

DEPUTATION 2 – MORLEY TOWN COUNCIL

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to the Mayor of Morley and members of Morley Town Council to our Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and please begin, Paul, by introducing the people in your Deputation.

COUNCILLOR P COOK: Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, this delegation is led by myself, Councillor Paul Cook, Town Mayor and Chairman of Morley Town Council, and Councillors Jackson and Beevers who are members of the Highways and Transportation Committee of Morley Town Council.

The purpose of attending and addressing the Council today is to seek the re-regulation of the bus services that serve the people of Morley and the surrounding areas. The bus services to and from Morley are at best hit and miss and often buses arrive together and then there are long periods without any buses at all. There appears to be no regular and maintained timetable on which people can rely. This is a very poor state of affairs, especially when people who are reliant on bus services are trying to regulate their journeys, especially in periods of bad weather.

Areas of Morley have had buses re-routed. This has resulted in massive inconvenience to the elderly and infirm residents of Fountain Street and Scotchman Lane area, as they are now left with a walk to the nearest bus stop. First Buses have been contacted regarding this but have shown no inclination to help or offer a solution to this problem. Also, there are no school buses from the Cottingley, Thorpe and East and West Ardsley areas to many of the Morley schools. These result in both children and parents taking children to school from these areas having to catch the service buses to get to and from school. These services, as I have already said, are both unreliable and costly.

The number 85 service bus, because of a reorganisation in timetable, does not start till after 10.00 am and this is obviously too late for children living in Thorpe and Ardsley to get to school on time. This results in them having a long walk to Wakefield Road to catch the 425 service bus.

In a similar way, parents and children travelling from Cottingley must catch the 55 service bus which normally runs one an hour, so they must catch the 7.30 am bus to get to school on time. This is the only bus that passes Victoria Road Primary School. If they miss this bus then they have to walk from Morley Bottoms to Victoria School.

Children from these areas have long distances to walk to the high schools and parents who are taking children to Victoria Road Primary School cannot get a direct service from Cottingley to that school to arrive in time for the start of lessons.

Many families in these areas rely on buses as their only means of transport. As I said, it is a costly exercise as the pricing arrangements instituted by First Buses are also difficult to understand, an example of this being the cost to travel from Cottingley starts at £1 for three stops but to go all the way to Morley costs £2.70. For people travelling this route four times a day to take and collect children from school it works out very expensive. As children must attend school, they are left with no alternative.

We are being forced to come here today because of the difficult and uncompromising attitude of First Buses. Two public meetings have been held in Morley over the past year regarding the appalling state of the bus services. First Buses were invited to attend both meetings, as were representatives of Metro. The intention was that residents could explain their frustrations with the services and try to broker a better outcome for the people of Morley. A representative of Metro did attend these meetings but First Buses declined to attend either meeting. They sent a very terse letter saying that they were happy with the services they provided, in their opinion buses arrived on time and to schedule and that their fares were fair and reasonable. *(laughter)* Quite.

If they had attended in person with these comments, they would have received first hand accounts from many residents who were present at these meetings to the contrary, together with examples of dirty and run-down buses being in use on these routes. One gentleman had done his own survey of bus arrivals, which proved that the services in no way keep to any form of timetable. He had firm evidence that he had recorded himself with buses arriving on many occasions two and three together and then going long periods without any buses at all.

Other residents would have given first hand accounts of real hardships they face by the areas they live in not being serviced by a regular and reliable bus service.

It is clear that the people of Morley have been let down by the providers of the bus services. They are inadequate and expensive and do not meet their needs and should be re-regulated. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Paul, for your comments. Councillor Gruen, please.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you very much for an excellent contribution. I have great pleasure in moving that this matter be considered further by the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor, thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I now ask for members to vote on it, please? Thank you. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon to you.