

York Bus Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 15 January 2019

Present: G Collett (chair), DM Merrett (Treasurer), D Magill, SR Irwin, BJ Nye, N. McFerran, J Bibby, R Pierce (minutes), R Healey, B Jones (First Bus), T Hudson, W Owen, M Fairbrother, G Beacon, C Rutt, AK Robinson, C Mullen (speaker)

1. Welcome: The chair welcomed members and guests. He explained that the Forum had become informally recognised by councillors and officers as the local voice of York's bus passengers. He specifically welcomed Brandon Jones from First Group. Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr d'Agorne, Cllr M Cannon, Colin Hall, Eleanor Tew, Audrey Miller, Andrew Bradley, Julian Ridge, Dee Boyle, Parish Cllr Gail Shuttleworth, and Peter Scott.

2. Minutes (previously circulated) **of the last meeting** held on 20 November 2018 were approved as a correct record. The actions had been followed by officers.

3. Guest Speaker: The chair welcomed **Caroline Mullen** of the **University of Leeds Institute of Transport Studies**. The title of the presentation was '**Housing, Employment and Car Dependency**'.

Caroline Mullen began by explaining how recent research had shown an unexpected finding which challenged transport assumptions, policy and planning. Those assumptions were that transport journeys followed a rational choice model in which the individual's home was a long-term origin in deciding where to work and how to travel between the two. But her empiric research - including 46 qualitative interviews - revealed that those on median and low incomes behaved differently. The cause of their exclusion could be ill-health, family breakdown, loss of job or loss of home. She explained how socially excluded people living in private rented housing were unprotected and could have their tenancy terminated with only two months' notice. Many worked in the gig, zero hours economy. Loss of home or job and restricted choices often meant far greater distances between the two in an era when jobs were now more dispersed and beyond traditional concentrations and outside direct public transport networks. A consequence was that the individuals often became more reliant on their own private transport whose costs worsened their poor financial circumstances – often at the expense of adequate food and heating. Many were forced to live with family or friends which created difficulties for both. In contrast, social housing tenants were reluctant to leave their protected homes. Transfers were problematic. So they too became more reliant on private transport.

The research had highlighted six mobility issues: growth of complicated personal journeys; the additional cost of retaining a private car when financial circumstances militated otherwise; difficulties with public transport solutions when origins and destinations became so highly separated and associated fare costs of multiple journeys; the loss of educational and retraining opportunities; the psychological cost of increased uncertainty; and the preference

of many people for secure housing rather than a secure job. The traditional pattern that the location of jobs determined where people lived no longer applied. The key issue was housing & jobs rather than transport.

An extensive question and answer session followed involving the wider context of resource consumption, climate change impacts, sustainability and conservation, the scope for car sharing, through-ticketing and the cost of fares, the redevelopment of brownfield sites for housing and employment, greater institutional support for car sharing, and mixed mode travel.

The research had been funded by ESRC and TfL. DfT had not contributed. Caroline hoped that they could follow this up with quantitative research work to confirm this small sample was representative of the wider population group. She also said she'd forward a brief they'd done to spread the messages.

4. Other Business: Dave Merrett reported on the most recent council executive's meeting, the Air Quality Zone proposals and the retendering of 90% of secured bus services in 2019 that the papers flagged. Subsequent discussions included engine idling, bus tracking and open data access on bus movements, First saying they use the data afterwards to feed into bus stop info and timetables, concerns on the accuracy of the real time displays, the one-year closure of Lakeside way at Heslington East Campus and implications for Nos. 66 and 66A bus services and the sports centre.

The Membership Secretary & Treasurer asked for subscription payments for 2019.

5. Next Meetings: Open committee meeting Tuesday 19th February, AGM 19th March, preceded by Council bus control centre visits. Meetings 5:50 -7pm.