

**Memorandum of Understanding between
Darlington Borough Council and Arriva North East Limited,
concerning the operation of local bus services in the Borough of Darlington**

Preamble

1. Arriva North East agrees to the following voluntary code of conduct for operation within the Borough of Darlington, subject to the acquisition of Stagecoach's operation in Darlington by Arriva North East. The code sets out the principles of operation and while it is impossible to cover every eventuality, it sets the tone for dealing with likely future scenarios.
2. The concept of a Statutory Bus Quality Partnership, as proposed through Connect Tees Valley, is welcomed. It is intended that this Partnership document, when agreed and enacted, would replace the relevant sections of this Memorandum. In any event it is anticipated that this agreement should last for five years from the acquisition date, before being formally reviewed. A decision would be made at that time over the continuing need for this agreement.
3. Underpinning this agreement is an assumption of the continued support for public transport in Darlington by the Council. This support includes measures to provide on and off street car parking in accordance with the ethos of the Second Local Transport Plan, and successor documents; bus priority to improve operational reliability, journey speeds and thus overall journey times. This support includes the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement and physical measures to improve access to bus stops.
4. Both the Council and Arriva recognise the importance of enforcement to the operation of bus services in the Borough. To this end, both parties will continue to work with Durham Police to help local people use bus services.

Network design & introduction

5. Following the acquisition of Stagecoach in Darlington, Arriva will commit to agreeing an introduction date for a new network within the Borough of Darlington. The new network will be introduced following the schedule below:-
 - (a) an open consultation process with Council 16 weeks before the planned due date, to discuss the proposed service network and the underlying research evidence supporting the proposals.

- (b) an open consultation process with local people on possible new service network by 12 weeks before the introduction date.
- (c) introduction of new local bus service network from agreed date.
- (d) amendment of services as required one month from 3.
- (e) amendment of services as required four months from 3.

Agreement on longer term network stability contained in paragraphs 9-11.

Frequencies

6. The design of the commercially operated network within the Borough of Darlington to be based on the following principles:-
 - (a) the application of criteria in table 5 of the Bus Strategy, Monday to Saturday daytimes (0730 to 1800).
 - (b) connecting major traffic generators in the town to the town centre every 10 minutes or better between 0730 and 1830 Monday to Saturday.
7. Current major traffic generators are:-
 - (a) the Memorial Hospital
 - (b) Darlington College
 - (c) Morton Park
 - (d) Lingfield Point
 - (e) Yarm Road Industrial Estate
 - (f) District shopping centres (defined as Cockerton & North Road in Local Plan, 1997).
8. There is also a presumption that bus services will serve local shopping centres (defined as Whinfield, Yarm Road, Neasham Road and Mowden in Local Plan, 1997). Similarly, there is a presumption that Arriva will actively seek opportunities to serve future traffic generators such as Central Park & Faverdale, so that bus travel is a realistic option as sites develop. Once developed, the presumption is that bus routes operating at frequencies of 10 minutes or better will serve major employment sites such as Central Park and Faverdale.

Network Stability

9. The redesigned local bus network will be amended on a date to be agreed with Darlington Borough Council and on subsequent anniversaries.
10. Arriva local commercially operated bus services operating into the Borough to be altered at six monthly intervals from the agreed change date in paragraph 5.
11. However, exceptions to this principle may occur for the following reasons:-
 - (a) Response to new services operated by another operator, or changes made to existing operators.
 - (b) Changed travel demand caused by alterations to time or place of education, employment, healthcare or other destination.
 - (c) Unforeseen restriction in fuel supplies or availability of drivers.
 - (d) Consequential commercial responses to the decisions of Darlington Borough Council and other transport authorities concerning supported bus services within their areas.
 - (e) Consequential commercial responses to the decisions of Darlington Borough Council and other highway authorities concerning highway infrastructure in their areas.
 - (f) Unforeseen regular delays caused by traffic congestion.
 - (g) Other matters as identified by Arriva or the Council, and mutually agreed, as having a significant effect on the network.

Network ticketing

12. Arriva to continue to participate in the multi-operator weekly ticket scheme and will seek to introduce easy to use, multi-operator tickets by day, intermittent, month and year for under 16, 16 to 19 and adults by the change date in paragraph 5.
13. Arriva to actively market these network tickets via an agreed marketing strategy. There will be quarterly reviews of progress, particularly in terms of actual usage compared to potential use (including via travel plans).
14. Network ticket prices to be reviewed annually other than for reasons covered in exceptions in paragraph 11 above.
15. Arriva will include in their regional marketing, the availability of PlusBus through ticketing for rail passengers traveling to Darlington, including the detail that the tickets themselves have to be purchased from train operators.

Vehicle quality

16. Arriva to provide new or used vehicles with following attributes for all services¹ operating in Darlington either:-

- (a) by December 2011,
- (b) as otherwise mutually agreed as a consequence of the new network proposals or
- (c) as determined by any Statutory Bus Quality Partnership.

Attributes

17. (a) DiPTAC specification
(b) CCTV equipped
(c) internal next stop display,
(d) full electronic destination screens to front, side and rear
(e) equipped to communicate with real time system.

Information provision

18. In accordance with the Council's Bus information Strategy, the Council will seek a determination to ensure that all bus operators provide information in compliance with the requirements of the Strategy, under the Transport Act 2000. This will include contribution to costs of such provision, including participation in NETIS.

19. To deliver the information, both Arriva and the Council will enter into a service level agreement by the change date in paragraph 5, or as otherwise agreed, for timetable and route information whereby:-

- 1. Arriva supply the Council with information by a mutually agreed period before any service changes.
- 2. the Council publishes at stop bus timetables, the bus map and other information in a format agreed with Arriva.
- 3. the Council provide data for operation of the Traveline service by the relevant dates prior to service changes.
- 4. the Council (or ClearChannel if Adshel location) to provide appropriate bus stop infrastructure at all stops (pole or bus shelter).
- 5. Arriva (or their sub-contractor) to place timetable information at all bus stops in the Borough within specified time periods and alter bus stop flag information as required.

¹ except services using Hundens Lane or roads within Skerne Park until after replacement of existing pattern road humps on roads used by bus services.

6. Arriva (or their sub-contractor) to maintain all existing timetable cases and bus stop flags to specified standards. Also to provide new or replacement items as required up to agreed limits per year.
 7. Arriva (or their sub-contractor (which may include the Council)), to distribute bus route maps and area timetables to all households in the Borough within a mutually agreed period prior to the change date in paragraph 5. Then subsequently to deliver information on an annual basis prior to the service change date, or as required due to alterations to timetables.
 8. Arriva to maintain electronic web pages correct to the day to recognized accreditation standards for clarity and ease of operation by all users.
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20. Arriva to install real time information system equipment in all vehicles used on local bus services within the Borough by two months after completion of purchase of Stagecoach in Darlington. Also to part fund, a mutually agreed number of real time information displays at locations including supermarkets and other public buildings.
 21. Seventy percent of all vehicles used on local bus services from the change date in paragraph 5, to display internal and external colour coded route branding.

Customer care

22. Arriva agree an internal and external bus cleaning schedule with DBC by date of introduction of new network, and agree the implementation schedule for driver training to national standards as a result of the forthcoming European Training Directive effective 2008.
23. Arriva to record all complaints received, result of investigation and action taken, and sharing a summary record monthly on a confidential basis with DBC.