

North Yorkshire County Council

Business and Environmental Services

Executive Members

24 June 2022

YorBus Pilot Project Extension

Report of the Assistant Director – Travel, Environmental & Countryside Services

1.0 Purpose Of Report

- 1.1 To update the Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services (BES), and Business and Environmental Services Executive Members on the YorBus pilot project over the last 12 months.
- 1.2 Seek approval from The Corporate Director, BES and BES, Executive Members to extend the YorBus pilot scheme for up to 12 additional months from July 2022.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As part of the wider review of transport across the authority, The Council wanted to investigate alternative delivery options for providing transport services across the county. A proof of concept activity for a digital demand responsive service in a rural town and its surrounding villages was agreed as a pilot project. This was agreed for a period of 12 months and its aim was to offer customers a more flexible and responsive service, improving the customer experience.
- 2.2 The service is provided on two 14 seater , wheelchair accessible buses using NYCC “in house” fleet vehicles and staff resource and was launched in Ripon, Masham, Bedale and surrounding villages in July 2021 covering an area of 217km².The service operates from 06:55 to 18:00 Monday to Friday, and 09:00 to 18:00 on Saturdays.
- 2.3 Customers using the service are required to book ‘on demand’ via the dedicated YorBus app or through the NYCC Customer Service Centre. The service cannot currently be pre-booked and this model offers the service maximum flexibility in terms of aggregating rides and also maximises the ability of the service to meet passenger demand.
- 2.4 There is a flat fare of £1.20 for adults to travel within the service area, or 65p for a child, with under-fives travelling for free. Customers with a concessionary bus pass may use their bus pass to travel for free within concessionary bus pass hours.

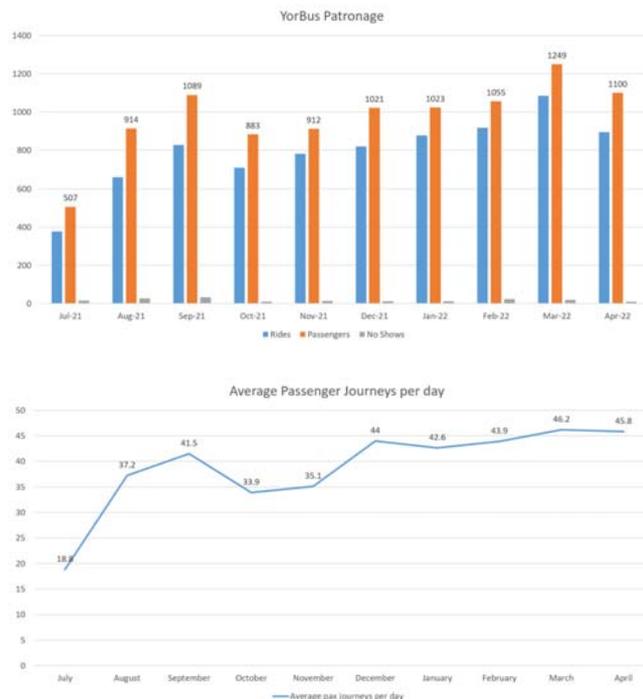
3.0 Performance of YorBus 2021/22

- 3.1 The business case for the project identified a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the service. The table below sets out these KPIs and the progress the pilot has made in achieving them

KPI	Measure	Target	Progress (09/05/22)
Passenger mode shift from fixed timetable to YorBus	Number of pick ups	758 at 3 months 885 at 6 months	9,765 Patronage data on LBS suggests this is latent demand rather than modal shift
Customer satisfaction	Ride rating	85% of riders give a 4 or 5 star rating	92% 5 star rating
Awareness of service	Citizens Panel survey responses which indicate they have heard of the YorBus service	50% respondents indicate they are aware of the service (6 months post Go Live)	Survey in progress, initial results indicate 89% of respondents who live in Hambleton or Harrogate districts (where the pilot operates) are aware of the service
Customer base	Number of customer accounts created	171 at 3 months 398 at 6 months	2,416 accounts created
Journey availability	% requests which receive a ride proposal	80% requests receive a proposal	82% requests received a proposal
Pick up times	% ride proposals within 45 minutes of search time	65% requests offered a journey within 45 minutes of search time	Average wait time 31 minutes (73% of all scheduled rides* offered a journey within 45 minutes of search) *Figure not obtainable where proposal was not confirmed
Punctuality	Average pick up time: Scheduled v Actual	Average pick up time: Scheduled v Actual to be less than 5 minutes	Average pick up time: Scheduled v Actual 0.4 minutes
Service suitability	% accepted proposals	60% proposals accepted at 6 months	47.4% - although lower than target, this is higher than other DR services when looked at in a benchmarking exercise
Mid project reviews and final assessment on wider rollout recommendation	Reviews will monitor as a minimum: Objective: Costs (internal and external), income and customer demand (pilot and existing subsidised services) Subjective: Customer satisfaction and experience evidence.	Review reports at month 1, 3, 6 and 9	2 reviews complete, review 3 in progress

