

Minutes of York Bus Forum Meeting held on 19 June 2018 at CoYC West Offices

Present: 11 members & visitors - speaker Dr. James Tate, Graham Collett in the Chair

1. Apologies: Gail Shuttleworth, Mary Cannon, John Bibby, Andy d'Agorne

2. Speaker on Clean Buses

Dr. Tate explained in detail the work he had done with City of York Council, also involving a colleague, Laetitia Schmitt from the Leeds Institute of Health Studies. This had included analysis of air quality data regarding nitrogen dioxide at a number of sensitive locations in and around the City centre, like Fishergate. However he was surprised to see the latest figures had changed little since 2014, whereas elsewhere in the country figures were falling. He noted that the UK was leading in Europe on low emission strategy and electric buses. There was a problem of real emissions being higher than the official base, and the big differences between different vehicles performances. This was a big issue with LCV diesels, especially supermarket delivery vehicles with refrigeration units. For HCVs the picture was better. The technologies were pretty clean when new and there was proper on road testing, unlike for cars. This was also true for the latest Euro standard buses - at least until the catalytic converters reached the ends of their lives. He flagged a question though as to whether bus operators were taking the costs of needing to replace these into account in choosing between diesel and electric.

He then went onto outline the recent work on looking at the future Park and Ride contract issues. Replacing 24 of the P&R vehicles from 2017 was estimated to cost £6.1m for Euro VI diesels, £8.9m for electrics, and this would give relative health benefits of £4.65m and £5m per annum and discounted benefits over 6 years of £29.2m and £31.4m respectively. On the energy costs over 5 years the balance was £2.82m to £0.73m diesels to electrics. However health benefit costs weren't in the transport evaluation scheme rules.

In the question and answer session, a comment was made about the evolution of bus fleets - experience being that operators often don't have proper plans for. Dr. Tate agreed. He went on to say he didn't think Euro VI diesel buses were the right answer as their emissions will deteriorate over time. In 4 years time you will again have a dirty diesel fleet and then be stuck with them. AB was asked when the Council would actually get the new buses, and indicated it would now be 2019. He added that if the Council had got the green bus funding when they first applied in 2016, would have been there by now. Regarding the new contact vehicles, the Council had only got First's agreement early this year.

DM asked about the issue of small particulates (PM2.5) and brake and tire dusts. Dr. Tate said the recent paper highlighting this was a piece of bad science. It ignored the rapid reduction in battery weights we were seeing, which will reduce electric vehicle weights, plus the lower turbulence under electric vehicles, and use of electric recapture from new braking technologies. He said there was no definitive information on their relative toxicity against diesel emissions, which were a known carcinogen. The paper also ignored the problem of catalytic converters and filters with people removing them to improve fuel efficiency and save money, or failing to replace them because of the very high cost when they came to the ends of their operating life. He flagged a number of abuses going on around this, and the remaining detection and enforcement problems now it had been legally banned. Need to address in commercial contracts. AB added that there were issues the other way too. The current electric Optare buses had thrown up a lot of issues, and were now substantially obsolete things were moving on so fast.

Dr. Tate was asked about the Government's role and diesel scrappage schemes. He agreed that scrapping old vehicles would be the most effective approach, but it raised problems with the EU state aid rules, so the Government had gone for Clean Air Zones instead.

Dr. Tate was thanked for his presentation and answers to questions, and left the meeting.

3. City of York Council update

The Council's Public Transport lead officer, Andrew Bradley advised that the Council would be launching the consultation on its Bus Only Clean Air Zone for the City centre on Clean Air day. He also flagged the separate Council consultation on its Front of Station proposals.

4. Committee Elections

The chair noted that the AGM had omitted to elect a new committee. Tony Hudson offered to stand. It was also suggested that Alan Robinson, Gail Shuttleworth and Andy d'Agorne were invited to be on the committee too. All agreed.

5. Bus Station Report

Tony Hudson reported that the bus working group were now on version 10 of their draft report which now included Alan Robinson's proposals! The sub-group was meeting at 12 on Friday for anyone who wished to come along.

In a brief discussion DM said he had now discovered what the turn round proposals in the Council's front of station proposals were - this involved buses circuiting the main Railway Institute Gym building using the car park access and egress roads, with stopover bays down the station side of the gym building, which would also be used by school buses, etc. - a wholly inadequate arrangement - again demonstrating buses subsidiary position in what was proposed.

It was agreed that the Chair would sign off the Forum's submission on the consultation after the sub group's meeting on Friday. Forum members were also encouraged to respond individually to the consultation.

6. Bus matters

Brian Nye raised a number of points about individual bus routes that he'd been pursuing, plus inadequate responses from First's Hunslett office, and the loss of the Theatre Royal bus arcade shelter. Ron Healey raised the 66 / 66a change issues, which students were up in arms about. The Chair noted the very poor information on this in the city centre stops.

Ron also urged the Forum to take note of the Catch the Bus week coming up soon and to liaise with as many operators as possible in that campaign, which he saw as vital to the Forum. He also said the Manchester CityZAP service was finishing at the end of July. Stuart Irvine raised a problem with EYMS not accepting bus passes before 9:30am which he'd challenged a driver over. Brian Nye flagged the same problem with Coastliner on pre 6am usage.

7. July committee meeting

The next Forum committee meeting would be open to all, taking place on 17th July at 5:30pm in the same location.

RH/DM 15-09-2018