
SUPPORTED BUS SERVICE CONTRACTS 2009-2014

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio

**Responsible Director - Richard Alty,
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To present evidence about travel needs in the Borough for bus services that are funded by the Council, and recommend the tendering of contracts that complement commercially operated bus routes.

Summary

2. Arriva made changes to commercial bus routes¹ on 20 July 2008, following a period of evidence collection, including analysis of a questionnaire circulated to nearly every house in the Borough and information on travel patterns held by the Council.
3. Cabinet (29 April 2008) put in place a set of short term supported bus service contracts from the same date that complemented the commercial network and served areas that were not covered by Arriva. This was to allow more assessment of travel needs as the commercial network settled down, with a view to seeking longer term contracts from April 2009. **Appendix 1** lists these current contracts, which are operated by Arriva following a competitive tender process.
4. Evidence about travel needs for bus services that are funded by the Council has been collected from the following sources:
 - (a) face to face interviews by a market research company of a sample of passengers using supported bus service journeys;
 - (b) a questionnaire available from the Town Hall, the Tourist Information Centre and on line (publicised in the Darlington Advertiser and Northern Echo). Copies were also given to Councillors, Parish Councils/Meetings and Community Partnerships. Individuals and other groups were sent copies upon request. A total of 4,337 paper copies of the questionnaire were sent out, with 860 of these being sent to ward councillors representing Harrowgate Hill and, including the Parish Council, Sadberge

¹ Under the 1985 Transport Act, bus companies may decide to operate bus routes at their own commercial risk, under the regulatory control of the Traffic Commissioner. As businesses, bus companies provide buses to make money, not meet social need. Local Councils may choose to pay for additional bus services where there is unmet travel need, although these cannot compete with commercially provided bus services.

- (online questionnaires in addition);
- (c) ticket machine data for existing supported bus services (including concessionary fare pass use figures); and
 - (d) feedback received about the changes to the local bus network made by both Arriva and the Council on 20 July 2008.
5. Initial headline results have been extracted from the data. These are summarised in **Appendix 2** and further analysis by ward and area will be available at this meeting. Initial headline analysis of the 749 replies to the self completion questionnaire received by 21 October 2008 shows that:
- (a) 65% (466 – figures omit missing responses to each question) of those replying held a concessionary fare bus pass.
 - (b) 37% (253) felt that they had a disability that affected their travel choices.
 - (c) 98% (732) currently had access to a daytime bus service and 93% (696) has access to an evening one.
 - (d) 74% (555) did not want a more frequent bus service.
 - (e) 87% (654) did not have a problem getting to the nearest bus stop.
 - (f) 21% (156) of the replies were from residents in Harrowgate Hill and 9% (69) were from residents in the Sadberge & Whessoe ward (65 replies were from Sadberge).
6. The summary of 433 face to face interviews on bus is as follows:
- (a) 30% (130) of passengers on supported bus services used a concessionary fare bus pass.
 - (b) 7% (30) of those interviewed considered themselves to have a disability that affected their travel choices.
 - (c) 44% (191) used a supported bus service daily, with a further 18% using it daily during the week.
 - (d) 43% (186) of those interviewed were travelling to the town centre.
 - (e) 45% (195) of those interviewed used the bus to go to work. The second largest use was for leisure or social purposes (15%).
 - (f) If no bus were provided, 29% (126) would choose to walk or cycle in order to make their journey.
7. Feedback received by both Arriva and the Council about the changes to bus services on 20 July 2008 has also been considered. In response to this, Arriva have made changes to their commercial network on 26 October 2008 and feel that these answer 44% (81) of comments made to them in response to the July changes. Another 41 comments remain to be

addressed by the Council through its supported bus service contracts (an additional 63 comments fall into other categories as shown in Table 1 of the main report.

