

Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14 April 2021

Report of the Corporate Director Business and Environmental Services

Rural Transport in North Yorkshire

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an update report on road passenger related rural transport in the county including funding, policy and strategy.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 At the 24 October 2019 meeting of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee the committee resolved that an update report from the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit be provided on rural transport in the county including funding, policy and strategy.

3.0 Policy, Strategy and Funding

3.1 Legal Duty:

The council's statutory duties in relation to local bus service provision are contained within S63 of the Transport Act 1985, where the Council is obliged to:

- (a) 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; and
- (b) formulate from time to time general policies as to the descriptions of services they propose to secure under paragraph (a) above.

- 3.1.1 The Council also has a legal duty to consider how its policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010, including people with disabilities, and to make any reasonable adjustment necessary to ensure they are not disproportionately affected.

- 3.1.2 The council has statutory duties in relation to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS). These duties relate to issuing a bus pass to eligible residents, who are defined within the legislation, and for reimbursing bus operators for journeys made by passengers with a bus pass. There are a number of Acts and Regulations covering these statutory duties including Transport Act 1985, Transport Act 2000, Travel Concession (Eligibility) Act 2002, Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007, Travel Concession Schemes Regulations 1986, Mandatory Travel Concession (England) Regulations 2011, The Travel Concessions (Eligible Services) Order 2002 and The Travel Concessions (Eligible Services)(Amendment) Order 2009.

3.2 Policy and Strategy:

The Council fulfils its local bus service provision statutory duties through a combination of strategy, policy and procedure. The Local Transport Plan (the Plan) sets out strategic objectives in relation to the provision of transport infrastructure and services. It is a comprehensive suite of documents that are subject to regular review and widespread consultation, and which include an assessment of transport needs, satisfaction and behaviours. The Plan is also supported by a strategic environmental impact assessment.

3.2.2 The Plan sets out the following relevant objectives for public transport:

- to ensure that as many communities as possible have transport services which contribute to alleviating isolation and loneliness and allow people to live independently;
- to support the local economy where possible, by maintaining access to the National Rail network and providing public transport links between towns and villages;
- to ensure that the services we subsidise give value for money.

3.2.3 These objectives are delivered through a mix of arrangements including:

- Commercial rail and bus services
- Supported local bus services
- Financial and practical support to community transport schemes
- Support for community cars
- Other support to schemes such as wheel to work.

3.2.4 When considering the provision of supported Local Bus Services the Council has adopted the following service standards:

- We will not subsidise evening or Sunday services
- We will not subsidise services that primarily run in and within a 2 mile radius of market towns - "Town Services"
- The maximum frequency we will specify for a tendered service is one journey every two hours.

3.3 Funding:

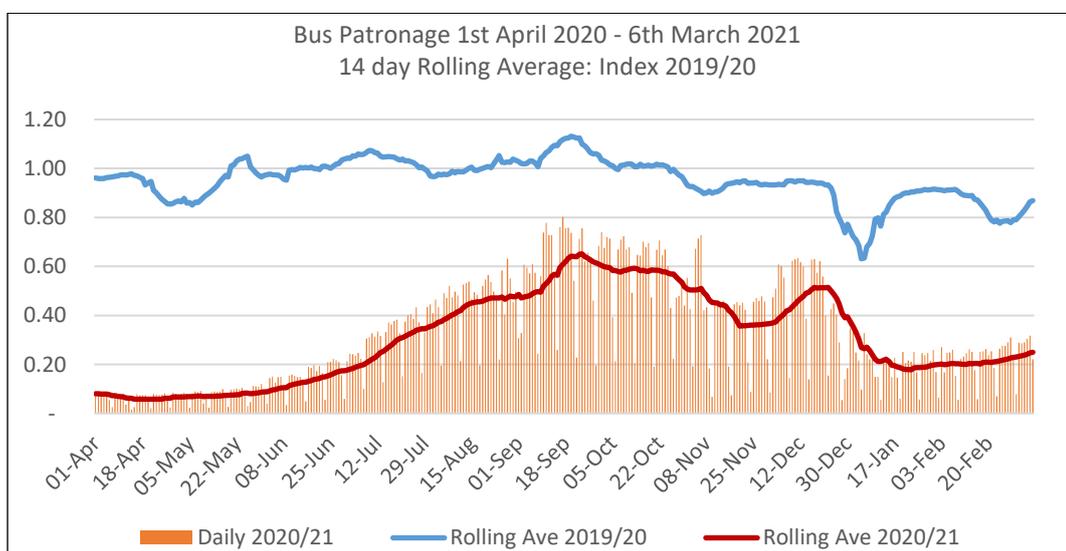
Council expenditure on tendered bus services, community and demand responsive transport and concessionary travel is forecast to be over £10m for 2020/21. Concessionary travel payments are made to operators to reimburse them for concessionary journeys made by bus pass holders as part of the national scheme and this alone accounts for over £7m. The remaining spend supports passenger transport through subsidised local bus services, community transport and park and ride services and £1.5m of this is funded by council revenue budgets with the rest from developer contributions, central government grants, Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) funding. Expenditure on tendered bus services has declined in the last 10 years in response to austerity and savings that were required.

