked for shared hire car or taxibus options to be explored. With the assistance of the Ward Councillors, further consultation, involving Temple Lane residents and all affected Parish Councils has been carried out on options (g) and (h), set out in paragraph 12 below, for alternative Service 21 routes. The views expressed in the 48 replies received are summarised in the following table:

| Some journeys in option (h) unacceptably long | Option (g) preferred (Tue/Thurs via Temple Lane) | Option (h) preferred | Option (g) potentially confusing | No return service from Copmanthorpe in option (h) |
|---|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 42# | 44# | 1* | 3* | 40# |
| <p>(*) Acaster Malbis Parish Council indicated 35 residents were unanimous in these views.</p> <p>(#) 40 Identical letters received from Copmanthorpe expressing these views and supported by Copmanthorpe Parish Council; one reply expressed preference for three days a week service via Temple Lane and one argued for an all day daily service to appeal to a wider public.</p> <p>The contractor of route 21 (Harrogate Coach Travel) would seek additional subsidy (amount not yet quantified) to reflect risk of revenue loss, due to service being less convenient/attractive with either option g) or h), and there being less demand for travel between outlying villages and Copmanthorpe compared to Bishopthorpe.</p> | | | | |

Options

10. A number of different ways of providing a public transport service along Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe has been suggested. These are set out below together with officers comments on their feasibility and affordability.

- a) Provide a 2 or 3 day a week public transport link from Acaster Malbis to either Askham Bar or York City Centre using either bus or shared car options.

For – Meets principal travel needs of those in the community dependent on public transport

Against – Minimal provision unappealing to those in the community with choice of travel mode, potentially too expensive as bus, but possibly affordable as shared hire car

- b) Extend First York Service 13, either in whole or part, to a new terminus in Temple Lane

For – Would not require additional resources to run service, would potentially provide more frequent solution than above, should be economical (no, or low, cost to Council solution)

Against – Relies on co-operation of First York to modify their commercially operated service to accommodate Temple Lane. It has not been possible to establish an acceptable, safe, existing location to turn the buses back to Copmanthorpe. The Company has confirmed it is unwilling to make the requested change.

- c) Join First York Service 13 (Monks Cross – Copmanthorpe) to Service 11 (Ashley Park – Bishopthorpe) via Temple Lane and Appleton Road

For – Would reinstate public transport links between Bishopthorpe & Copmanthorpe broken over a decade ago, would provide more frequent solution than recently discontinued service, might provide other opportunities to rationalise and improve services

Against – Would require additional resource for which it is anticipated the Council would need to provide substantial subsidy, relies on co-operation of First York to provide the service, involves changes of time which may inconvenience other users of the two services

- d) Divert some or all Yorkshire Coastliner services from Hallcroft Lane/Top Lane via Copmanthorpe and Bishopthorpe to & from Tadcaster Road

For - May not require additional resources to run service, would potentially provide more frequent solution than above, an economical solution with no, or low, cost to Council

Against - Relies on co-operation of Yorkshire Coastliner to provide the service. The Company has confirmed it is unwilling to make this requested change as it would be likely to reduce reliability and attractiveness of service for other users/potential users

- e) Revise the new Service 21 to run along Temple Lane and return between Acaster Malbis and Bishopthorpe (but see further option in “Analysis” below)

For – Provides improved service for Temple Lane compared to recently discontinued service

Against – Modified route could not be accommodated in existing schedule, so would incur additional resource cost , reduce frequency, or require route curtailment elsewhere, any changes would reduce attractiveness of service to other passengers

- f) Revise the new Service 21 to run some journeys each day via Bishopthorpe and some journeys via Copmanthorpe

For - Would not require additional resources to run service and is a no, or low, cost to the Council solution

Against – Would make already infrequent (every two hours) service less frequent for journeys to/from split sections of route, reducing its attractiveness/convenience to users/potential users

- g) Revise the new Service 21 to run via Bishopthorpe on some days and Copmanthorpe on others

For - Would not require additional resources to run service, is likely to incur additional cost for loss of operator revenue but this is expected to be low when compared to other options

Against – Would reduce service to and from Bishopthorpe, reducing its attractiveness to users/potential users, likely to cause confusion amongst customers and operator's staff.

- h) Revise the new Service 21 to run a one way loop (Acaster Malbis – Copmanthorpe – Colton – Bolton Percy – Appleton Roebuck – Acaster Malbis) linked to existing York – Bishopthorpe route

For – Minimises loss of service to communities served by Service 21

Against – Significantly extends journey times for some passengers, only provides one-way link between Temple Lane and Copmanthorpe village, only provides one way links between other villages on route.