8. Feedback on the evidence and the proposed response to it was sought at a Talking Together event on 20 November 2008. This is summarised separately in **Appendix 3**. Members of the Economy & Environment Scrutiny Committee also attended this event before their meeting on 21 November 2008; their views being appended to this report as **Appendix 4**.
9. A final decision on what supported bus service contracts should be entered into is scheduled for the Special Cabinet meeting in February when it also considers the Council budget. It is proposed that tender prices are sought for all existing supported services in advance of that meeting. It is also proposed that support is given to select supported bus service contracts let by neighbouring authorities, where there is a benefit to local people. This has the advantage of allowing Members to take decisions with all the information, in the light of a longer experience of the existing network and in the context of the wider budget discussions. It will also allow Cabinet to consider any further issues arising from the equalities impact assessment and from the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee's Task and Finish Group. It is therefore possible that not all services for which tenders are sought will eventually be run.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that:
 - (a) That tenders be sought for existing supported services and variations on them as set out in Appendix 5 and paragraphs 37 and 38 of the main report;
 - (b) That tenders be sought for a five year period;
 - (c) That officers report further to the Special Cabinet meeting in February so that consideration can be given to the award of supported bus service contracts.

Reasons

11. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) To ensure that the proposed solutions to identified travel needs are procured at the best possible price to the Council.
 - (b) To award any contract deemed desirable in light of tenders received with regard to the budget available and additional analysis of evidence received.
 - (c) That an increase, beyond inflation, to the current budget for supported services cannot be supported in the current financial climate;
 - (d) To consider all available relevant information.

**Richard Alty,
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

Background Papers

- (i) On bus face to face interviews.
- (ii) Self-completion Questionnaires.
- (iii) Ticket machine data.
- (iv) Feedback comments.

Simon Houldsworth : Extension 2701
cc

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime & Disorder.
Health and Well Being	This report has no implications for Health.
Sustainability	Provision of supported bus services contributes to the ability of local people to choose to travel more sustainably.
Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment is currently being done and will be available for consideration at the Cabinet meeting in February 2009.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	As detailed in the report.
Budget and Policy Framework	The principle of providing supported bus services is set out in the Council's Bus Strategy. Budget implications are as set out in the report.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	The decision is urgent in order to meet procurement deadlines. The contents of this report have been considered by the Economy & Environment Scrutiny Committee.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Contributes to the Sustainable Transport Network work strand in the Greener theme.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

12. Arriva North East purchased the business of Stagecoach in Darlington on 26 August 2007, after gaining the approval of the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). During this process, Arriva signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council about how it would operate in the Borough should it receive OFT consent (Cabinet 10 July 2007). Arriva face the possibility of competition from any other bus company at any time, since there is no “lock out” agreement with Stagecoach.
13. Arriva made changes to their commercial bus routes on 20 July 2008, following a period of evidence collection including analysis of a questionnaire circulated to nearly every house in the Borough and information on travel patterns held by the Council. This approach, one consequence of the memorandum and unusual for a commercial bus company, helped Arriva plan a network of bus routes that they felt best met the evidence about use and were most likely to generate a profit for their business.
14. The Council introduced a set of short term supported bus service contracts from the same date. These were designed to complement Arriva’s network to meet travel needs not provided for commercially following assessment of the evidence (Cabinet Report 29 April 2008). The contracts were let until April 2009 to allow further evidence to be collected about how the new bus network was performing in terms of meeting travel needs, with the intent of letting long term contracts in 2009. The contracts were won by Arriva following a competitive tender process and are designed not to compete with commercial bus services.
15. Analysis of the feedback received about the 20 July 2008 changes, shows that the following issues were dominant:
 - (a) loss of daytime service to Harrowgate Farm from the town centre;
 - (b) loss of evening and Sunday service from Whinfield to Harrowgate Hill and North Road;
 - (c) loss of service to Glebe Road & Mayfair Road;
 - (d) loss of service from Brinkburn Road to Cockerton; and
 - (e) loss of service from southern Hummersknott to Cockerton.

