

York Bus Forum Meeting Tuesday 15th March 2022 17.30, by Zoom

Attending: Doreen Magill (Chair), Graham Collett (Vice Chair), Niall McFerran (Secretary), Kevin Fradley, Cllr. A. D'Agorne, Andrew Bradley, Eleanor Tew, Jim Harbus, Andrew Hayes (First), John Bibby, Ian Anderson, Flick Williams, David Stuart, Richard Parker, George Wood, Barry Connor, John Slaughter, Tony Hudson, Alan Robinson (Membership Sec.), Roger French (Finance), Brandon Jones (First), Tony May, Julian Ridge (CYC), Mary Cannon, Mary Harlington, Lionel Lennox, Eden Blyth and Dave Merrett.

1. The Chair welcomed delegates and reported apologies from Gail Shuttleworth, Debby Cobbett and Iris Wells.

2. The minutes of the last meeting were approved after an amend suggested by Brandon Jones.

RP reminded group that the timetables in Peasolm Green were still incorrect on both sides of the road. JR advised he would have it looked at.

3. Andrew Bradley of West Yorkshire Combined Authority gave a presentation on the new Demand Responsive Travel initiative in East Leeds. This is a joint initiative involving the local authority and First Bus.

Flexi-bus is a trial using small electric buses to offer a flexible service running in an area of East Leeds from Monday to Saturday from 0700-1800 with a standard £2 fare.

The intention is to offer a service which encourages people to use a bus rather than a car with focus on commuter traffic and the disabled to improve connection to the rail station and local hospitals.

The contact with the customer is via an application and telephone. The trial was launched in September 2021 and usage data is available. It is growing from a slow start to over 600 journeys per week, but this requires subsidy.

Customers on bus routes do use the service and no one is refused travel. Dedicated team of drivers. Tickets can be used to connect on to other services. Further enhancements are planned, and areas of rural Leeds may be considered in the future for the service.

FW asked if the vehicles are fully adapted for disabled users. AB replied that there is room for one wheelchair so yes, they accommodate all users.

BJ stressed that partnership is key to the project.

BC stated that on the website the maximum pre-book period is 7 days which might deter users. AB replied that a longer period was available, and customers do block book journeys.

RP asked if analysis of data points towards an additional bus route is one considered? Do you ever recommend passengers use existing bus service? AB replied not at this time.

GC thanked the speaker and asked if there had been an attempt to involve local organisations in the scheme e.g., NHS, LNER, local supermarkets? AB advised that there will be funding from Section 106 monies from local developments, and they were also working with the NHS.

JB asked how the area used by the scheme was selected? AB responded that it was driven by the funding.

NM asked how long the trial will run? AB replied it had an initial 18 months which will be extended to three years.

MC asked about audio-visual announcements, AB said these were being fitted.

DMag thanked the speaker for the interesting presentation.

4. BSIP etc.

GC asked JR about report that of the 77 BSIP documents submitted only 16 were likely to be funded. JR was not able to comment but reported that as the Local Elections were drawing close it is more likely that an announcement would be made at the end of May. The EP process will also now be more likely to run into the autumn.

JR explained that the funding which started at over £3bn is now reduced to £1.3bn. He felt that DfT were looking for schemes that offered quick solutions.

City Centre Bus Study – the draft has been shared confidentially.

EP proposal will go to Exec. At end of April, there are no plans for public consultation before August but there will be ‘engagement’ with key bodies.

GC asked about report of Parliamentary inquiry into the bus strategy which might impact the concessionary fare scheme whilst encouraging more bus use. GC suggested more publication of concessionary fares available on Park and Ride services.

5. Local Plan response – DM reported that YBF have submitted comments to the Local Plan inspectors which are little changed from the 2018 submission. This calls for improvements to public transport to keep pace with growing population trends in the city.

GC re-iterated the call to move people back onto the buses.

IA thanked DM and GC for their work and called for the Forum to agree the three key demands in the report. This was accepted.

6. Publicity – AR displayed the revised poster within the First frame, as it will appear. NM asked BJ if he could suggest dates which would allow us to have a publicity photo?

DMag reported that the new website is now active, the About page needs expanding. **Action:** All to suggest copy improvements.

GC thanked DMag for her work on the website.

7. GC reported a successful meeting with LibDem councillors and a further meeting with First.

8. AGM notice -the meeting was advised that the April Forum meeting will include an AGM. A formal notice will be emailed to all and mailed to those without connection. RF asked if anyone was interested in participating on the committee to contact us.

9. AOB-

KF advised the withdrawal of the York-Bridlington service from mid-April, the No45 will no longer be a continuous route!

BJ advised that Andy Hayes had joined our discussions, he is the contracts manager for First and would be happy to handle any enquiries.

10. DNM- will be Tuesday 19th April.

DMag advised that we are still communicating with CYC about having hybrid meetings with some members in person and some on-line.

IA suggested that we ask at the next meeting how many would prefer to meet in person?