4.0 Current Provision

4.1 Local Bus Services:

As highlighted in section 3 above, expenditure on supporting local bus services experienced a period of decline up to 2016 but since then the support provided has remained largely stable.

- 4.1.2 During 2020/21, financial support was provided to 85 local bus services through contractual agreements with 18 operators. A list of these services can be found at Appendix 1. The council also transports some children by local bus service as part of its statutory duties in relation to home to school. There are limitations to the ability to do this; however, in 2020/21 £350,301 was paid to local bus and rail service operators for season tickets for home to school transport.
- 4.1.3 Regular reviews are undertaken of the local bus services in receipt of financial support. As part of the formal review process, key stakeholders such as local members and parish councils are made aware of the review and asked for comments in relation to service provision in their area.
- 4.1.4 The Covid19 pandemic has had a significant impact on local bus services nationally. The chart below demonstrates the impact in North Yorkshire, with daily (Monday to Saturday) bus patronage from 1 April 2020 to 6 March 2021. Passenger numbers have been indexed 1.00 = patronage levels at pre pandemic. It clearly shows the huge impact of the various lockdowns and public messaging on the use of local bus services with patronage falling to a low of 5% of pre Covid levels.



- 4.1.5 To support operators during this difficult period the council has maintained home to school and local bus service contractual payments. In addition, reimbursement to operators for journeys made by ENCTS pass holders has been made at pre pandemic levels. Separately the DfT has provided Covid19 Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG) to local bus operators, some of which has been routed through Local Transport Authorities including the council.
- 4.1.6 The Government view public transport as vital national infrastructure and DfT's intention with the whole support package has been to ensure that passenger transport services are maintained and that there are sufficient services available to enable the public, in particular key workers, to make essential journeys and travel safely.
- 4.1.7 From the data we have available, there are indications to the level and speed that patronage recovery will take and whether the different ways of working and shopping people have adopted during the pandemic will continue to some extent. There are indications that demand will be different and patronage could be in the region of 20% lower than prior to the pandemic.

