

**North Yorkshire County Council**

**Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee**

**15 December 2022**

**Receipt of Petition 'Restoration of the original bus service between Ingleton and Lancaster - previously the No80 service provided by Stagecoach'**

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To advise of a petition containing more than 500 signatures.
- 1.2 To ask the Area Constituency Committee to consider a response.

**2.0 The Petition**

- 2.1 A petition has been received by the County Council. This is a paper-based petition with 918 signatures, all of which are of people who live, work or study in the county.
- 2.2 The wording of the petition is 'Restoration of the original bus service between Ingleton and Lancaster - previously the No80 service provided by Stagecoach'.
- 2.3 The covering letter for the petition provided the following context:

There are some people in Bentham who did not use the 80/81 bus but that's not to say that will always be the case. Tomorrow, next week, next year... they may be unable to drive for health reasons or car breakdown/ servicing etc.

The Train service is out of the question for many people in High Bentham and just not realistic for residents of Low Bentham.

The new bus takes 30 minutes to get to Kirkby Lonsdale. Passengers then get off the Bus for a 30 minute wait (where?) and then get the next Bus to Lancaster which takes a further hour making the total journey of 31 miles and taking 2 hours.

Previously, it took 55 minutes for a 14 mile journey.

The return journey from Lancaster is interesting.

There are 4 Buses arriving in Bentham Monday to Friday. 3 of these buses from Lancaster to Kirkby Lonsdale arrive 2 minutes, 2 minutes before the Bentham bus departs. The 4<sup>th</sup> buss (a School Bus) arrives at exactly the same time as the Bentham Bus departs!! If you miss the Bus; which is highly likely then there is a 2 hour wait for the next bus in 3 cases and 1 hour 5 minutes for the other case.

Here's an example of this ludicrous service: The distance from Bentham to Hornby is 6 miles. On the new bus route this journey would take 30 minutes, 1 ½ hours to do 6 miles. The Bus, because of the route, would have travelled 21.0 miles to get from Bentham to Hornby.

In conclusion, any Hospital, Dental, Optical or other appointments in Lancaster will have to fit in with this Bus "service".

### **3.0 The County Council's Arrangements for Receiving and Responding to Petitions**

3.1 The key features of the County Council's arrangements for receiving and debating petitions, as published on the County Council's website, are as follows:-

- Receipt of the petition is published on the County Council's website (which has been done in the case of this petition).
- If a petition contains 500 or more signatures (but less than 30,130 signatories), it will be scheduled for debate at the next meeting of the appropriate Area Constituency Committee.
- The petition organiser is offered the opportunity to speak for five minutes at the Area Constituency Committee meeting to present his/her petition. Subsequently, at the meeting, the petition will be discussed by County Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes and a decision will be made on how to respond to the petition.
- Possible responses by the County Council to petitions, as shown on the website, are:-
  - (a) to take the action requested by the petition;
  - (b) not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate;
  - (c) to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee; or
  - (d) where the issue is one on which the county council executive are required to make the final decision, the county council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.
- The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on the website.

3.2 In accordance with the arrangements described above, the petition organisers have been invited to join today's meeting to present their petition.

### **4.0 Business and Environmental Services Officers' Comments Regarding the Petition**

4.1 Stagecoach operated the Monday to Saturday daytime services on routes 80/81 on a commercial basis from April 2016 until earlier this year. This means the service ran without financial support from either Lancashire County Council (LCC) or North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and covered its costs from bus fare revenue.

4.2 In late 2021 Stagecoach advised that the service was no longer commercially viable and would be withdrawn. This is not an isolated problem with many other commercial bus services across both council areas being withdrawn and requiring additional funding to provide replacements.

4.3 Use of the previous Stagecoach service within North Yorkshire was low, with an average 31 passengers a day pre-pandemic and this had fallen by 50% by the time that Stagecoach withdrew the service.

4.4 Working together, LCC and NYCC investigated costs and timetable options to provide a replacement service. The cost to maintain the service at a similar level to that provided by Stagecoach was over £450,000 per annum, and neither authority was in a position to find this amount of additional funding. Kirkby Lonsdale Coach Hire submitted a partially commercial option that provided journeys within Lancashire, but not offering a service 80 timetable via High Bentham, Low Bentham and Burton in Lonsdale.

- 4.5 This option was accepted by Lancashire County Council but in order to prevent the communities of High Bentham, Low Bentham and Burton in Lonsdale having no bus service NYCC worked with the operator to retain a link to Ingleton and Kirkby Lonsdale and to connect Low Bentham with High Bentham. This is the current 583 timetable.
- 4.6 Regarding the specific comments made in the cover letter, the aim of the 583 service was to provide links to the nearby service centres of Ingleton and Kirkby Lonsdale. While travel further afield to Lancaster is possible it was not the primary reason to introduce the service and the cost to fully replicate the previous Service 80 timetable was prohibitive.
- 4.7 The bus arriving from Lancaster is the same vehicle that then operates the journey to High Bentham so the short connection time would work.
- 4.8 The vehicle that operates the 583 journeys also operates on other Kirkby Lonsdale services and this means that there isn't time available to extend to Hornby to connect with service 81/82.
- 4.9 There are currently no plans to make any changes to the service, however, there is also a demand responsive bus service operated by North Yorkshire County Council operating in the North Craven area which brings people into Bentham to the Living Well project and also provides some shopper trips. There may be scope for this bus to also provide a connection across to Hornby from Bentham and this is something we can investigate if it is felt to be beneficial.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

- 5.1 That the Committee notes the petition and considers a response.

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Background Document: North Yorkshire County Council's petitions information and advice, a copy of which is on the County Council's website at <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/petitions-information-and-advice>