
Report of the Director of Development

Executive Board

Date: 4 April 2007

**Subject: DEPUTATION TO COUNCIL, 21 FEBRUARY 2007
RICHMOND HILL BUS ACTION GROUP**

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report informs Executive Board in relation to the deputation received by Council on the 21 February 2007 from Richmond Hill Bus Action Group.

Richmond Hill Bus Action Group raised concerns regarding the deterioration of the bus services in the Richmond Hill area over recent years. The Group cited the implications for local residents who are reliant on public transport and specifically highlighted the issues faced by older people.

The services in the Richmond Hill area are operated in the main on a commercial basis by First. However, Metro, the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, do subsidise some of the services in the area.

The local community have raised their concerns regarding the bus services with Metro who have recently investigated the issues in conjunction with the operator.

In response to this, a revised timetable and routing has been registered for operation from 22 April 2007 to address the issues identified.

Metro has informed the Richmond Hill Bus Action Group and local ward members of the service changes.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report provides information relating to the deputation received by Council at the 21 February 2007 meeting in connection with bus services in the Richmond Hill area.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 A deputation from Richmond Hill Bus Action Group was heard by the 21 February 2007 meeting of Council. The subject of this was the deterioration of bus services in the Richmond Hill area over recent years. A copy of the deputation is attached.
- 2.2 The Group voiced concerns which have been raised by the local community regarding the impacts of the cuts in service provision and the unreliability of the existing bus services.
- 2.3 The deputation requested that the Council pressures the operator and Metro to provide 'a decent bus service for the residents of our area'.
- 2.4 The services are operated in the main on a commercial basis by First, although Metro do subsidise some of the services in the area.
- 2.5 The local community have raised their concerns with Metro who have now investigated the issues in conjunction with the operator.
- 2.6 Monitoring has been carried out and the causes of the reliability problems have been analysed using the vehicle tracking data available from the YourNextBus real time passenger information system.
- 2.7 As Members will be aware Leeds City Council does not have a statutory responsibility for the co-ordination, provision or financial support of bus services which, in West Yorkshire, lies with the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority working through the Passenger Transport Executive (Metro).
- 2.8 As a Local Transport Authority and Highway Authority the Council works with Metro to develop and implement a Local Transport Plan in line with the requirements of the Transport Act 2000. Metro has also produced a Bus Strategy which forms part of the Local Transport Plan. Through the Local Transport Plan process the Council has an input to Metro's public transport policies but does not have any powers in relation to the provision of services.
- 2.9 Following the investigations carried out by Metro and First changes are to be made to the services to address the issues of reliability and a revised timetable and routing has been registered for operation from 22 April 2007.
- 2.10 Metro and First attended a meeting of the Richmond Hill Bus Action Group on the 8th March 2007 and the service changes were welcomed by the Group. Local ward members have also been informed of the service changes.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 The deputation's main concerns regarding the bus services in the Richmond Hill area are as follows:

- Cuts in the level of service provision, specifically in relation to the service numbers 61, 62 and 63, leading to a reduction in service frequency
- The unreliability of the existing services
- The impact of the problems for local residents using public transport to access employment opportunities
- General issues for local residents with lower incomes who are reliant on public transport in order to access services and facilities
- Specific issues for older people who may be prevented from participating in community activities due to transport problems

3.2 The Group's claims regarding the impacts on older people were substantiated with a letter of support from Richmond Hill Elderly Action (RHEA). RHEA highlighted the specific issues faced by older people in relation to public transport and its importance in enabling participation in community activities. RHEA confirmed that they have seen a reduction in the number of people attending their activities at the community centre since the changes to the bus routes in the Richmond Hill area.

3.3 Metro and the operator have recently investigated the issues raised by the local community and it has been determined that the problems exist largely because the routes cross the city centre and are subject to traffic delays at many points on the routes.

3.4 To address these issues a revised timetable and routing has been registered for operation from the 22 April 2007.

3.5 The effect of this during the daytime will be to operate a half hourly Cross Green – Richmond Hill – city centre service, without extension to Woodhouse, in order to improve the punctuality of the service number 60.

3.6 To accommodate much of the remainder of the route, a new service number 58 will combine the operation of the 60 west of the city centre with the current service 62. It will therefore operate from St James' Hospital to the city centre via Sheepscar and Woodhouse Ridge. However, to improve the reliability of this service its route has been shortened and it will no longer serve Cowper Street in Chapeltown and Belle Vue Road in Woodhouse. Frequent bus services can be accessed in these areas but will require a longer journey on foot in order to do so.

3.7 Service number 61, which operates city centre – Hunslet – Cross Green – St James', will be largely unchanged although it will terminate at Park Row rather than Leeds General Infirmary in order to reduce the journey time and improve punctuality.

3.8 Early morning, evening and Sunday services are funded by Metro and will essentially follow the current pattern.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 This report does not raise any specific implications for Council policy and Governance. The issue of public transport provision is an issue for the Local Transport Plan and the Bus Strategy, which has been prepared by Metro in conjunction with its local authority partners. The issue of bus service provision is one which affects all members of the community and is a key transport policy issue.

4.2 The issues raised in this report may have implications for the policies of Metro, as the public transport authority responsible for the co-ordination, provision and financial support of bus services in West Yorkshire.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1 This report has no specific legal and resource implications.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 This report has outlined the issues relating to the deputation to Council by Richmond Hill Bus Action Group concerning the deterioration of bus services in the Richmond Hill area.

6.2 The services are operated in the main by First on a commercial basis, although some services are subsidised by Metro.

6.3 The local community has raised the issues regarding the bus services with Metro and they have been investigated in conjunction with First.

6.4 The main causes of the problems have been identified and a revised timetable and routing has been registered for operation from 22 April 2007 to address the issues.

6.5 Metro have informed Richmond Hill Bus Action Group and local ward members of the service changes.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

8.0 Background Information

8.1 The following documents provide background information for this report:

- i) Deputation to Leeds City Council by Richmond Hill Bus Action Group
- ii) Letter from Richmond Hill Elderly Action