- 4.1.8 Officers are working with local bus service operators to understand what the public transport network might look like during and after recovery and how we can work in partnership to ensure bus patronage levels improve across the North Yorkshire network. This work will intensify in the weeks leading up to the withdrawal of the CBSSG funding mentioned above.
- 4.2 External Funding:
In February 2020, the Department for Transport announced funding of £220 million to improve bus services through its Better Deal for Bus Users. In North Yorkshire, we asked for proposals from bus operators, Parishes, County Councillors, members of the public and other stakeholders on how we might spend the funding. A total of 77 responses were received with requests or suggestions, some included multiple requests and a total of 115 suggestions were put forward. Whilst many requests did not include costs, it is estimated that the total value of requests submitted is around £7million.
- 4.2.1 Supported bus services fund: The council was allocated and had the opportunity to submit proposals for £757k for this funding, The 115 suggestions were prioritised covering items such as comparison against current levels of service availability and if the journey could already be made by connecting journeys, reasons for travel (for example employment, healthcare etc.), cost benefit etc. The DfT subsequently advised, following the COVID outbreak, that this funding may also be used on maintaining the supported and commercial bus service network at pre-pandemic levels. Recovery of local bus patronage is a concern for the council, as highlighted a section 4.1 above. As such, the council is expecting to spend the full amount of £757,185 on maintaining the supported and commercial bus network at pre-pandemic levels.
- 4.2.3 Rural Mobility Fund: The council submitted two expressions of interest (EoI's) to the Department for Transport for the Rural Mobility Fund. The first bid is around resolving some of the health transport issues in the Richmondshire and Hambleton areas. A number of consultation responses referred to problems accessing hospital services in these areas. The second bid is based around working directly with communities to establish their needs and provide them with the resources to resolve the transport issues they identify. The DfT received 56 separate EoI's and the fund was therefore heavily oversubscribed. Unfortunately, neither of the council's EoI's were within the 17 taken forward to the next stage of the funding opportunity.
- 4.2.4 Opportunities to bid for external funding are continually monitored.
- 4.2.5 The Transport Chapter of the York and North Yorkshire devolution proposal submitted to central government contained a number of passenger transport related items including two funding related items seeking:
- £52.5m funding to deliver a three-phase programme to accelerate the transition to zero exhaust emission public transport across our region
 - £36m revenue funding for bus services. £2m funding would be used to pump-prime services in response to COVID-19; £33m would be used to develop existing areas of under bus provision in North Yorkshire; and £1m would be used to develop and implement technology-based solutions, based on the principles of Mobility as a Service (MaaS)

4.3 Digital Demand Responsive Service

The council is committed to ensuring that as many communities as possible have transport services whilst at the same time balancing available budgets and responding to austerity and savings required. The council is also committed to providing innovative solutions when and where appropriate and as such is introducing a new Digital Demand Responsive Service for a trial period, anticipated to be 12 months. A pilot area of the county will be provided with a flexible transport service, where transport is shared and vehicles vary their routes based on demand rather than using a fixed route or timetable, therefore providing transport that would react to local needs. More detailed information is due to be presented to this committee's mid cycle briefing on 1 June 2021.

4.4 English National Concessionary Travel Scheme

Outside London, the statutory concession currently consists of free off-peak travel for older and disabled people on all local buses anywhere in England from 09:30 until 23:00 on weekdays and all day at weekends and on Bank Holidays. The following groups are eligible for the concession:

- Eligible older people
- Eligible disabled people, meaning a person who:
 - is blind or partially sighted;
 - is profoundly or severely deaf;
 - is without speech;
 - has a disability, or has suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to walk;
 - does not have arms or has long-term loss of the use of both arms;
 - has a learning disability, that is, a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning; or
 - would, if he applied for the grant of a licence to drive a motor vehicle under Part III of the Road Traffic Act 1988, have his application refused pursuant to section 92 of that Act (physical fitness) otherwise than on the ground of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol,

4.4.1 In addition, certain people are automatically 'passported' to free bus travel based on their eligibility for other schemes / welfare benefits.

4.4.2 In addition to the mandatory bus concession, the council is able to introduce additional "discretionary" concessions. In North Yorkshire, the following discretionary provisions are provided:

- Passes can be used from 9.00am to 6.00am as opposed to the statutory requirement of 9.30am to 11.00pm.
- In addition to the above point concessions are accepted on certain 6.00am to 9.00am journeys
- We provide companion passes in certain circumstances.

4.5 Community Transport and Car Schemes:

The council supports 15 Voluntary Car Schemes delivered by voluntary organisations across the county. During 2018/19 over 61,000 journeys and during 2019/20 over 63,000 journeys were made.

4.6 The council also supports 6 Dial-a-Ride Schemes delivered by voluntary organisations across the county. During 2018/19 over 42,000 journeys and during 2019/20 over 40,000 journeys were made.