Analysis

11. Surveys on sample days carried out on the old Service 21 showed the following:

| When? | Journey / passengers | Journey / passengers |
|-------|--|----------------------|
| 2005 | Temple Lane to York / 9 | Total route / 44 |
| 2006 | Temple Lane to Askham Bar / 4 | Total route / 38 |
| 2007 | Temple Lane to York / 6 Temple Lane to Copmanthorpe / 2 | Total route / 37 |

Local residents claim that about a dozen residents in the Temple Lane area need to use the bus service to meet their travel needs. Summarised passenger survey results are attached to this report as Annex D.

12. The new route 21 has merged aspects of both the old routes C1 and 21. Prior to the rationalisation of these bus services in April 2009, the following 2008/09 out-turn data demonstrated:

| Service | Passenger per bus hr | Subsidy per passenger |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------|
| C1 (via Bishopthorpe) | 6.1 | £1.96 |
| 21 (via Temple Lane/Copmanthorpe) | 10.5 | £2.70 |
| Council policy to justify continued support | Minimum 11 | Max. £2 |

An independent review of subsidised bus services reporting to Executive in January 2009, identified both of these services as representing questionable value for money. Early indications following introduction of the revised service suggest subsidy is currently between £2 and £2.50 per passenger journey and patronage is around 8 passengers per bus hour. These figures are likely to improve as awareness of the service amendments spreads and more data becomes available for analysis.

13. Option (g) proposes a return to the 2-3 day a week bus service enjoyed by Temple Lane prior to the changes. If the re-routing of an existing bus service is not deemed to be desirable or achievable however, then the introduction of a dedicated public transport service for Temple Lane may be more attractive. A price has been sought from a supplier with resources available to provide a limited bus service (one return journey per day) between Acaster Malbis and Askham Bar (via Temple Lane). 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. 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 Park & Ride feeder which was extended to York in 2005. Using available information, it is estimated that subsidy per passenger journey is likely to be well over £20.
14. A price has also been sought, informally, from a Private Hire Vehicle operator, who would be able to provide a similar replacement service (one return journey) between Temple Lane and the City Centre using an eight seat, wheelchair accessible minibus. This is significantly less than the price quoted in paragraph 13 above and promises to be a proportionate and more affordable solution. To comply with Council Financial Regulations, competitive quotations would need to be sought before a contract could be awarded.
15. This alternative to a full size bus could operate in one of three ways:
- a. As a shared hire car service

- b. As a Minibus Permit service (both requiring passengers to pre-book and agree to the sharing arrangement),
- c. As a "Taxibus", as provided for by the 1985 Transport Act,
- d. Or as a "Private Hire Bus", as recently introduced under the Local Transport Act 2008.

The latter two options would require the operator to obtain a Special Restricted Public Service Vehicle Operating Licence from the Traffic Commissioner. This may deter some interest in providing the service and add to costs. During the recent consultation it emerged that, to cater for the travel needs of residents, ideally there should be both a morning and an afternoon return journey. This would also increase costs, but it is expected they will still be below the quotation provided by a bus operator referred to in paragraph 13.

- 16. None of the three proposals previously put forward to modify the new Service 21, options [(e), (f), and (g) in paragraph 10] is considered to be in the best interests of the service and the majority of its users. After further consideration, an alternative has been developed [option (h) in paragraph 10] which could minimise the adverse consequences of incorporating Temple Lane into the route. The existing 21 timetable and a possible revision (option h) are attached to this report as Annex C.
- 17. If option (h) was adopted, buses from York would continue to Acaster Malbis as at present, then run via Temple Lane, Copmanthorpe Village and the A64 to Colton, Bolton Percy, and Appleton Roebuck, before returning to York via Acaster Malbis and Bishopthorpe as at present. Most passenger journeys currently catered for by the service would continue to be catered for, albeit with some of those to Colton, Appleton Roebuck, and Bolton Percy taking longer. Additionally journeys from Temple Lane to Copmanthorpe and York and from York to Temple Lane would be possible. Return journeys from Copmanthorpe to Temple Lane would not however be possible, without a 45 minute journey via the North Yorkshire villages. Temple Lane would, however, have a six day a week service to and from York reinstated, representing an improvement on recent previous provision.
- 18. 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

19. 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.
20. 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

21.
 - **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. It should be noted, however, that due to tender prices for other bus service contracts recently awarded being slightly below budget, funds are currently available in the allocated budget to meet modest additional expense. The cost of either recommended option is expected to be less than £10,000 in a full year, and is affordable within the budget.
 - **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. Changes to existing contracted bus services would, however, involve less additional unplanned work and could be more easily accommodated.
 - **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

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

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Report Approved **Date** 17 August 2009

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All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

All relevant background papers must be listed here.

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

All annexes to the report must be listed here.

Annex A – Petition Header Sheets

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

Annex C – Service 21 – Current and Proposed timetables

Annex D – Service 21 & C1 – Summary passenger survey data