York Bus Forum – Members Monthly Meeting 17.30-19.00 Tuesday 21st November 2023, by Zoom

Attending: Doreen Magill (Chair), Graham Collett (Vice Chair), Niall McFerran (Secretary), Roger French, Flick Williams, Ian Craven, Miriam Binsztok, Jim Forrest, Jamie Kerslake, Toby Hart, Andy D’Agorne, Richard Parker, George Wood, Eden Blyth, Duncan Miller, Catherine Odell, Tom Donnelly (First Bus), John Bibby, Christine Cooke, Iris Wells, David Stuart, Dave Merrett, Julian Ridge (City of York Council), Mary Fairbrother, Elanor Tew, Natalie Linfoot, Lionel Lennox, Kayleigh Ingram (First), John Bibby, Ian Anderson and Terry French

1. The Chair welcomed delegates especially the first-time attenders. Apologies were received from: Mary Cannon, Dr. Colin Fletcher, Tony Hudson, Michael Howard, Joanne Waddington, Gail Shuttleworth, Diana Robinson and Robin Jorimann.
2. MB, the Transport Coordination Service Manager for Cornwall County Council, presented a talk on their experiences making improvements to the county’s bus network.

The measures introduced include introducing 170+ electric buses, being awarded £13.5M BSIP monies and a single cross network printed timetable.

She felt the keys to Cornwall’s success were, better communication with public through simple messages, cheaper fares with special rates for young users. The single brand on Cornwall’s buses helped establish identity.

There have been challenges particularly economic and political, but the network is stable.

The effects of the fare reduction scheme to £2 are still being analysed as it has amalgamated the journey costs between operators. The impact of increasing fares to a normal commercial level are unknown but currently passenger numbers are high especially for single trips.

The £2 fare has distorted the market, but journey numbers are higher than national trend. The ‘Bus Fare Pilot’ has made for improved marketing with items such as the county wide timetable. They are producing an application, but this is complicated.

DMag. asked how the network coped with the different seasonal demands? MB replied that the network is subject to regular reviews, but the holiday months present particular challenges usually centred around reliability. They are keen to develop the use of Park and Ride facilities.

EB asked how much involvement do you have in timetable planning? MB said that there is increasing involvement from the EP with better accountability.

JR asked if the DRT buses still existed. MB replied no, but there are more services being run by local communities.

RF asked if £2 fare has distorted the longer journey demand? MB advised that delays at the DfT have meant that there have not been improvements in revenue.

RP how do you cope with traffic delays? MB the operators and Council officers communicate well to advise of bottlenecks.

NM asked if the concessionary fare clients had returned? MB agreed that this is a problem but there is now an emphasis on hygiene and safety on board.

TH asked how well Sunday services are faring? MB admitted that 50% of the services were subsidised and this is a challenge.

EB asked what are the levels of public and school services being funded? MB suggested that the level of subsidy payments for public services is currently around £12M and the level for schools is £32M.

DMag asked if the size of carriageways presented special problems? MB agreed and advised that tree damage and roadworks were the major causes of delays.

DMag complimented the single printed timetable principle. MB advised that for continued success they require support from above and below.

1. Minutes of last meeting agreed with amendments.
2. EP meeting – NM attended and advised that new staff had organised the meeting well but there still needs to be a radical re-think regarding this process as no decisions and actions are being made, the transparency is still poor and there is no accountability. In his view this is not the best means to manage the city’s bus network.

ADA advised that at least the meeting minutes for the Operating Group are now appearing on the website. There should be a review of the EP structure in March 24, but it may not be open to the public. **Action: DMag. to asked Joanne Waddington for a copy of the review.**

1. BSIP – GC pointed out that the support services funding had been agreed to march but there was no mention of the numbers 13 and 412. Information on the No.13 is awaited.

RF reported that the route changes to the No.13 bus have been implemented without public consultation. These changes occurred in Copmanthorpe and Haxby, Cllr. Pearson has been advised of this but there has been no response to date.

IA asked why there had been so little progress on implementation of the BSIP schedule, ADA responded that there are delays in the current administration.

JR explained that large capital projects have long timescales over several years, as the plans in the BSIP portfolio are complex they will be years before completion. Although the award was two years ago the funds had only been received in the last year. He anticipated that £4M will be used to convert the Park and Ride sites and £4.5M will be invested in further bus priority routes. As the plans are developed, they will be shared with organisations such as the YBF.

RF thanks JR for the useful update

GC asked if with only 18 months on the clock there will be sufficient time to complete BSIP? JR responded that the plans will be shared as they progress.

1. CYC/Operators issues
2. TD presented an update on the recent passenger numbers which showed continued improvements in patronage and reliability. He thanked Gail Shuttleworth for the information she provided on recent roadworks. He advised of the introduction of Revenue Protection Officers to safeguard passengers and advised of a more active marketing campaign. He told the group that University services had shown a reduction in use since the free services were withdrawn. There are still concerns with city services in the mid-week times.

RF asked why the services on No.4 had been reduced when its numbers were strong?

1. The letter to Michael Howard has been responded to, but we need to analyse it further.
2. The Coastliner position is unchanged. GC has written to Transport Focus and we await a response.
3. Reliance have withdrawn all their weekend services running north of York, some are now operated by York Pullman. **ACTION; JR to advise on situation.**
4. The Finance statements and plans to freeze subscriptions were agreed.
5. AOB

DR still feels that the No.9 could run through Jewbury and Monkgate instead of Layerthorpe. TD responded that it is CYC that determines the route.

JR advised that the Local Transport Plan will commence its public consultation period shortly and invited members to submit responses.

1. The date of the next meeting is 19th December.