- 4.7 The council offers grant funding opportunities for Capital and Small Grants. During 2020/21, a total of £96,981 was paid to 8 community transport organisations. This funding enabled the organisations to partially fund the cost of a minibus, electric mopeds, website and database development, a travel booking system, and marketing materials.
- 4.8 Go Local is an overarching brand for community transport in North Yorkshire. Jointly designed by community transport organisations and North Yorkshire County Council, the aim of the brand is to help raise awareness of community transport, to change perceptions, and increase the usage of the service throughout North Yorkshire. Further information is available at [Home - Go Local North Yorkshire \(golocal-northyorks.community\)](http://golocal-northyorks.community)

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to note the information in this report.

6.0 Key Implications

Local Member: None

Financial: There are no additional financial implications arising directly from this report. Details of funding and costs relating to the Service are set out in the body of the report.

Human Resources: None

Legal: The Council has a wide range of statutory duties imposed by a variety of legislation relating to passenger transport. The most relevant to this report are detailed in section 3 above.

Equalities: None

Environmental Impacts/Benefits including Climate Change Impact Assessment: No Impact

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Background papers relied upon in the preparation of this report: None

Service No	Description	Service Level
72B	Buckden - Kilnsey - Threshfield - Grassington - Skipton	daytime Monday to Saturday
74A	Hebden - Grassington - Ilkley	74 off peak Monday, Wednesday and Friday
72A	Grassington - Skipton	72A school days only
72	Grassington - Skipton	daytime Monday to Saturday
71	Low Bradley - Airedale Hospital - Steeton & Silsden Rail Station	3 peak journeys Monday to Friday
78A	Skipton - Low Bradley - Cross Hills - Airedale Hospital	daytime Monday to Saturday
11	Horton In Ribblesdale - Settle - Tosside	daytime Monday to Saturday
DR07	South Craven Demand Responsive Services	off peak Monday to Friday
DR06	North Craven Taxibus Demand Responsive	off peak Monday to Friday
581	Kirkby Lonsdale - Ingleton - Settle	daytime Monday to Saturday
210	Skipton - Airton - Malham	off peak Monday, Wednesday & Friday
211	Skipton - Malham	off peak Tuesday & Thursday
DR14	Burnt Yates - Harrogate Demand Responsive	off peak Wednesday only
DR04	South Harrogate Village Bus Demand Responsive	off peak Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
1D	Knaresborough - The Pastures Knaresborough (Developer funded)	daytime Monday to Saturday
138	Ripon - Kirkby Malzeard - Masham	138 peak Monday to Friday
144	Masham - Bedale	144 off peak Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
139	Ripon - Fountains Abbey - Grantley Circular	136 peak Monday to Friday, 138-138A peak Monday to Friday and off peak Monday, Thursday and Saturday, 139 off peak Monday, Thursday and Saturday, 144 off peak Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
138A	Ripon - Laverton - Kirkby Malzeard - Mickley - Ripon	138 off peak Monday, Thursday and Saturday
136	Ripon - Melmerby , Barker Business Park	136 peak Monday to Friday
412	York - Tockwith - Wetherby	Peak Monday to Friday
21	Knaresborough - Boroughbridge - Roecliffe	daytime Monday to Saturday
23	York - Boroughbridge - Copt Hewick - Ripon	Peak Monday to Saturday
8	Wetherby - Knaresborough - Harrogate	off peak Monday to Saturday
22	York - Boroughbridge - Skelton - Ripon - Knaresborough	daytime Monday to Saturday
737	Harrogate - Leeds Bradford International Airport	daytime daily
89	Northallerton - Great Broughton - Stokesley	daytime Monday to Saturday
80	Northallerton - Hutton Rudby - Stokesley	daytime Monday to Saturday
54	Kirkby Fleetham - Northallerton	54 off peak Monday to Saturday
55	Richmond - Brompton On Swale - Scorton - Northallerton	55 daytime Monday to Saturday