In addition, the following became an issue after the withdrawal of service 34 on 26 October 2008:

 - (f) Loss of service through Blackwell.

Other issues raised included the need for a bus service to residential areas of Heighington and a need for different departure times on service 16.
16. Although Arriva are happy with the performance of their new bus network to date, they recognise that the changes have disadvantaged some bus users; for example where they have to walk further to the bus stop. In response to feedback received (**Table 1**), Arriva

have introduced changes on a trial basis from 26 October 2008, that should resolve 44% of feedback received as follows:

- (a) A diversion of the daytime service 6a/b from the town centre to Whinfield via Harrowgate Farm, thus providing a bus service from Harrowgate Farm to Whinfield Asda and Morrisons, North Road – this answers issue (a) above.
 - (b) A commercially provided extension to Whinfield of the evening supported bus service from the town centre to Harrowgate Farm on Friday, Saturday & Sunday nights (mirroring the daytime route) – this answers part of issue (b) above.
 - (c) Daytime operation of service 6a/b on Sundays – this answers issue (b) above.
 - (d) Provision of a new daytime service (no. 77) from the town centre to the Memorial Hospital via Coniscliffe Road, Mowden and Cockerton. This service replaces links to Cockerton and health care facilities lost in the July changes – this answers issues (d) and (e) above.
17. Service 34 through Blackwell village was withdrawn from the same date as a consequence of decisions by North Yorkshire County Council about services originating in North Yorkshire.

Table 1 Analysis of Feedback in response to changes on 20 July 2008

	Comments to Arriva	Comments to DBC ²	Total	%
Issue with DBC supported network ¹	19	22	41	22%
Issue solved or will be solved with changes on 26/10/08	62	19	81	44%
No solution at present time	33	4	37	20%
Non specific complaints	6	4	10	5%
Issue will be looked at in April 2009 service review	7	1	8	4%
Customer error (not got the correct service information)	2	6	8	4%

¹ For example, service 16 no longer serves Larchfield Street, could it run at different times and could it serve residential areas of Heighington.

² Written comments.

18. As set out in the previous Cabinet Report (29 April 2008), an evidence collection process has been undertaken as soon as possible after the introduction of the new bus network – the

delay allowing for travel patterns to stabilise as users become familiar with the new bus routes.

19. The evidence collection process used was a development of that used previously in 2007; and lessons learnt then were applied to ensure that it was focused on actual travel needs or those that needed to be provided for by supported bus services (any evidence received about commercially provided routes has been passed on to Arriva for their consideration and action). The evidence collection process used the following sources:
 - (a) face to face interviews by a market research company of a sample of passengers using supported bus service journeys;
 - (b) a questionnaire available from several locations in the Borough and on line (publicised on bus, in the Darlington Advertiser and Northern Echo). The questionnaire was available from the Town Hall, and the Tourist Information Centre as well as from Councillors, Parish Clerks and Community Partnerships. It was also sent to individuals upon request. A total of 4,337 paper copies of the questionnaire were sent out, with 860 of these being sent to ward councillors representing Harrowgate Hill and, including the Parish Council, Sadberge (online questionnaires in addition). A further 200 questionnaires were sent to both Hurworth Parish Council and Pat Buttle (a volunteer at the Mayor's Charity Shop) upon request;
 - (c) Ticket machine data for existing supported bus services (including concessionary fare pass use figures); and
 - (d) Feedback received about the changes to the local bus network made by both Arriva and the Council on 20 July 2008.
20. A summary of the evidence and the proposed response to it were presented at a Talking Together event in the Dolphin Centre on 20 November 2008. This event was attended by Members of the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee, whose findings from their subsequent meeting, are attached to this report as **Appendix 4**.
21. Briefings about the evidence collection process and consultation arrangements were given to Members, the Association of Parish Councils & Meetings and Darlington Transport Forum.
22. Self completion questionnaires (**Appendix 2**) were supplied to local people to provide evidence about travel needs, either as existing users of supported bus services or as potential users. Respondents were reminded that the questionnaire was about the need for Council funded bus services and not those provided commercially by Arriva. Initial headline analysis of the 749 replies received by 21 October 2008 shows that:
 - (a) 65% (466 – figures omit missing responses to each question) of those replying held a concessionary fare bus pass.
 - (b) 37% (253) felt that they had a disability that affected their travel choices.
 - (c) 98% (732) currently had access to a daytime bus service and 93% (696) has access to an evening one.

