

STOCKTON ON TEES PUBLIC TRANSPORT FORUM
ARC, Dovecot Street, Stockton – 19th November 2016

Present:

John Fletcher	Chair
Joanne Roberts (JR)	SBC
Jonathan Kibble (JK)	SBC
Cathy Summers (CS)	SBC
Karen Stephen	SBC
Lynne Tebbs	SBC
David Sharp	Stagecoach
Tony Shaw	Stagecoach
Nathan Stanislawski	Stagecoach
Richard McGowan	Arriva
Mark Gibbon	Arriva
Pete Myers	Northern Rail
Alex Nelson	Chester-Le-Track
Scott Cooper	Stagecoach

Public: Approximately 56 residents and elected members

ITEM	AGENDA ITEM	ACTION
1.0	<u>Welcome and apologies for absence</u>	
1.1	Chair welcomed attendees and introduced panel members.	
1.2	Apologies were received from Sally Ann Watson (Councillor)	
2.0	<u>Presentation from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council</u> A presentation was provided by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. A copy of the presentation can be found on the Public Transport Forum page at www.stockton.gov.uk	
3.0	<u>Feedback from online meeting on 11th June 2016</u> The below comments were received following the first online transport forum: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not like the setup of the online forum, prefer forum at the Arc • Found the setup confusing and the tweets • Could not hear what was being said 	
2.2	SBC thanked the attendees for their feedback and all will be reviewed. 70 tweets were received which comprised of 28 questions. It has been noted that regular attendees did not like the setup and missed the face to face	

	engagement with operators and SBC Officers.	
4.0	<u>Public Question Time</u>	
4.1	Chair reminded attendees that only questions regarding Stockton services can be answered at the forum, any other questions must be addressed directly to the operators.	
4.2	Hartburn questions and comments	
Q	<p>The Chair consolidated a number of questions that were received previous and during the forum regarding the Hartburn area:</p> <p>Why can't Arriva provide a bus service to Hartburn? Profit before people is not a valid excuse</p> <p>We have 800+ concessionary fare pass holders living in the Hartburn area, 1 third have no bus, no bus stops at Ropner Park, will Arriva help?</p> <p>I just can't understand why one simple re-route i.e. 7 bus stops from Stockton High St to Greens Lane coming via Yarm Road, Hartburn Lane, Darlington Road, Greens Lane then turning up onto Dunedin Avenue back onto original route is such a problem? The lack of a bus on this is causing absolute misery to the Hartburn community, besides the carbon footprint. We have a constant stream of traffic now! Hartburn residents are having to spend unreasonable amounts of money on taxis just to do everyday things i.e. shopping, doctors and dentists appointments. Not everyone in Hartburn drives or has a car!! If the excuse is not commercially viable - is that a good reason - surely all routes aren't profitable - do we put profit above people!!</p> <p>Councillor Hall – Hartburn residents do not have a bus, the people at the forum from Hartburn have arrived via taxi or a lift by family or friends members, they cannot get into the centre of Stockton, the bus companies do get 4 million pounds from Stockton Council to cover the concessionary bus passes each year, a large portion of residents in Hartburn cannot use their concessionary bus pass, it really is a serious issue, there is no bus service to Ropner park however a large people do or could visit but no bus service prevents this as they can't get there. Residents from Hartburn who work but don't drive are unable to get to their workplace, Hartburn is a thriving community and could bring a lot of money into the town centre. At Elmwood there is the adult social health service which helps teach young people how to live independently and they would benefit from having a bus service to get them from home to the centre. There is a bus that goes from Long Newton (stagecarriage service 88) that residents are able to get but this only leaves you to have half an hour in the town before you would then need to come back.</p>	
A	Arriva provided a statement in connection with Hartburn – Following the announcement of withdrawal of Stagecarriage Service 87 and subsequent loss of service along Hartburn Avenue and Darlington Road, Arriva have had various requests via different mediums to divert Service X67 along Hartburn Avenue instead of Green Lane/Oxbridge Lane (west of Oxbridge Avenue) between Hartburn and Stockton.	

We are aware that some existing passengers will be left without a direct bus service and a longer walk to reach their closest bus stop from 1st August following the withdrawal of Stagecarriage Service 87.

