

PRESENTATION ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

I REPRESENT EIGHT PARISH COUNCILS FROM THE WETHERBY AREA TRYING TO RESOLVE POOR OR NO PROVISION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT AS IDENTIFIED IN OUR *NEIGHBOURHOOD* PLANS.

THERE ARE A LARGE NUMBER OF REFERRALS FROM OUR AREA TO HOSPITALS IN HARROGATE AND YORK. THE ONLY DIRECT PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINK TO YORK IS FROM WETHERBY – WHICH DOES NOT RUN DURING EVENINGS OR ON SUNDAYS. PATIENTS AND THEIR VISITORS FROM OUTSIDE WETHERBY NEED TO CHANGE BUSES AT WETHERBY OR TADCASTER – WITH POOR LINKS AND LONG WAITS. OUR AREA HAS A HIGH PERCENTAGE OF OLDER CITIZENS, AND POOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS (ESPECIALLY TO YORK) MAKE ACCESS TO HOSPITALS DIFFICULT FOR BOTH PATIENTS AND VISITORS. OLDER PEOPLE NEED REGULAR PUBLIC TRANSPORT TO EASILY GET TO DOCTORS AND HOSPITALS.

THE LACK OF APPROPRIATE BUS SERVICES ALSO HAS AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING. BY RESTRICTING ACCESS TO SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND INCREASING ISOLATION, A FURTHER BURDEN IS PLACED ON SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES.

I PRESENT TO YOU ONE OF A NUMBER OF CASE STUDIES *GATHERED* BY OUR REPRESENTATIVES :-

EDITH IS 72 YEARS OLD AND HAS HAD TWO KNEE REPLACEMENTS, ONE EXCELLENT, ONE NOT SO GOOD AND HAS HAD A HEART ATTACK AND A STENT FITTED AND WHO SUFFERS FROM BREATHING PROBLEMS, SHE DOES NOT DRIVE AND THE WALK TO THE BUS STOP CAN TAKE UP TO TWENTY MINUTES. SHE CANNOT RUSH OR IT EXACERBATES THE BREATHING PROBLEM.

SHE HAD AN APPOINTMENT AT YORK HOSPITAL FOR 4PM; TO GET TO YORK REQUIRES AT LEAST TWO BUSES POSSIBLY THREE DEPENDING WHAT IS AVAILABLE; THE TIMESCALE, BEARING IN MIND HER CONDITION, IS ABOUT 3 HOURS. SHE IS ADVISED TO ALLOW UP TO 2 HOURS FOR HER APPOINTMENT. THE LAST BUS TO WETHERBY

LEAVES YORK AT 5.20PM, SHE THEREFORE CANNOT RETURN BY THIS ROUTE. SHE MUST THEREFORE RETURN BY A DIFFERENT ROUTE VIA LEEDS USING TRANSPENNINE. ASSUMING SHE IS ABLE TO MAKE THE CONNECTIONS, THIS WILL AGAIN TAKE ABOUT 3 HOURS AND SHE MAY GET HOME BY 8.20PM IN THE EVENING.

THIS MEANS SHE HAS TO SPEND 6 HOURS TRAVELLING AND 2 HOURS FOR AN APPOINTMENT OR A WHOLE DAY BY WHICH TIME SHE IS TOTALLY EXHAUSTED FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

AS A RESULT OF THE ABOVE UNSATISFACTORY PUBLIC TRANSPORT, HER HUSBAND WHO IS 75 YEARS OLD, AND HAS A HOSPITAL APPOINTMENT ON THE SAME DAY, HAS HAD TO CANCEL HIS APPOINTMENT AND DRIVE HER TO AND FROM THE HOSPITAL.

A DIRECT LINK TO YORK WOULD HAVE AVOIDED THIS UNSATISFACTORY SITUATION

RESIDENTS IN WALTON WANT A LINK TO YORK AND TADCASTER.

LIMITED PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS TO YORK ALSO IMPACT ON ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT. A LARGE PROPORTION OF RESIDENTS COMMUTE TO YORK AND LEEDS AND WE HAVE ALSO AN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE AT THORP ARCH, WHICH INCLUDES THE BRITISH LIBRARY (A MAJOR EMPLOYER). LACK OF GOOD PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS AND POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES CAN BE A BARRIER TO GETTING TO WORK OR EDUCATION.

SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE ALSO AFFECTED AND PARENTS NEED TO TAKE THEM TO SCHOOL AND TAKE TIME OFF WORK TO DO SO. LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT ALSO AFFECTS THEIR OPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

THERE IS PUBLIC TRANSPORT BUT NO LINK TO THE AIRE VALLEY AND EAST LEEDS EMPLOYMENT ZONES ALTHOUGH OUR AREA IS WELL PLACED FOR THEM.

SIGNIFICANT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN OUR AREA AND THE LACK OF ANY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THIS IN TRANSPORT POLICIES IS AN OPORTUNITY MISSED WITH A REAL DANGER OF SIGNIFICANT INCREASES IN AIR POLUTION. (THIS IS ALREADY 34 MICROGRAMS PER CUBIC METRE IN WETHERBY, DUE TO THE INCREASED CAR USAGE CAUSED BY THE LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT.)

ADDITIONALLY THE CONNECTING LEEDS BOOKLET; “ TRANSFORMING OUR BUS NETWORK “ STATES; “ WE’RE PASSIONATE ABOUT GETTING OUR TRANSPORT SYSTEM RIGHT FOR EVERYONE WHO LIVES IN, WORKS IN OR VISITS LEEDS”.

UNFORTUNATELY SIGNIFICANT PARTS OF LEEDS HAVE NOT BEEN ACCOMMODATED IN THIS PROPOSED TRANSFORMATION AND IT SEEMS FOCUSSED ON IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING SERVICES ONLY.

WE URGE COUNCILLORS TO MAKE A FAIRER DISTRIBUTION OF THE FUNDING AVAILABLE TO “ PROVIDE “ TRANSPORT TO AREAS WHICH HAVE INADEQUATE OR NO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND TO ENCOURAGE WYCA TO MAXIMISE THE OPORTUNITIES AFFORDED BY THE BUS SERVICES ACT (2016) TO DELIVER USEABLE BUS SERVICES TO THE OUTER NORTH EAST AREA.

THE ADVANTAGES ARE CLEAR –

REDUCED USE OF PRIVATE TRANSPORT

INCREASED USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING

AND ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR MORE VULNERABLE CITIZENS.

REDUCED POLUTION FOR ALL.

N.B. The parishes involved are: -

Bickerton, Bramham, Boston Spa, Clifford, Collingham, Thorp Arch, Walton and Wetherby.