- (d) 74% (555) did not want a more frequent bus service.
 - (e) 87% (654) did not have a problem getting to the nearest bus stop.
 - (f) 21% (156) of the replies were from residents in Harrowgate Hill and 9% (69) were from residents in the Sadberge & Whessoe ward (65 replies were from Sadberge).
23. The summary of 433 face to face interviews on bus (**Appendix 2**) is as follows:
- (a) 30% (130) of passengers on supported bus services used a concessionary fare bus pass,
 - (b) 7% (30) of those interviewed considered themselves to have a disability that affected their travel choices.
 - (c) 44% (191) used a supported bus service daily, with a further 18% using it daily during the week.
 - (d) 43% (186) of those interviewed were travelling to the town centre.
 - (e) 45% (195) used the bus to go to work, with the second largest use being leisure or social (15% or 65 replies).
 - (f) If no bus were provided, 29% (126) would choose to walk or cycle in order to make their journey.
24. Ticket machine data for the first month's operation of the existing supported bus contracts has been analysed. The information shows that there is a wide range of travel patterns, resulting in considerable variances between routes and between individual journeys on routes. This information will be presented to Members at their February meeting, so that a further two months information may be included to get a better picture of how existing supported bus services are being used.
25. Local people resident in the Glebe, Laburnum and Mayfair Road area in Harrowgate Hill feel there is a need for a supported bus service. This area was previously served by Arriva route 23 until its replacement by service 6a/b on 20 July 2008. Arriva do not feel that the demand justifies the time taken to operate a bus around these residential roads, particularly given the delay at the junctions with North Road and Salters Lane North. Delays caused by negotiating parked vehicles were also a problem. Local residents may live up to 420m away from a bus stop on either North Road or Salters Lane North; 120m more than the guideline that the Council has set in its Bus Strategy.
26. Questionnaire returns submitted by the 20 October 2008 deadline show that 62 people responded from this area. These respondents wished to make 90 journeys by bus of which 45 were to the town centre and a further 17 were to Whinfield. Respondents stated that 37 of the 90 journeys were made every day, with another 32 being made between 2 to 4 times a week.

Outcome of Consultation

27. **Appendix 3** contains detail of the outcome of the Talking Together event on 20 November 2008 and **Appendix 4** the recommendation of the Economy & Environment Scrutiny Committee (21 November 2008).

Budget Implications

28. The overall budget pressures on the Council are highlighted by the Director of Corporate Services in his report to this meeting. (item 16 on the agenda). That report outlines the position in the MTFP and the need for the Council to identify savings in order to balance the revenue budget. In these circumstances it would be extremely difficult for the Council to commit to an expansion of supported bus services without consequences for other Council services or budgets.
29. The budget for supported bus services is about £600,000 (including Rural Bus Grant). Inflation in the bus industry is higher than average inflation, and around £645,000 may be required in 2009/10 simply to support the existing supported service network (including associated payments) only. It is possible that the level of private developer contributions available for use to support bus services will decrease in future years (2010/11 onwards), so increasing the budget pressure in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
30. It is recommended that tender prices are sought for all the existing supported services plus the suggested variations that may provide lower cost solutions. This has the advantage of allowing Members to take decisions with all the information, in the light of a longer experience of the existing network and in the context of the wider budget discussions. It has the disadvantage of potentially raising expectations, which may not be fulfilled since it may not be possible to fund all demands within the existing budget. It may need to be made clear that not all the services for which tenders are sought will eventually be run.
31. In addition to payments made directly to operators for the provision of supported bus services, the budget is also the funding source for payments to the Traveline travel information service (NETIS) and contributions to Durham County Council for cross boundary supported bus services of benefit to the Borough. Furthermore an allowance of £2,000 should be made for additional cost to supported services that arise from disruptions and diversions on the highway network. These additional costs are estimated at £55,000 in total.

