

**North Yorkshire County Council**

**Skipton and Ripon Area Constituency Committee**

**9 March 2023**

**Update on 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 update committee following the request to review transport links.
- 1.2 To ask the Area Constituency Committee to consider the proposed action.

**2.0 The Petition**

- 2.1 A petition was received by the County Council and considered by the Committee on the 15 December 2022.
- 2.2 The wording of the petition was '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 two hours.
  - Previously, it took 55 minutes for a 14-mile journey.
  - The return journey from Lancaster is interesting.
  - There are four Buses arriving in Bentham Monday to Friday. Three of these buses from Lancaster to Kirkby Lonsdale arrive two minutes, two minutes before the Bentham bus departs. The fourth 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 two hour wait for the next bus in three cases and 65 minutes for the other case.
  - Here's an example of this ludicrous service: The distance from Bentham to Hornby is six miles. On the new bus route this journey would take 30 minutes, 90 minutes to do six 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 Business and Environmental Services Officers' Comments Regarding the Petition**

- 3.1 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.
- 3.1.1 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.
- 3.1.2 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.
- 3.1.3 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.
- 3.1.4 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.
- 3.1.5 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.
- 3.1.6 The bus arriving from Lancaster is the same vehicle that then operates the journey to High Bentham so the short connection time would work.
- 3.1.7 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 and there are currently no plans to alter the 583 service.
- 3.2 At the Area Committee meeting on the 15 December, officers were asked to review the practicality of a link between Bentham and Hornby to improve connections to Lancaster.
- 3.2.1 There is no time available in the operating schedule for bus operating Service 583 but there is also a demand responsive bus service operated by North Yorkshire County Council operating in the North Craven area. This service runs on Mondays to Fridays providing some shopper and health related trips in the area and also bringing people into Bentham to the Looking Well Project.

- 3.2.2 The bus operates a school route to High Bentham Primary School and then is used regularly on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays by passengers travelling to the Bentham Living Well project. However, it would be able to operate a scheduled journey from the Low and High Bentham to Hornby on Wednesdays and Thursdays in time to connect with the 09:48 Service 82 departure to Lancaster (arriving at Lancaster at 10:22).
- 3.2.3 A return journey could be operated back from Hornby at 14:20 which would be available for passengers returning from Lancaster on the 13:35 departure, allowing three hours in Lancaster for shopping or other appointments.
- 3.2.4 Operating this new link on these days will reduce the time when the bus is available to provide other journeys in the area, but passenger data shows that the majority of current trips could still be accommodated.
- 3.2.5 It is proposed to operate this on a trial basis if the Committee feels it would be beneficial.

#### **4.0 Recommendation**

- 4.1 That the Committee considers the proposal for connecting journeys.

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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>