

STOCKTON ON TEES PUBLIC TRANSPORT FORUM
ARC, Dovecot Street, Stockton – 29th July 2017

Present:

John Fletcher	Chair
Joanne Roberts (JR)	SBC
Jonathan Kibble (JK)	SBC
Chloe Mason	SBC
Debbie Fairless	SBC
Tony Shaw	Stagecoach
Nathan Stanislawski	Stagecoach
Mark Gibbon	Arriva
Alex Nelson	Chester-Le-Track
Public:	

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 Eleanor Mockler (Resident of Billingham), Councillor Helen Atkinson, Councillor Sally Ann Watson, Councillor Phil Dennis, Mrs Johnson (Hartburn Resident), Christine Anderson (Ingleby Barwick Resident)	
2.0	<u>Matters arising from March 2017 Forum</u>	
2.1	Apologies on behalf of minutes from March forum, minutes have gone astray, haven't been able to find the recording. Point made was the busses bill which was making its way through Parliament at the time, not in place yet. Tees Valley combined authority, in the process of preparing a bus statement to go alongside the strategic transport plan for the area – more info on this in Autumn.	
2.2	Fully online forum in May: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from Arriva, Stagecoach and Stage Carriage and also members of the public. Other local authorities joined in. • Was opened up to all other Tees Valley authorities as well • 12 questions to Connect Tees Valley, questions around infrastructure and timetables • 6 to Arriva, 4 to Stagecoach, 6 to Stage Carriage and 4 to miscellaneous 	
2.3	Feedback:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be Tees Valley wide • Should be members of staff from local authorities so they can answer questions as well • Train operators should be included 	
3.0	<p><u>Presentation from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (9 mins in)</u></p> <p>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</p>	
4.0 4.1	<p><u>Public Question Time</u></p> <p><i>Question concerning service 52 (Stagecoach) from Eleanor Mockler</i></p> <p>Q: Has anything been decided regarding alterations to these bus services, I am unable to attend the meeting, would it be possible to keep me updated when alterations are decided and not on the internet. Thank you.</p> <p>Stagecoach: Regarding the service 52, the major service changes are coming in on 20th August. The service 52 running time is being extended to allow a more reliable service.</p> <p><i>Question concerning community bus from Ursula Whitworth about the number 87</i></p> <p>Q: Would it be possible to run the community bus on Saturday's, a day when events are held in Stockton and a market day, an afternoon service would also be appreciated.</p> <p>Jonathan Kibble: <i>[question was already partially covered in presentation]</i> The answer still stands. As soon as we can.</p> <p><i>Question from Patricia Johnson:</i></p> <p>Q: Why are the bus companies still unwilling to run the service through Hartburn via Hartburn Lane/Darlington Road when the figures show there is a need for one? The first bus is 10am which does not help people who use it going to work/appointments etc.</p> <p>Jonathan Kibble: There is no afternoon service as the drivers are needed for other duties.</p> <p><i>Question from Judith Gallagher:</i></p> <p>Q: For the community bus 87, when will the hours be extended on Saturday services? For the Arriva X67, the community bus is proving to become commercially viable. Why can't we have a regular public transport bus like the X67 operating through the main hub of Hartburn? Travelling on the X67 to and from Dunedin Avenue I have</p>	

noticed very few people accessing the service via the Oxbridge area. Whereas if the bus came via Darlington Road to Green Lane people with cars would leave them at home to travel to Stockton, Darlington and Middlesbrough as the towns are getting over congested.

Chair: I appreciate that some of those comments have already been covered but in fairness to the people who put them in in advance, I have read them out. I think to summarise what Arriva have just said about the X66, what they are saying is effectively, west of Yarm Road the speed limit is 70, on the diversion the speed limit is 30 most of the way, quite a part of the time will be taken to stop buses.

Question from an audience member:

Q: Mrs J Gallagher; I can appreciate what has been said about the X66 there is no problem in my mind however. My problem is with the X67 because I have timed it coming down 7 bus stops each way from Stockton. I can't go along with your timetable and how it is commercially viable because we have got the community bus and that has proved there is a need. It wouldn't take any longer time wise to come from Stockton, to go up Greens Lane via Darlington Road and still go up Dunedin and Birkdale where the main catchment area is because there is 6 buses an hour going along that route. So I can't go along with this time now. Initially it wasn't commercially viable, now it is commercially viable as we've proved with the community bus and as I say there are 7 bus stops each way so I can't see how it would take longer to come through Hartburn.