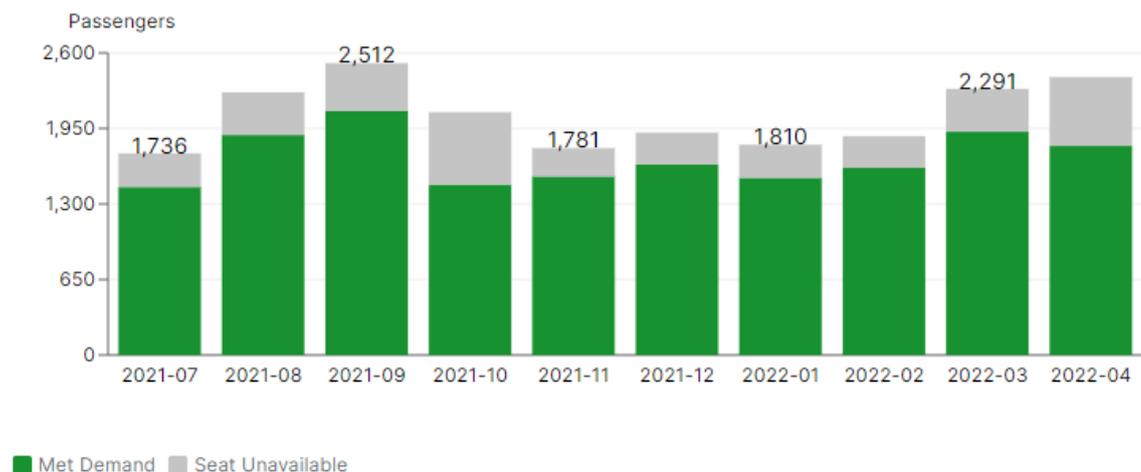
3.2 Comparator data has been sought from Via (the system provider) in relation to other schemes operating across the country to benchmark, the YorBus pilot service. The comparator data demonstrates that YorBus is slightly ahead of peers in completion rate and seat availability.

3.3 Patronage of the YorBus service has been stronger than forecast during the project pilot, and exceeded the key performance indicators associated with patronage.



Met Demand

Number of ride requests (passengers) met with a ride proposal.



4.0 Customer Feedback

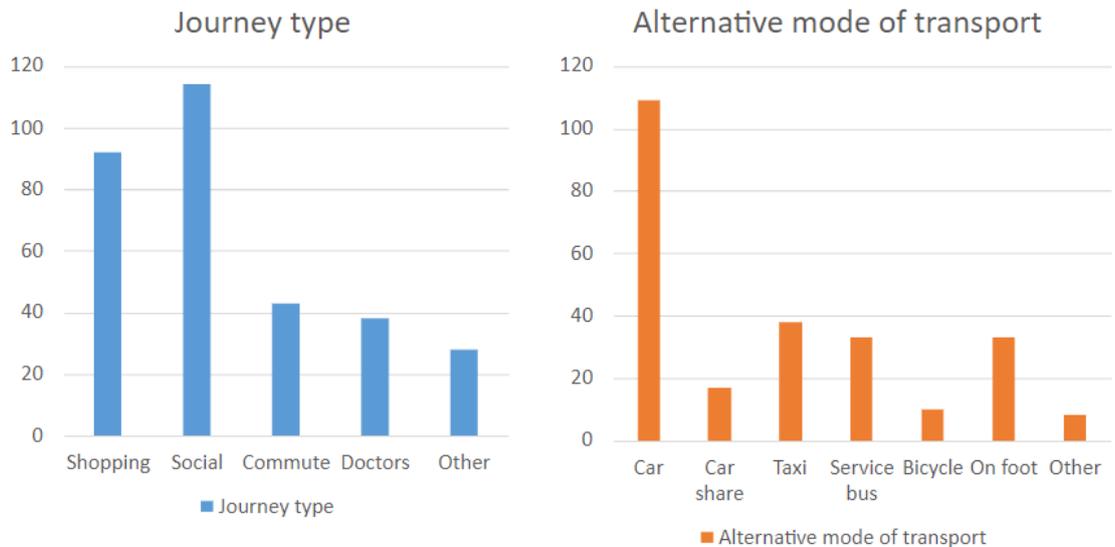
4.1 Feedback from customers has been very positive, and the high levels of customer satisfaction are reflected in the number of repeat passengers using the service.

