

**Decision Session**  
**- Executive Member City Strategy**

**6 July 2010**

Report of the Director of City Strategy

**FUTURE OPERATION OF BUS ROUTE 21**

**Summary**

1. This report informs the Executive Member of the results of the trial re-routeing of bus 21 to serve Temple Lane in Copmanthorpe following an ongoing and thorough review of passenger use. These results show that predicted loadings to and from the Temple Lane area have failed to materialise and the extended journey times resulting from the re-routeing of bus 21 are acting as a deterrent to passengers from other areas. This effect is even more apparent when, as is often the case, no passengers are picked up or set down in Temple Lane. In view of this, alternative options are put forward for consideration by Members as to the future operation of this route.

**Recommendations**

2. That the Executive Member for City Strategy is recommended to agree that route 21 be restored to its former routeing but operating to the revised timetable shown in Annex C, with effect from 31 August 2010.
3. Reason: The diversion to serve Temple Lane is unpopular with the majority of passengers and is of little benefit as usage from this area has been and continues to be far below that necessary to justify the additional costs borne by the Council. Adoption of the recommendation will meet the demands and requirements of the majority of users whilst providing a substantial saving in Council funding.

**Background**

4. In response to strong public pressure, the Executive Member for City Strategy agreed at his Decision Session held on 1st September 2009, to subsidise the re-routeing of service 21 for a trial period in order to retain a public transport link to and from the Temple Lane area of Copmanthorpe, with an implicit suggestion that this was on a 'use it or lose it' basis. The timescale was set at six months, with a review to be carried out in May 2010 to assess whether or not the significant numbers that the petitioners suggested would make use of this provision would in fact materialise, with an adjunct that should these numbers prove too few to warrant continuation, the route would revert to its former incarnation.

5. This review has now been completed, the results of which show conclusively that little use is made of the route from and to the Temple Lane area. Out of 652 journeys monitored over an entire week (w/c 19 April 2010), only 9 commenced or finished in Temple Lane, equivalent to 1.38% of the total numbers, and of these, seven (77.8%) were journeys made to/from Copmanthorpe Village. Five of these seven passengers stated that they were travelling to/from the City Centre but changing to commercial route 13 in order to do so, presumably because this was seen as a faster, more convenient option.
6. When considering options for the future of route 21, it was noted that, aside from Temple Lane and despite the intensely rural nature of the areas served, the surveys showed a respectable level of usage from most areas. In addition to those travelling to/from Bishopthorpe and Acaster Malbis, the review shows significant usage from areas lying solely within North Yorkshire, in particular Appleton Roebuck, with a reasonable level albeit lower level of demand from the hamlets of Bolton Percy and Colton.
7. The additional mileage, and associated time penalty incurred, resulting from the diversion has given rise to a significant amount of correspondence to the Transport Planning Unit from users of this route from residents in Acaster Malbis, Appleton Roebuck and Bolton Percy and their respective Parish Councils. In every instance, the complaint has been made that the extended journey time makes the route a less attractive option and actively discourages people from using the bus.
8. Subsidy for route 21 is shared between City of York Council (60.6%) and North Yorkshire County Council (39.4%). The additional subsidy needed to procure this re-routeing is £6000 p.a., this sum being borne by City of York Council alone, increasing the annual total subsidy provided by the Council to £47,023, yet the average monthly income over the five months to the end of March 2010 is £1034, compared to £1280 for the five months preceding the alteration. Whilst this drop in revenue cannot be solely attributed to the extended journey times resulting from the diversion via Temple Lane making the present route less attractive to other passengers, it has contributed to the route failing to meet the Council's own criteria for assessing the viability for subsidised services where, for the year 2009/10, the average passenger loading per bus hour (which is the total number of passengers divided by the number of hours each bus is employed on the route) was 6.21 against a recommended minimum of 11 whilst the cost of subsidy per passenger averaged £3.32 against a recommended maximum of £2.00. If separated out, in the five months preceding the change to the routeing, the average daily loading was 5.64 at a subsidy cost per passenger of £1.30. Since the alteration the average loading per bus hour has reduced to 3.56 while the cost of subsidy per passenger has risen to £1.87. These figures are tabulated in annexe D.
9. This report offers three options to the Executive Member as to how route 21 might best be operated in order to meet the financial criteria laid down for bus routes procured by the Council.