A: Mark Gibbon; Obviously when we were talking about the X66 part of it that was the one I was mentioning that would take a lot longer. There are currently no plans to change the X66 or the X67 in its current form. The X67 as it stands at the moment is a viable service for us at picking the numbers of people up that we need to pick up to be a viable service and because of that we certainly haven't been thinking about changing it. Our commercial team will always look at different things that we can do.

Question from Adrian Lasenby concerning Yarm railway station:

Q: There appears to be no progress in expanding the car park at Yarm railway station as promised. The car park is full every weekday with many cars parked illegally in the car park preventing the Stagecoach service 82 from ever entering the car park to its scheduled pick up/drop off point. This bus service has never been able to get in to my knowledge. Also, vehicles are on the grass verge outside and also in the estate opposite to the annoyance of local residents. When is it going to be progressed?

A: The cancellation notice has been submitted to the Traffic Commissioner for the 82 service. With regards to the progress for the car park, it is subject to a housing development right next to the station so the actual build of the car park extension is being funded and carried out by a third party and not Stockton Council. So, the council have been chasing the third party to get an update on when they will submit a plan for us to approve for that car park. We are just awaiting

a response, which is essentially the position at the moment. Once that is in place and we do have a programme we will obviously make those who are affected aware of the programme for the expansion of the car park and ensure that we have adequate programmes in place for the parking that will be displaced and the expansion will be dealt with as best as it can be. With regards to the illegal parking, we do send our enforcement team to the car park at Yarm station quite regularly to try and deal with that.

Chair: For the benefit of people who are not familiar with planning, this is a Section 106 agreement. This means that as part of the package of the developer getting planning permission to build houses on the south side of Green Lane beside the station the developer has to provide, at his own expense, the car park extension and having to do it isn't triggered off until they get to a certain stage in the development. It does mean that the car park extension is being provided at no cost to the council tax payer.

Question concerning Arriva Service 7 from Marjorie Galloway (Chairman of Preston-on-Tees Parish Council) :

Q: Why when there are 6 buses an hour, should 3 or 4 buses come together?

A: Mark Gibbon; On the majority of days the punctuality is almost as good as we can get it. But it's the small things that occur at random times on random days that can pull the services back over. There has been no change to the route and no change to the stops for many years but the punctuality issue is always something we have been working on to get better and better as more and more traffic are using the roads and certainly the hardest part of it that we managed to get round is the Friday scenario on a Friday afternoon where everything piles up from 3 o'clock where we have to start changing it from running 6 buses an hour every 10 minutes to where we are now running 6 buses an hour every 12 minutes. So in theory every trip one bus stops back so instead of getting an hour to do the full trip is now an hour and 12 minutes to make the punctuality right. It means there are only 5 departures an hour but it is better than having 5 buses an hour rather than having 6 buses running in pairs. Another thing we have recently done as well is that we are now doing the driver change overs in Stockton High Street when the bus arrives in the high street going up the high street rather than when it comes back down because what we were finding was the buses was going up to the top and turning round up Maxwell's Corner it had time to sit at the top stop for 2 or 3 minutes it comes down to the Castlegate stop and we then get the majority of passengers on there. We do a driver change over which can sometimes take 3 or 4 minutes and that meant there was a delay leaving. So what we do now is we are going to change the drivers over outside the Shambles on the way up. It leaves the top of the high street on time and picks up the passengers at the bottom end of the high street and again in recent years wait times at the bus stops are a lot longer now as people are getting on with pushchairs and wheelchairs and obviously we tell our drivers to make sure everybody is suitably secure before the vehicle pulls away as well. So there is the safety aspect to it. We are constantly looking at the service 7 and we

make the local authorities aware every period about what our punctuality stats are. I'd be quite happy to do it by route if the local authority requests it from us. Obviously the traffic commissioners request data from us as well so we need to make sure we keep services punctual. So we are constantly reviewing all of our services. With the service 7 it is not something we can put into the timetable. If there is a flower wagon in Yarm high street we can have buses losing 10 minutes straight away in both directions. We don't know when they are going to turn up so we always do our best to get our services to be on time and punctual.

Follow up Q from *Marjorie Galloway (Chairman of Preston-on-Tees Parish Council)*: Why should Friday be picked out? I wish somebody would come into Yarm on a Saturday incognito and stand at quarter to 1 till quarter past 1 waiting for this number 7 bus to come. And four come at once. You get on one that pulls up at the stop but you've unfortunately got on the one that was the last one to go to the station at Yarm which I found out now might be part of the congestion. And we get to Eaglescliffe golf course and you stand there for 5 minutes while he makes the time up and the other three just sail past you and you're sitting on the bus like a banana. Also, I can just about tell you what all the people say because the same people are waiting for the same bus every Saturday and there is one lady in particular that is not very polite and we have to sit and listen to it. It's disgusting. I come down on a Tuesday to the library. It was lovely, I got a taxi down from Eaglescliffe and there was only myself and another person on it. I had a taxi back from Stockton town hall up to Hartburn Lane. It's absolutely ridiculous I just don't know how you make any money on that service at all and can I just point out to Mr Nelson I travel on the rail free when I can get on it. There's so many trains that I can't travel on.