Proposed Supported Bus Services

32. It is recommended that tenders for the supported bus service journeys listed in **Appendix 5** are obtained prior to Members' making a decision at their February meeting about whether to award a contract. This process permits market testing of the proposed supported bus services. It is recommended that tenders for alternative timetable specifications are sought, as well as for current ones, to provide comparative costs. These alternatives are set out below.
33. It is recommended that tenders are sought for the operation of all existing supported bus services and negotiations carried out over the continued support of contracts let by neighbouring authorities. In addition, the following alternative tenders or variations to

contracts let by neighbouring authorities are recommended:

- (a) A hourly frequency on service 12 to Neasham from the town centre on Monday to Saturday evenings, for comparison with the cost of providing the existing half hourly service.
 - (b) additional tenders for smaller buses on services 17, 18 & 20 to see if costs can be reduced.
 - (c) additional tenders for revised routes on services 17 & 20 if further analysis of travel needs indicates that these are desirable. The route of service 18 also needs to be revised to make buses operating it more punctual by reducing its journey time. This may involve the provision of a separate bus service to The Broadway on the same two hourly frequency.
 - (d) additional tenders for revised timings or revised routes on services 16 & 19 to address issues raised by local people about timing, access to West Park Hospital on Sundays and bus capacity. A resident of School Aycliffe has requested an evening service to Darlington and a Councillor request has been received for a route diversion within Heighington village.
 - (e) A two hourly bus service to Blackwell through the agreement of a variation to an existing contract let by North Yorkshire County Council for service 29.
34. A Disability Equalities Impact Assessment is being undertaken to understand the travel needs of people with disabilities. The conclusions of this assessment will be reported to the February meeting.
35. It is proposed that tenders are not sought for completely new bus supported bus services due to the budget implications, given the overall budget position for the Council as outlined in other papers on the agenda.

Decision Making Timescales

36. The process required for decision making is detailed below:
- (a) Cabinet 2 December 2008 - Decision made as to which contracts can be tendered for.
 - (b) Tender period – Tender documentation issued to operators who have expressed an interest. This period includes evaluation.
 - (c) Council 29 January 2009 – members to be asked to approve the extension of current contracts until 2 May 2008 to enable consideration of new contracts within the overall budget decision process.
 - (d) Cabinet February 2009 – Decision made as to which of the tendered contracts to award.
 - (e) Contract award – Each contract awarded to successful operator by 27 February 2008.
 - (f) Registration of services by 7 March 2008 – Services registered with the Traffic Commissioner, which is required 56 days prior to scheduled implementation date of 3

May 2008.

Quality Bus Partnership – The Transport Bill

37. The 'Memorandum of Understanding' with Arriva, which sets out the principles that both sides are trying to adhere to on issues such as ticketing, information, vehicle specification and network stability, is effectively equivalent to a 'Voluntary Quality Bus Partnership'. This is not legally enforceable, and neither party is liable to penalty clauses, but this partnership has been effective with both parties adhering to the principles set out.
38. New powers introduced in The Transport Bill (currently awaiting Royal Assent) are to make it easier to enter into a 'Statutory Quality Contract' with an operator for specified routes. Such a contract would place obligations on the Council to improve journey times and reliability by improving road conditions and reducing delays to bus services and at the same time obligates bus companies operating those routes to comply with a set of service standards. The implications of such contracts are likely to have little significance for this current discussion on supported bus services.