4.2 In the period 01/07/21 - 09/05/22, YorBus has seen more than 650 active riders, with 39% of these customers completing more than 5 journeys on the service. There are a number of customers who have completed more than 100 rides on the service.

4.3 Customers who leave feedback via the app leave an average rating of 4.9 out of 5 stars, with 92% of rides being given a 5 star rating.

4.4 A survey carried out in May 2022 has found that customers have been using the YorBus service to travel to work, essential services and for social trips, and that the most common mode of transport which would have been used if YorBus wasn't available was a car. This clearly evidences that YorBus is helping to tempt North Yorkshire residents away from the private motor vehicle and onto public transport.

- What do/would you use the service for? How would you travel otherwise?



5.0 Pilot Extension

5.1 As the service approaches one year of operation, both the planned end date of the pilot and the end date of the contract with the software provider are approaching.

5.2 There are three options we have considered:

1. cease the pilot and remove the service from the operating zone
2. cease the pilot and mainstream the service in the operating zone only
3. extend the pilot while options are considered around the expansion of the service to other parts of the county.

5.3 Having evaluated each option using a 5-point business model we have identified the risks/benefits of each option and the preferred option is 3 as:

- The YorBus pilot has clearly evidenced that digital demand responsive transport is filling a gap in public transport provision, enabling people to travel to work, essential services and to make social trips – and it is helping to reduce car use.
- The YorBus pilot has evidenced that this delivery model appeals to a wide range of customers, encompassing children, fare paying adults and concessionary pass holders.
- It is likely that the success of the pilot could be replicated in other areas of the county, and provide a public transport option for many North Yorkshire residents in rural locations.

5.4 The recommendation is to extend the pilot for the duration of up to 12 months (until 30 June 2023), to enable options for wider rollout to be explored in more detail, including assessing potential zones and a review of the overall delivery model

6.0 Next Steps

- 6.1 There are areas for development that we would like to give attention to should approval be given to extend the pilot. Some of the key areas are:
- Develop our telephone contact option for a better customer experience
 - Consider how to roll out return booking experience for the customer
 - Undertake a fares review and look at incentivising certain areas like group bookings
 - Consider if we can widen the current offer to other villages bordering the zone
 - Re-launch a comms campaign over the summer
 - Following the confirmation from the DfT that BSIP funding will not be forthcoming, seek alternative funding sources for future roll out to other parts of the County.

7.0 Equalities

- 7.1 Consideration has been given to the potential for any adverse equality impacts arising from this decision (see Appendix A). The extension of the pilot scheme will allow all passengers to continue to benefit from the service and provide travel options for all members of the community to access essential services.
- 7.2 Maintaining the YorBus service levels will help to avoid any adverse impact to groups of people with protected characteristics.

8.0 Finance

- 8.1 During 2020/21 £15,000 expenditure was incurred as one off set up costs with Via, the software provider. Expenditure and income during 2021/22 (Jul-21 – Mar-22) was as follows:

Item	Cost
Printing	£664
IT Software	£11,045
Marketing	£16,653
Fleet Operational Costs	£143,337
CSC charge	£1,684
Fares	-£6,366
Total	£167,017

The costs in the 21/22 financial year were met from the ENCTS budget

- 8.2 Should the pilot be extended the costs during 2022/23 (April 22 – March 23) are detailed below:

Item	Cost
Fleet Operational Costs	£207,564
Admin	£9,672
IT Software	£15,960
CSC charge	£8,536
Fares income*	-£12,833
Total	£228,899

* Estimated income based on most recent complete month of operation.