A: As far as the issue on a Saturday I've already noted that we do have tracking on all of our buses. I'll have to go in my computer and see if I can look in the archive to see them particular services for every Saturday in the last 12 months. I'll be interested to look at that data as there is a particular issue there for that time. I'll find out some reasons why and I'll get some feedback for you on that one

Q: Stockton Borough Council is working to clean the highstreet on a Saturday and keep it clean with the rubbish in Yarm. The chap that used to clean the bus shelter used to come in at quarter to 1. He got that sick of listening to folks moaning he doesn't bother.

A: Another thing with Yarm high street, we for many years used to complain about the issues with parking where people would be driving cars stop at one gap look down to see if there is a space and do the same for the next one and so on and so forth. When they brought the parking charges in that has alleviated it and we have less of an issue with that but again we know it's forever changing. Yarm is one of these places where we are never going to get a bypass so there is always going to be that case.

Chair: I can say living nearer to Yarm than councillor Ms Galloway that from about lunchtime on Friday there is normally a tailback well up Yarm Road to Eaglescliffe so I can perfectly understand Arriva

identifying Friday afternoon as a problem time. I can also add that Tuesday of this week my wife saw three Number 7's running together in the early afternoon, she called it a number 21.

Question from Mrs Sharp concerning X66 and X67:

Q: Why does the X66/X67 not stop at the Swallow stop if they cannot get into a stop on the main high street? A lot of problems arise as turnaround buses take up two stops.

A: Certainly the Stockton high street bus stops, we appreciate there is a lot of regeneration that has gone on in Stockton. A lot of money is being spent. The numbers of bus stops available were vastly reduced and as operators we work with the local authorities to make sure that all of our services are timed at least 5 minutes apart to allow adequate time on the bus stops. At the north end of the high street there are more stops going southbound, at the south end of the high street and going north there are less stops which makes it a bit tighter. It is an issue we do have and we appreciate everybody who travels to Stockton wants to be as close to the town centre as possible so to use the stops outside the Castlegate centre and at the north end of the high street, is the obvious choice for us rather than being out of the high street past The Swallow. We'll be making sure that all our services serve both the north end and the south end as close as possible to Castlegate.

Jonathan: We work constantly with all the operators who serve the high street on comments about stand allocation. We are currently reviewing that to see whether we can increase capacity through changes that can be made with stands so that is something we are aware of and always looking to try and improve.

Question from Sue Langstaff concerning Service 35 and rumours that it is changing to hourly instead of half hourly:

Stagecoach: We can confirm that it is staying as a 30 minute service.

Question from L. Hughes concerning Service 35:

Q: When the 35 is late it is nearly always when it has changed from another service number. Why are they changed and why does it not just stay the same bus and why does it have to change to another service?

A Stagecoach: Again, the service 52, there will be a service change coming in August. The punctuality of the 35 has not been the best. Starting from the 20th August the 35 will be a standalone service every half an hour and hopefully to improve the reliability of the service and the punctuality

Question from Dillon Clark for both operators:

A request that drivers wait until people are sat down properly before pulling away from stops and that they allow time for people to get on for when for example there is someone with a pushchair trying to get

	<p>on the bus.</p> <p>A: It is the policy of drivers to wait for people to sit down before they are departing anyway</p> <p>Dillon Clark: A couple of minutes ago I was showing the lady to my right my scars on my legs where I have been flung when getting on the bus because drivers don't wait for people to get on. I've had to walk to the back of the bus to get a seat with 20/30% vision and I'm having to walk to the back of the bus to get a seat and the drivers already pulling away and then 5 mins later the driver is sitting at the stop counting his change because he is ahead of time and that is the same for Arriva and Stagecoach. I've got too many scars on my ankles and on my hips from falling over on buses.</p> <p>A: We do expect drivers to make sure everyone on the bus is safely secured, we do appreciate people take more time to do that than others however when it does go wrong I can assure you we will find out about it. We will not ignore it.</p>	
5.0	<p><u>Date, time and venue of next meeting</u></p> <p>Saturday 25th November 2017 10am – 12pm</p>	
6.0	<p><u>Any other business</u></p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>	