Current Contracts

Contract No – Service Number	Times of Operation	Route
DBC0812 - 5A	Monday - Saturday	Brafferton diversion
DBC0805 - 14	Monday - Friday early morning	Morrisons - Town Centre - Skerne Park
DBC0805 - 14	Saturday morning	Morrisons - Town Centre - Skerne Park
DBC0816 - 16	Monday - Saturday	Newton Aycliffe - Mowden - Town Centre
DBC0807 - 2	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Branksome
DBC0807 - 2	Sunday morning	Town Centre - Branksome
DBC0811 - 12	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - DTVA
DBC0811 - 12	Saturday morning	Town Centre - DTVA
DBC0806 - 7	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Durham
DBC0806 - 7	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Durham
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Saturday early morning	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sunday morning	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sunday -Thu eve	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Monday - Thursday evening	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sunday	Town Centre - Firthmoor
DBC0811 - 12	Sunday	Town Centre - Hurworth - Neasham
DBC0811 - 12	Monday - Saturday evening	Town Centre - Hurworth - Neasham
DBC0804 - 4	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Minors Crescent
DBC0804 - 4	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Minors Crescent
DBC0810 - 3	Monday - Saturday evening	Town Centre - Mowden
DBC0814 - 20	Monday - Saturday	Town Centre - Neasham
DBC0808 - 11	Saturday morning	Town Centre - Red Hall
DBC0808 - 11	Sunday morning	Town Centre - Red Hall
DBC0817 - 17/18	Monday - Saturday	Town Centre - Sadberge
DBC0813 - 30/31a	Monday - Saturday evening	Town Centre - Skerne Park/Albert Hill and Mowden Circulars
DBC0813 - 30/31a	Sunday	Town Centre - Skerne Park/Albert Hill and Mowden Circulars
DBC0803 - 9	Monday - Friday early morning	Town Centre - Springfield
DBC0803 - 9	Sunday -Thursday evening	Town Centre - Springfield
DBC0803 - 9	Monday - Thursday evening	Town Centre - Springfield
DBC0803 - 9	Sunday	Town Centre - Springfield
DBC0815 - 19	Monday - Saturday	Town Centre - West Park
DBC0802 - 10	Saturday early am	Town Centre - Whinbush

Contract No – Service Number	Times of Operation	Route
DBC0809 - 6a	Daily late eve	Town Centre - Whinfield
DBC0809 - 6a	Monday - Saturday evening	Town Centre - Whinfield

Durham County Council Contracts (partly subsidised by Darlington Borough Council):

- 1 Service 1b – Daily early Saturday morning and daily evenings – Town Centre to Crook via Bishop Auckland
- 2 Service 6a+b – Monday to Saturday evenings – Town Centre to Harrowgate Hill via Longfield Road
- 3 Service 7 – Monday to Friday early morning – Town Centre to Thinford
- 4 Service 8c – Monday to Friday – Town Centre to Bishop Auckland

Survey Evidence

Face to face Interviews

The summary of 433 face to face interviews on bus is as follows:

- (a) 30% (130) of passengers on supported bus services used a concessionary fare bus pass.
- (b) 7% (30) of those interviewed considered themselves to have a disability that affected their travel choices.
- (c) 44% (191) used a supported bus service daily, with a further 18% using it daily during the week.
- (d) 43% (186) of those interviewed were travelling to the town centre.
- (e) 45% (195) of those interviewed used the bus to go to work. The second largest use was for leisure or social purposes (15%).
- (f) If no bus were provided, 29% (126) would choose to walk or cycle in order to make their journey.

Self Completion Bus Survey

The survey has a confidence level of +/-3.58.