## **Consultation**

10. During the period of experimental operation, much correspondence has been received from users of route 21. We have also received formal requests from the Parish Councils of Acaster Malbis, Appleton Roebuck, Bolton Percy & Colton asking that the

bus service be restored to its former routing as soon as possible. Copies of this correspondence is attached to this report as Annex A.

11. A questionnaire was issued to every passenger in order to gauge travel habits and patterns, of which 95 were completed and returned. Examination of these revealed that the highest priority for users is the re-instatement of a link from Appleton Roebuck and Bolton Percy to Tadcaster, although as these areas are all outside the area of responsibility for City of York, from where adequate links already exist, obliging and financing this request would be the responsibility of North Yorkshire County Council. The majority of other comments made by those offering suggestions reflected a dissatisfaction with the extended journey times resulting from the diversion to serve Temple Lane, without a single person expressing a view in favour of this routing.
12. Members for the relevant wards (Rural West York, Bishopthorpe, Dringhouses, Micklegate and Guildhall) have been consulted on the content of this report. Responses were received from Cllrs. Gillies and Healey who were both, whilst disappointed, accepting of the report's conclusions. Cllr. Healey plans to discuss the matter with Temple Lane residents and feedback any views received.

## Options

13. The following options are presented for consideration by the Executive Member:
  - a) Restore route 21 to its former routing and timetable, as shown in Annex B, saving the Council £6000 per annum over current cost.
  - b) Restore route 21 to its former routing but with a timetable revised to reflect demand indicated by recent surveys conducted to demonstrate usage and travel patterns, as shown in Annex C and likely to save the Council approximately £9000 per annum over current cost.
  - c) Retain the experimental routing and timetable at current cost.

## Analysis

14. The surveys conducted by the Council during the trial period, and supported by the consensus of opinion expressed by other users, confirm that retaining the experimental routing via Temple Lane is not justified. Returning the route to its former incarnation would appear to have only a minimal effect on residents of the Temple Lane area where passenger numbers have failed to materialise in sufficient numbers to warrant continuation of financial support for a regular local service. The numbers and types of journeys that have been made are more suited to the type of provision able to be offered by demand responsive operations such as dial a ride, a notion supported by the fact that since the inception of the revised routing for bus 21, five new passengers from the Temple Lane/Temple Garth area have registered with this service and in the financial year 2009/10, 323 passenger journeys were made by passengers from this area on dial and ride vehicles.
15. Table 1 below shows the timetable of available Dial and Ride journey options for Temple Lane residents and the destinations that can be reached on each trip.

<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>C1:</b> Monks Cross 09.00 - 10.00, 11.30 - 12.30
	<b>C2:</b> Monks Cross 10.15 - 11.15, 12.30 - 13.30
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>C3:</b> City centre and supermarkets 09.00 - 10.00, 11.15 - 11.30, 12.30 - 13.30
	<b>C4:</b> City centre 10.15 - 11.15, 14.30 - 15.30
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>C5:</b> Askham Bar 09.00 - 10.00, 11.30 - 12.30
	<b>C6:</b> City centre 10.15 - 11.15, 14.30 - 15.30
	<b>C11:</b> Monks Cross 13.30 - 14.30, 15.45 - 16.45
<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>C7:</b> City centre and supermarkets 09.00 - 10.00, 11.15 - 11.30, 12.30 - 13.30
	<b>C8:</b> City centre 10.15 - 11.15, 14.30 - 15.30
	<b>C12:</b> Askham Bar 13.30 - 14.30, 15.45 - 16.45
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>C9:</b> City centre and supermarkets 09.00 - 10.00, 11.15 - 11.30, 12.30 - 13.30
	<b>C10:</b> City centre 10.15 - 11.15, 14.30 - 15.30

