York Bus Forum – Members Monthly Meeting 17.30-19.00 Tuesday 17th October 2023, by Zoom

Attending: Doreen Magill (Chair), Graham Collett (Vice Chair), Niall McFerran (Secretary), Roger French, Flick Williams, Andy D’Agorne, Jason Murgatroyd, Richard Parker, George Wood, Eden Blyth, Duncan Miller, Tony Hudson, Catherine Odell, Tom Donnelly (First Bus), Peter Kitchin, John Bibby, Christine Cooke, Iris Wells, David Stuart, Dave Merrett, Joanne Waddington (City of York Council), Elanor Tew, Glen Simpson, Lionel Lennox, Tony May, John Slaughter, Ian Anderson, Stephen Hemingway, Carole Green, Nick Murray, Jonathan Bray, Cllr. P. Kilbane

1. Delegates were welcomed by the Chair. Apologies had been received from Gail Shuttleworth, Debbie Cobbett, Michael Howard, Mary Cannon, Dee Boyle, Mary Fairbrother, Terry French, Robin Jorimann, Kevin Fradley and Tom Bridge.
2. Jonathan Bray former Director of the Urban Transport Group, now a campaigner for the re-regulation of buses, gave a presentation.

He said that there is good news. Buses are now even more important in transport strategies than before. Capital investment in bus fleets is growing. Buses in some regions are part of fully integrated transport plans.

The bad news is that bus use is in a historic decline, only poorer areas with student populations showing growth. In some areas the percentage of journeys by bus is very small particularly rural, well-off districts.

The challenge is the available road space, which is insufficient and the resources available to resolve this are limited. Can we think differently in the future? Increased use of bus priority measures and detailed management of travel corridors is required. Again, the resource to provide the detailed management of transport is very limited and a better evidence base from which to communicate the benefits of such measures is required.

There is a lack of R&D investment in buses in comparison with rail, there is, for example, no reliable safety data across the country. Industry costs have risen putting pressure on margins and the need to recruit the right personnel suggests that we need to keep subsidies high to maintain attractive fare levels.

He finds York buses unreliable and the fares too high. He suggests that there is no sense of anyone being ‘in control’ and that the problem for York is that it is part of larger networks.

York needs to consider the benefits of a more efficient, integrated network.

DMag. asked what would improve York’s position? JB suggested a bus station.

SH compared York to Amsterdam – our Sunday and evening services are poor. JB suggested that a more regulated system would ensure services run.

RP suggested that £2 fare is too cheap but First have done much to improve punctuality by engineering timetables. JB suggested that better ‘social’ contact between passengers and drivers could be considered with more announcements.

EB agreed that industry lacks proactive approach. JB suggested that operators and local authorities need more motivation, improvements can be achieved.

ADA suggested that with a forthcoming combined authority and a new administration we need to improve the culture in N.Yorks. JB agreed but added that new authorities take some time to bed in. He felt that there was an opportunity to forge a political reputation in the current position.

JM pointed out that bus lanes in Liverpool had been removed, JB advised that they are now restored following intervention.

GC felt that there was poor supervision of buses since the removal of the Inspectors. JB agreed that there should be better management and control. Many issues go back to the lack of R7D and poor information.

DMag. thanked the speaker for his thought-provoking presentation.

1. The minutes of the last meeting were agreed, there are no matters arising.
2. DMag. reported on the EP meeting of the 11thOctober, there were no improvements – there was no agenda making it impossible to prepare. It was worthless!

ADA concurred, no minutes, no accountability, and no follow through. He called for greater transparency.

1. The Local Transport Strategy is now in the public domain and will be discussed at the Economy and Place and Transport Scrutiny Committee next week which we will attend. It will then go to the Exec. Meeting on 14th November.
2. FW confirmed that the recently delivered buses only have a single wheelchair space. The recent Accessibility Day at Vanguard Park was very well attended and there has been suggestions to repeat the exercise in other locations.
3. CYC have appointed a new manager in charge of handling the bus issues Joanne Waddington, who introduced herself to the meetings.

TD reported that it will be difficult to route the No.9 bus to Monkgate as it only uses Jewbury if there are problems on Layerthorpe.

The idea of using P&R services during the night times is worth consideration.

JW apologised for the problems with the EP meetings, but they are having staffing issues.

TD advised that discussions were starting about the retro fitting of an extra wheelchair space on buses.

RP felt that there should be plenty of room for an additional space.

RF reminded delegates to send in suggestions for real time display boards on bus stops.

JW reported that the stop on Peasholme Green had been fixed today. The Banana Warehouse stop will be subject to a survey over three days, the results should be available soon. DMag. asked that the raw data be shared with us. Cllr. K advised that the

TD reported that a network review was under way with possible changes in January with possible returns to clock face timings.

GC felt that there should be fixed dates at which timetables could be altered and that the public need to be better informed about these changes.

SH was concerned regarding the effect on services of the changes at the Queen Street Bridge.

TD advised that the work was scheduled to be carried out over two weekends.

1. DMag reported continued problems on the Coastliner services with insufficient buses to cope with the demand.

GC felt that we need to contact the new MD of Transdev to lodge our complaint. The Coastliner appears to be focussed more on tourism that the regular users.

Cllr. K agreed that York needs a plan that puts buses first and the operators need to improve.

1. AOB

DMag. advised that all bus stops in Heworth are providing incorrect information regarding the 45/46 services.

JW asked her to send an email with details of the problem.

RF asked if No.19 service will be going out to tender? JW replied yes it will be taken over by York Pullman.

1. Date of next meeting is Tuesday 21st November.