Initial headline analysis of the 749 replies¹ to the self completion questionnaire received by 21 October 2008 shows that:

- (a) 65% (466) of respondents held a concessionary fare bus pass.
- (b) 37% (253) people felt that they had a disability that affected their travel choices, although only 4% (26) of respondents held a concessionary fare bus pass through grounds of disability.
- (c) 98% (732) had access to a daytime bus service and 93% (696) had access to an evening one.
- (d) 74% (555) felt they did not want a more frequent bus service.
- (e) 13% (95) had a problem getting to the nearest bus stop.
- (f) 98% (731) did not require a 'cross town' service.
- (g) 21% (156) of the replies were from residents in Harrowgate Hill and 9% (69) were from residents in the Sadberge & Whessoe ward (65 replies were from Sadberge).

¹ Figures omit missing responses to each question

Of the 749 respondents, 944 different journeys were identified, therefore the percentages shown below (g-h) relate to a sample size of 944 journeys:

- (h) The top five reasons for wanting to make a particular journey were as follows (respondents could enter more than one reason for travel):
 - (i) 46% (434) - health appointments
 - (ii) 44% (414) - leisure or social reasons
 - (iii) 39% (368) – visiting friends
 - (iv) 31% (291) – shopping
 - (v) 20% (189) – travel to work

- (i) When asked how people currently make their journey, the top five methods were as follows:
 - (i) 33% (314) of journeys were made by bus at a different time
 - (ii) 26% (244) of journeys were made by bus to a different location
 - (iii) 21% (202) of journeys were made by walking or cycling
 - (iv) 21% (194) of journeys were made by car as a passenger
 - (v) 19% (181) of journeys were made by taxi

Talking Together Talk Time session: 20th November, 2008 Central Hall, Dolphin Centre

Approximately 25 people attended the event.

A number of key points and inferences stood out from the debate:

- Arriva are perceived to be holding the Council to ransom. They appear to have removed some popular routes.
- From the point of view of economic development there is a paradox in the fact that it is quicker for some residents of the borough to get to Richmond for shopping by bus than it is to get to Darlington town centre.
- There is confusion over the public's perception of how subsidy is paid to Arriva and clarification was sought over ticketing arrangements.
- Some residents of Harrowgate Hill are desperate for additional opportunities for bus travel and are unsure about the implications of new legislation about how councils can intervene in bus travel arrangements.
- The potential loss of public transport provision for rural parts of the borough would have a critical negative impact on some Darlington residents of all ages. Let's not lose the rural bus services that were protected last year.
- The number 18 bus goes through Middleton St George the wrong way. The Council are paying for a service that is not what is required.
- Local people wish to be informed of changes to bus routes and timetables as early as possible before the changes are implemented rather than the extremely short notice of changes made to services in July 2008. It was noted that such changes need to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner eight weeks before implementation.
- There is public interest in the precise amount of subsidy paid to Arriva by the Council.
- Are there ways of ensuring commercial viability for some bus routes through the provision of smaller buses?
- Some members of the public feel that the forthcoming Transport Act should bring the Council the power to kick Arriva out and run buses itself.

Online comments:

To date there has been just one comment relating to the number 3 bus service from Mowden to Morton Palms via the town centre. It is a plea for no change to scheduling, a criticism of Arriva management and praise for some of the bus drivers.

Talking Together – informal approaches to Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee representatives in one-to-one discussion

Just one point was raised. There are no timetables on the bus shelters and the drivers are not helpful.

6/11/08

David Plews

Communities and Social Inclusion Manager

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21st November, 2008

PRESENT – Councillor Robson (in the Chair); Councillors Hartley, Jenkinson, Lewis, Long, and Walker. (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Armstrong, Baldwin, Dunstone, Nicholson and Ruck. (4)

OFFICERS – John Anderson, Assistant Director – Planning, Regeneration and Transport, Simon Houldsworth, Transport Policy Manager and Gill Hutchinson, Transport Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors D.A. Lyonette and Mrs. Scott.

EE32. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS – Councillors Robson, Hartley, Lewis, Long and Walker each declared non-prejudicial interests in that they were all holders of Concessionary Fares Passes.