We have, at the request of local residents, further consideration of this and other potential options, including diversion of Service 7 in the area, but regrettably we can confirm that we have no plans to operate via Hartburn Avenue at this time.

Service X67 forms part of a high frequency of service provision between Middlesbrough, Stockton and Darlington. This level of service and subsequent frequency increase in October 2015, was only possible due to growth that Arriva Service 6 had seen between March 2014 and October 2015 when it operated solely between Hartburn and Stockton, via the same route and Service X67 operates now.

Arriva Service 6 was a commercial venture that was put in place following the withdrawal of Stockton Borough Council supported Service 588/589 and was designed to maintain a bus service provision for a large proportion of affected passengers in Hartburn. This service was amalgamated into what is running as Service X67 today. The services in this area are fully commercial and receive no subsidy whatsoever from any local authority.

Part of our process to reach the decision above was analysis of our existing passenger and revenue data from the affected area that Service X67 would need to divert away from in order to serve Hartburn Avenue instead. We concluded that a significant risk to the business in terms of value of revenue loss and loss of existing passengers was evident and far outweighed any new passengers and revenue we would expect to gain. With that in mind, we are simply unable to justify at this time.

We suggest that local residents approach Stagecarriage with their concerns, following the withdrawal of their commercial Service 87 with view to potential reinstatement.

Stagecarriage – decided to withdraw service 87 due to the number of people using the service not covering the cost of running the service. Service 88 runs on a Wednesday and Friday around the village and down Hartburn Lane

SBC – Funding available would not support a commercial half hourly service around Hartburn, it will however support something community based and will work towards this with residents

Arriva commented after questions were asked from the audience – we do take the comments on board and do understand the concerns raised, Arriva North East are not in the position to divert services or provide a new service in the area of Hartburn

4.3 Any other questions and answers

Q Why is the 61 still running in twos? 1) we miss connection on other buses because of the above, 2) buses not being able to get into right bus stop, 3) drivers taking 3+ minutes to change over, time depends on how long they talk, 4) drivers will not let you off at shambles because it is not a stop, yet they can

	<p>get on and off so you miss a bus you may have been able to get if they had not changed over</p>	
A	<p>Stagecoach – the service 61 operationally links with the service 59, additional passengers have been boarding the 59 due to the Londonderry Bridge works and this has caused some delays onto the service 61. Previously the service 61 is reliable and once the bridge is opened the reliable service will be resumed. Due to the stop congestion in Stockton High Street it does cause issues with too many buses at a stop, there is little Stagecoach can do about that. When drivers are changing over we cannot let passengers board as this would cause confusion of where you can get on and off the buses.</p> <p>SBC – Layout of the High Street has been covered previously and stand allocations are regularly reviewed and what improvements could be made</p>	
Q	<p>Do Stagecoach have any aspirations to grow inter urban journeys on their ‘flagship’ service 36. Despite massive public investment through Tees Valley bus network programme. It still hugely disappoints in terms of comfort, speed and punctuality even in the off-peak as I experienced last week traveling in Billingham and Stockton. Is a 2 minute turn around at Hartlepool credible after a 74 minute journey from Middlesbrough</p>	
A	<p>Stagecoach – unclear what the questions is asking, service 36 does offer a lot of journeys across a long route. Service 36 is a reliable service, although there is a lot of congestion on the route the service does work well but will continue to monitor. With regards to comfort a lot of funding has been put into new vehicles and 36, 37 and 38 buses are comfortable</p>	
Q	<p>Is the service S1, the Saturday only service to Teesside Park going to become a more regular, even daily service</p>	
A	<p>Arriva – at the moment no plans to extend the numbers of days it operates, this service has been running for a year now and is running well, no plans to take this service away</p> <p>Stagecarriage – as of next Monday the 28th November we will be running a all week service Monday to Saturday, running between 9am and 3pm linking Stockton, Teesside Park and Middlesbrough and will be once an hour. The service will be running from stands D & F in Stockton and stand 18 in Middlesbrough</p>	
Q	<p>Why do vehicles wait for a long period and keep their engines running, wouldn't it save costs if they turned the engine off</p>	
A	<p>Arriva – drivers are advised if they are waiting for a length of time, normally over a minute then they are advised to switch the engine off</p>	
Q	<p>Passengers who are going to Ingleby Barwick have a long wait on the bus due to the length of time it takes to go through Thornaby and stopping at all the stops</p>	
A	<p>Arriva – a survey was undertaken back in July with regards to the bus service between Ingleby Barwick and Stockton, the results we got back from the survey suggest most people would prefer the service that is in place now and if another service was put in place it would only run hourly. Service 15 is a very</p>	