- 8.3 The costs in the 21/22 financial year in 8.1 cover 9 months of operation from July 2021 to March 2022 and the costs in 8.2 cover 12 months of operation from April 22 to March 23. Costs from April 23 until July 23 will be met from 2023/24 IPT budget allocations.
- 8.4 It should be noted that the fleet operational costs have increased this financial year due to additional costs in fuel and staffing and CSC costs are larger in the current year due to the requirement for increased staff support hours to cover increased operational hours.
- 8.5 The income is estimated on current fares so will increase if the fares increase is put in place as planned in August 2022.

9.0 Legal

- 9.1 The Council's obligations as set out in the Transport Act 1985 section 63 (as amended by the Transport Act 2008), places the following duty on the Council:
- to secure the provision of such public passenger transport services as the Council consider it appropriate to secure to meet any public transport requirements within the county which would not in their view be met apart from any action taken by them for that purpose;
 - in exercising or performing any of their functions pursuant to section 63 the Council shall have regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled
- 9.2 The Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules shall be followed to extend the contract with ViaVan for access to a technology platform system to manage demand responsive transport services for a further 12 months.

10.0 Climate Change

- 10.1 The continuation of the pilot will allow passengers continued access to a flexible bus service that allows them to continue accessing essential services. Maintaining the bus service level for another twelve months will not have any positive or adverse impacts. Impacts will remain the same as existing, see Appendix B.

11.0 Recommendation

- 11.1 That the Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services in consultation with Business and Environmental Services Executive Members agrees to the extension of the YorBus Pilot Project for up to 12 additional months from July 2022 and notes that the additional costs of £228,899 during 2022/23 will be funded from existing IPT budget allocations

MICHAEL LEAH
Assistant Director – Travel, Environmental & Countryside Services

Author of Report: Catherine Price/Emma Pemberton

Background documents: None

Initial equality impact assessment screening form			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services		
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport		
Proposal being screened	YorBus Pilot Project Extension		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Catherine Price		
What are you proposing to do?	Continue the current provision of the YorBus service with for an extended pilot period		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	to enable options for wider rollout to be explored in more detail, including assessing potential zones and a review of the overall delivery model		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	No		
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristics			
As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 			
If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your <u>Equality rep</u> for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
NYCC additional characteristics			
People in rural areas		X	
People on a low income		X	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		X	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable	Yes, the proposals relate to public transport.		

impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.				
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No			
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Continue to full EIA:	
Reason for decision	<p>The extension of the pilot scheme will allow all passengers to continue to benefit from the service and provide travel options for all members of the community to access essential services.</p> <p>Maintaining bus service levels will avoid any adverse impact to groups of people with protected characteristics.</p>			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Michael Leah			
Date	18/05/2021			



Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	YorBus Pilot Project Extension
Brief description of proposal	To extend the current YorBus service for a further 12 months
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport
Lead officer	Catherine Price
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	None
Date impact assessment started	May 2022

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

The other option consider is not to submit the acceptance declaration. However the council would not receive the grant funding available which in turn would have adverse impacts in maintaining the bus service levels needed to help key workers get to work and allowing the public to access essential services.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

10.1 The Council will allocate funds to extend the pilot project from existing resources for the extension period.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where	No impact (Place a X in the box below where	Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes over and above business as usual Evidence or measurement of effect Figures for CO₂e Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	Emissions from travel		X		Maintain bus service levels needed to help the public to access essential services will result in no impact.		
	Emissions from construction		X		No impact.		
	Emissions from running of buildings		X		No impact.		
	Other		X		No impact		
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>			X		No impact.		
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>			X		No impact		
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>			X		Maintain bus service levels needed to allow the public to access essential services will result in no impact.		

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		X		<p>No impact anticipated at this stage.</p>		
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		X		<p>No impact anticipated at this stage.</p>		
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		X		<p>No impact anticipated at this stage.</p>		
<p>Other (please state below)</p>		X		<p>No impact anticipated at this stage.</p>		

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

Not currently aware of any good practice environmental standards relating to this proposal.

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The continuation of the pilot will allow passengers continued access to a flexible bus service that allows them to continue accessing essential services. Maintaining the bus service level for another twelve months will not have any positive or adverse impacts. Impacts will remain the same as existing.

Maintaining bus service levels will not have any positive or adverse impacts. Impacts will remain the same as existing.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Catherine Price
Job title	Head of Transport Services
Service area	Integrated Passenger Transport
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services
Signature	C Price
Completion date	18/05/2022

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Michael Leah

Date: 18/05/2022