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

6 July 2010

Report of the Director of City Strategy

FUTURE OPERATION OF BUS ROUTE 55

Summary

1. This report draws attention to the unsatisfactory financial performance and poor patronage of bus route 55, which is procured by the Council under competitive tender. Officers have examined the reasons for this and have identified areas where the route duplicates more frequent commercial services as being the main cause for concern.
2. As a result, an investigation has been undertaken to identify actions to improve the route's overall performance, including timetable amendments and revisions to the routing. Several options had been prepared for consideration by the Executive Member but in the intervening period between preparation of a report containing recommendation and the date of this decision session, officers were made aware of major changes to be implemented to the commercial network that directly impact upon the existing route. In the light of this, it is considered preferable that any prospective amendments to the route be deferred until such time as the effects on the bus network in York can be further examined.
3. Members will be consulted on future options prior to the commencement of the tendering exercise for services whose contracts expire in September 2011.

Recommendations

4. That the Executive Member for City Strategy is recommended to:
5. Agree the proposal to maintain the present operation of route 55 until the expiry of the existing contract in 2011.
6. Reason: This will provide sufficient time for officers to assess the effects on the bus network in York resulting from the changes to the commercially operated routes and investigate and propose alternatives that best meet the requirements of the local transport plan and the residents of York.

Background

7. Bus route 55 has operated in its current form since April 2009, as a bi-directional, circular route operating City Centre, Huntington Road, Monks Cross Shopping Centre, York University, Fulford, City Centre and vice-versa. The contract, which is due to expire in September 2011, receives support from the Council of £60,560 per annum, although the University of York provides the Council with a subsidy of £5000 per annum in recognition of the service to and from the University. However, except between Monks Cross and Fulford the route is little used, leading to the average passenger loading per bus hour (that is the total number of passengers carried divided by the total number of hours operated by every bus providing the service) as of May 2010 being only 8.06. Council criteria state that this figure should not be less than ten and any route where the figure continually fails to reach this target should be reviewed to consider its viability. In the case of route 55, as stated in the summary above, for much of its length, the route mirrors other, more frequent commercial services, all of which are operated by the same company and on whose buses alone popular day tickets can be used. The tender for operation of route 55 was awarded to another operator, so these day tickets are not valid on this service.

Consultation

8. Ward members affected have outlined broad support for the proposal to maintain the current operation in the light of existing circumstances.

Options

9. The following, nil cost options are presented for consideration by the Executive Member:
 - To continue with the current route unchanged until the contract expires, despite this operation failing to meet the Council's own criteria.
 - Withdraw the route completely without replacement.
 - Replace route 55 with a new, more frequent, end to end route (provisionally numbered 15) operating solely between Monks Cross Shopping centre and the Designer Outlet, St. Nicholas Avenue via Heworth, University of York, Fulford Broadway and the A19.

Analysis

10. The recommended option maintains the existing provision whilst a thorough review is undertaken of the effects resulting from changes to the commercial bus network.
11. Adoption of the recommended proposal will permit the present level of service to be maintained under the existing contract for a period of twelve months at no additional cost to the Council. This is considered sufficient time for a comprehensive review to be completed and options for full consultation to be

carried out as to future provision, with a fully costed proposal to be prepared and submitted to the Executive Member for consideration.

Corporate Objectives

12. Support for the bus services in this area would contribute 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 and congestion.
 - **Inclusive City** – The introduction of the proposed route increases access to opportunities and facilities for a wider demographic of the travelling public.

Implications

- **Financial:** There are no financial implications.
- **Human Resources (HR):** There are no Human Resource implications.
- **Equalities:** There are no equalities 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

Risk Management

13. There are no known risks associated with adoption of the proposal.

Contact Details

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Report Approved**Date** 23 June 2010

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Wards Affected: Fulford, Fishergate, Heslington, Hull Road, Heworth, Heworth
Without, Huntington & New Earswick, Clifton, Guildhall.



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annexes

Annexe 'A': Timetable and mileage for existing route 55