	<p>busy route and do appreciate people from Ingleby Barwick do have the longest route and this is why the survey was undertaken</p>	
Q	<p>Is there any plans to provide a bus down the avenue at The Rings in Ingleby Barwick now that the shops are near completion</p>	
A	<p>Arriva – Service 15 will change its route at the middle of next month to provide this, the bus will go down Broomhill Avenue across to the shops and go clockwise around The Rings. Delay has been caused due to final road service to be completed</p> <p>SBC – the road is not currently adopted and ownership is still with the developer so no additional bus stops can be provided at the moment, we are however working with the operators and developer to speed up this process</p>	
Q	<p>Will the moors bus and dales bus run next year 2017</p>	
A	<p>Arriva – difficult to say yes or no, we have operated both services for the last 2 years on behalf of both of those organisations. Both are charitable organisations now and rely on funding</p>	
Q	<p>The number 7 service I understand because of the problems in Yarm sometimes causes the buses to run 2 or 3 times together, it would be an efficiency improvement for Arriva if two out of the 3 buses turned round at Yarm Town Hall, this would help with the frequency. When I mentioned this to the bus drivers I was advised the traffic commissioners would not accept this</p>	
A	<p>Arriva – we appreciate that we advise a 10 minute headway and then the bus turns up 2 or 3 together this can be frustrating and is also equally frustrating for Arriva and as you suggest the main issues is the congestion in Yarm. Arriva buses are fitted with real time which allows us to monitor the buses, service 7 has massively improved from a few years ago and is now one of the more reliable services within the Borough. The service going into Yarm is given extra time for the journey due to unpredictable traffic delays and this can be the cause of buses waiting in Yarm for a few minutes. Unfortunately bus lanes are not an option due to the layout.</p> <p>We are due to bring in a system in which we can speak to the drivers via hands free, once this comes in we can speak to the drivers and advise other drivers there are buses in Yarm already waiting and to head back into Stockton.</p>	
Q	<p>Compliment given to bus drivers on the service 7 route</p>	
Q	<p>Can a drop off point be given outside Marks & Spencer</p>	
A	<p>SBC – this has been covered at a previous forum by Arriva and SBC</p> <p>Arriva – we have instructed our drivers they can and should be dropping off outside Marks & Spencer's, if there are any particular issues with drivers not stopping please contact our customer services</p>	
Q	<p>Could questionnaires be sent to the Parish Council also for completion</p>	
Q	<p>When driving into Yarm from Hartburn I take two routes, the back road (Durham Lane) and Yarm Road. Could the service 7 bus not use both routes, it</p>	

	would be useful if even 1 in 3 service 7 bus could come down the back road and this would help serve Hartburn	
A	Arriva – in order to maintain frequency of the bus services this would not be possible, it is quicker for the service to leave Stockton and travel down Yarm Road than it is to travel down Durham Lane, this could also cause confusion if the buses are running late and passengers would not know which route the bus is due to take	
Q	Issue with the service 7 buses running early from Richardson Road stop, I get the 08:16am but quite often it arrives early, if buses are arriving early in Stockton they are parking up and getting off the bus or sitting waiting for a few minutes and I am sat waiting on the bus wondering what is happening	
A	Arriva – a lot of stops in the area are displaying estimate times, these times are calculated using the systems we use to create the bus timetables based on speed and mileage and occasionally the driver may get a good run from Eaglescliffe Gold Club and end up in Stockton earlier than expected, this is something we can look into. With regards to the vehicles coming in and laying over in morning and afternoon peaks on service 7, in order to alleviate the issue with too many buses coming in at the same time or running ahead of time the driver will try and not park up in a bus stop which could mean passengers boarding the bus and waiting a length of time before setting off. The drivers are advised to notify any passengers of a wait and we will remind them of this when we return to the office	
Q	Arriva service 7 has details of which stop you are at and which stop is coming up, is this something Stagecoach are looking into	
A	Stagecoach – Some people do like the next stop displays and other people think it's annoying, it isn't Stagecoach's policy to buy vehicles with this normally but it is something we look into. Stagecoach do offer the app which provides the same information SBC – Agree with Stagecoach that there are negative and positive points and feedback has also shown this. Central government are aware that this system is very useful to passengers and are currently considering whether or not to legislate mandatory use of the system, they are debating however the additional costs to the operators. If there is any update we will provide this at the relevant forum	
Q	People have mentioned problems with not knowing where they are on the bus and if the bus route alters it causes distress to people that may suffer from anxiety and don't feel comfortable asking another passenger where they are, people feel more comfortable using train because they know where they are and people with learning disabilities, anxiety issues feel they can be more independent using trains rather than buses for this reason	
Q	Whilst taking weekend breaks in the isle of Wight & Liverpool I noticed that when using a concessionary bus pass on public transport that no ticket was given by the bus operator. On enquiring I was told that it saved paper & reduced costs. Is this not something our bus operators should consider as you have to use your pass to get on the bus anyway	
A	Stagecoach – we like to give customers a ticket as it offers reassurance of their	