Service No	Description	Service Level
70	Ripon - Thirsk - Northallerton	Peak Monday to Friday
72	Northallerton - Darlington	daytime Monday to Saturday
150	Thirsk - Sessay - Helperby Ripon	off peak Tuesday and Thursday
147	Ripon - Melmerby - Pickhill - Thirsk	off peak Monday and Thursday
153	Thirsk - Thornton Le Moor - Northallerton	off peak Monday to Saturday
60	Thirsk - Carlton Husthwaite - Dalton - Thirsk Circular	off peak Monday and Friday
60A	Thirsk - Dalton - Carlton Histhwaite Circular	off peak Monday and Friday
59	Thirsk - Husthwaite Circular	off peak Monday and Friday
155	Bedale - Leyburn	off peak Monday to Friday
79	Barnard Castle - Richmond	daytime Monday to Saturday
29	Richmond - Darlington	daytime Monday to Saturday
34	Richmond – Catterick Village – Darlington	daytime Monday to Saturday
159	Richmond - Leyburn - Ripon	daytime Monday to Saturday
30	Swaledale - Richmond	daytime Monday to Saturday
156	Gayle - Askrigg - Redmire - Leyburn	daytime Monday to Saturday
113	Gayle - Hawes - Garsdale Station	daytime Monday to Saturday
840	Malton - Pickering - Whitby	daytime Monday to Saturday (winter only)
194	Hovingham - Amotherby - Malton	daytime Monday to Saturday
181	Malton - Castle Howard - Monks Cross/York	daytime Monday to Saturday
190	Malton - Foxholes	off peak Monday to Saturday
182	Foston - Malton	182 one return journey Thursday and Saturday only
174	Kirkbymoorside - Pickering Via Hutton Le Hole	one return journey Monday only
176	Malton - Gt Habton - Appleton Le Moors - Kirkbymoorside	176 one return journey Wednesday and Saturday only
175	Malton - Gt Habton - Marton - Pickering	175 one return journey Tuesday and Friday
184	Malton - Leavening - Acklam - Malton Circular	184 two journeys Tuesday only
185	Malton - Leavening - Acklam - Malton Circular	185 two journeys Tuesday only
173	Rosedale - Pickering	173 two return journeys Monday only
P1	Whitby Park & Ride	daytime and evenings daily seasonal - operational circa 1st April until 31st October
P2	Whitby Park & Ride	daytime and evenings daily seasonal - operational circa 1st April until 31st October

Service No	Description	Service Level
95	Whitby - Lealholm	daytime Monday to Friday
DR10	Esk Valley - Whitby Demand Responsive	return journey alternate Thursdays
DR18	Glaisdale - Guisborough Demand Responsive	return journey alternate Thursdays
115	Ravenscar - Scarborough	off peak Monday to Saturday
9	Scarborough - Scalby High Mill Via Northstead (Developer Funded)	daytime Monday to Saturday (High Mill only)
119	Scarborough - Primrose Valley Via Seamer Road	peak journey
165	Filey Road Park & Ride - Scarborough	daytime daily seasonal service - operational circa 1st April until 31st October
64	Seamer Road Park & Ride - Scarborough	daytime daily seasonal service - operational circa 1st April until 31st October
1	Holme On Spalding Moor - Selby Monday Only	return Monday
1	Bubwith - Selby Friday Only	return journey Friday
476	Kellingley - Selby	peak journey
486	Selby - Pollington - Whitley Monday	return journey Monday only
486	Selby - Pollington Friday Only	return journey Friday only
488	Great Heck - Goole Wednesday	return journey Wednesday only
496	Fairburn - Selby Monday Only	return journey Monday only
495	Tadcaster - Selby Monday Only	return journey Monday only
42	York - Cawood - Selby - Drax	Daytime Monday to Saturday
37	York - Tadcaster	off peak Monday to Saturday
493	Tadcaster - Ulleskelf - Church Fenton - Sherburn	Daytime Monday to Saturday
492	Tadcaster - Ulleskelf - Church Fenton - Sherburn	Daytime Monday to Saturday
494	Tadcaster - Ulleskelf - Church Fenton - Sherburn	School time journeys
493	Sherburn - Pontefract	Daytime Monday to Saturday
405	Doncaster - Selby Via Staynor Hall (Developer Funded)	Daytime Monday to Saturday (Staynor Hall only)
21	Colton - York	daytime Monday to Saturday
420	Doncaster - Pontefract	off peak Monday to Friday
18	Holme Upon Spalding Moor - Skipwith - York	daytime Monday to Saturday