16. Restoring route 21 to its original course and timetable, whilst the most straight forward option, would according to the survey results maintain an over provision of service that is difficult to justify in the current financial climate, particularly as the existing contract does not expire until April 2013. The tribulations with this route have already occupied significant time at a cost that cannot be justified by its relative position in the hierarchy of the entire York network. The likelihood is that, should the 21 simply be returned to its former routeing and timetable, the Council will undoubtedly again be required to divert attention from other issues during the course of the contract and it is felt advisable to address these issues now.
17. The proposed timetable, compiled to match provision to proven demand, will not only reduce the financial demand upon the Council but, in addition, permits if so desired for the first journey in the morning and the final journeys in the afternoon eventually being operated by a new council owned vehicle. These journeys, whilst attracting enough use to justify their retention, do not require the capacity offered by the vehicle employed on the route at other times. Therefore this fourteen seat, fully accessible bus, due for delivery in November 2010, and of a specification designed to make it suitable for use on lightly loaded local bus routes at times when it is not required to undertake duties on dial and ride operations, will be more than sufficient to operate these journeys. Such variation to the contract will then not only reduce the cost to the Council of maintaining the service but additionally generate funding from Yorkshire Forward that has been guaranteed should the vehicle be so employed.

18. The Council has been assured by North Yorkshire County Council that the £73k capital funding for the vehicles is secure, as is the £5.9k and £7.9k revenue funding for 2010/11 and 2011/12 respectively.
19. Should the decision be made to utilise the Council dial and ride vehicle on certain route 21 journeys, the Council will ensure arrangements are put in place for interavailability of ticketing between the existing contractor and the operator of the dial and ride vehicle.

## Corporate Objectives

20. The recommendation meets the Council's objectives of encouraging use of public transport and reducing the number of private car journeys made into the City and additionally meets the requirements to procure non-commercial services in the most cost effective and favourable manner.

## Implications

- **Financial** *The proposal will involve a contract variation that will restore the revenue support figure to that which it originally was. Should it then be decided to operate the early morning and evening journeys using dial and ride vehicles, a further reduction will ensue, expected to be in the region of £76.50 per day, whilst the cost of providing them in house is estimated to be approximately £42-49 per day.*
- **Human Resources (HR)** *There are no HR implications*
- **Equalities** *There are no equality implications*
- **Legal** *There are no legal implications*
- **Crime and Disorder** *There are no crime and disorder implications*
- **Information Technology (IT)** *There are no IT implications*
- **Property** *There are no property implications*
- **Other:** *Whilst adoption of the recommendation would leave Temple Lane without a regular local bus service, statutory notice will be given and public transport facilities will remain available through the Council's demand responsive dial and ride operation.*

## Risk Management

21. There are no known risks associated with this report.

## Contact Details

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**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**  
Richard Wood, Assistant Director, City Strategy

**Report Approved**  **Date** 16.6.2010

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** *Financial: Patrick Looker, Finance Manager, City Strategy. Tel 01904 551633*

**Wards Affected:** *Rural York West, Bishopthorpe, Micklegate, Guildhall, Dringhouses*

For further information please contact the author of the report

### Background Papers:

**All relevant background papers must be listed here:**

*Documents relating to the original decision to experimentally re-route bus 21 are contained in minutes of Decision Session for Executive Members dated 1st September 2009.*

*A Summary of route 21 journey and usage survey results for one week, survey undertaken in May 2010 is available on request.*

### Annexes

**Annex A** - Selection of correspondence received by Transport Planning Unit during trial period from users and parish councils regarding routing of route 21.

**Annex B** - Timetable for route 21 that operated prior to the experimental routing via Temple Lane.

**Annex C** - Suggested timetable for route 21 compiled to match current demand and restoring original course.

**Annex D** - Comparison of operational costs & returns prior to and after experimental changes to route 21.