	<p>journey if they are using a concessionary pass and if required to reference the journey the receipt is there. All other operators within the North East issue tickets and if this was to change it would be beneficial if there was consistency. For now we would prefer to keep issuing tickets, there are smart uses on the buses which is reducing the total of tickets being printed. We will also be offering contactless payment next year</p> <p>Arriva – agree with Stagecoach and customers do advise they prefer having ticket to refer to at a later date, internally this has been discussed and next year we will be moving a lot of our products onto smart tickets and by Easter next year every bus within the area should be fitted with contactless payment and this allows you to pay with a debit card.</p> <p>To reassure passengers who are paying via contactless, the driver needs to select this method of payment which means that if you have your free pass in front of your debit card your debit card will not be accidentally charged for that fare</p>	
Q	<p>The Stockton News magazine does not mention the forums and Tees Valley Connect have made mistakes with the bus timetables for example placing a bus table in the wrong stop. Would be great if there was a ticket covered the whole of Tees Valley</p>	
A	<p>SBC – If you do find any mistakes please make us aware as soon as possible. Connect Tees Valley provide the details of the timetables however it is the local authorities responsibility to print the tables and arrange for them to be displayed at the stops. With regards to the multi operating ticketing across the Tees Valley area, there is a plus bus ticket and there is currently work going on across the North looking into smart ticketing across bus and rail services</p> <p>Stagecoach – the easyrider and easyrider plus ticket is available and now also includes Darlington</p>	
Q	<p>There are rumours that the service 15 is to be diverted another way on Beckfields, at the moment people wanting to go the doctors cant due to it only going one way round</p>	
A	<p>Arriva – this isn't true however the 19th February 2017 the service 17 not 15 which currently terminates at Sober Hall will go via Beckfields and will operate a different loop, people can go from Beckfields to Tesco on the 17 and come back on the 15</p>	
	<p>Post Meeting Notes</p>	
Q	<p>When will the car park at Yarm Station be enlarged to cater for all the cars, including those illegally parked on the double yellow lines. Stagecoach are unable to get their service buses into the car park, and as such, the bus service does not stop anywhere near the railway station</p>	
A	<p>A date for the extension of the car park is not available at present. The extension is being led by and funded by the adjacent developer. Council officers are awaiting final plans for sign off.</p>	
Q	<p>Is there any Twitter feedback available</p>	

A	A link to the Twitter feed is available on the Stockton-on-Tees council website under the Public and community transport section	
Q	Why is it that you're forever late and half of the time you arrive at the bus stops in 2 to 3 buses at once? Arriva and Stagecoach buses both do this. The bus stands and bus station timetables are hardly correct	
A	Please advise of any specific times and we can investigate	
5.0	<p><u>Date, time and venue of next meeting</u></p> <p>Next forum will be on Saturday 04th March 2017 at the Arc, Stockton 10:00 – 12:00</p>	
6.0	<p><u>Any other business</u></p> <p>Concessionary passes due for renewal over next 3 years. SBC will contact you in writing to renew pass.</p>	