EE33. SUPPORTED BUS SERVICE CONTRACTS 2009-2014 – The Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration) submitted a report (previously circulated) on travel needs in the Borough for bus services that are funded by the Council which had been established by collating various forms of evidence. Comments taken from the public and interested parties at a Talking Together event held on 20th November, were also taken into consideration when formulating recommendations to Cabinet on supported bus service contracts. A PowerPoint presentation accompanied the report.

The submitted report outlined the background to the changes made to commercial bus routes by Arriva on 20th July, 2008, following an extensive period of evidence collection on travel needs within the Borough which helped Arriva plan a network of bus routes that they felt best met the evidence about use and were most likely to generate a profit for their business. Evidence was collected by various methods including face to face interviews with passengers, completed questionnaires, ticket machine data and feedback received following the changes to bus services. The Council also introduced a set of short term supported bus service contracts to complement Arriva's network to meet travel needs not provided for commercially following assessment of the evidence.

Details were also supplied of the budget implications to the council, the process for decision making timescales, powers introduced in the Transport Bill (which was currently awaiting Royal Assent), the outcome of the extensive consultation which had been held, current contracts and Tender Schedule.

Discussion ensued on the use of various services throughout the Borough, provision of transport links for patients as outlined in the NHS County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust public consultation document, the frequency of bus routes currently provided and the knock on effect of adding stops to routes, the Act of 1986 preventing Local Authorities from providing bus services, advantages of one operator as opposed to multi agencies within the Borough, terms and conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding between Arriva and the Council and location of bus stops and the consultation undertaken when new stops are requested

RESOLVED – That the following recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet :-

- (a) That tenders for existing services, together with variations to those supported services, as outlined in Paragraph 35 of the submitted report and detailed in Appendix 2, without any prejudice to any final decision the Council may wish to make on Supported Bus Services be sought.
- (b) That a Task and Finish Review Group be established, in order to give consideration to further evidence to be collected for both existing services and gaps in services, with a view to making further recommendations to Cabinet at its meeting in February in respect of the continuation or variation of existing supported services and on any unmet needs that have been identified.

Tender Schedule

Existing Contract No/service No	Times of Operation	Route	Specification (where different to that at present)	Recommendation
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Mon - Fri early am	Town Centre – Firthmoor		Tender
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Mon - Thu eve	Town Centre-Firthmoor		Tender
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Saturday early am	Town Centre - Firthmoor		Tender
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sun -Thu eve	Town Centre-Firthmoor		Tender
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sunday	Town Centre-Firthmoor		Tender
DBC0801 - 13a/b	Sunday am	Town Centre-Firthmoor		Tender
DBC0802 - 10	Saturday early am	Town Centre - Whinbush		Tender
DBC0802 - 10	Sun -Thu eve	Town Centre - Whinbush		Tender
DBC0803 - 9	Mon - Fri early am	Town Centre - Springfield		Tender
DBC0803 - 9	Mon - Thu eve	Town Centre - Springfield		Tender
DBC0803 - 9	Sun -Thu eve	Town Centre - Springfield		Tender
DBC0803 - 9	Sunday	Town Centre - Springfield		Tender
DBC0804 - 4	Mon - Fri am	Town Centre - Minors Crescent		Tender
DBC0804 - 4	Saturday am	Town Centre-Minors Crescent		Tender
DBC0805 - 14	Mon - Fri early am	Morrisons - Town Centre - Skerne Park		Tender
DBC0805 - 14	Saturday am	Morrisons - Town Centre - Skerne Park		Tender
DBC0806 - 7	Mon - Fri early am	Town Centre - Durham		Tender

DBC0806 - 7	Saturday am	Town Centre - Durham		Tender
DBC0807 - 2	Saturday am	Town Centre - Branksome		Tender
Existing Contract No/service No	Times of Operation	Route	Specification (where different to that at present)	Recommendation
DBC0807 - 2	Sunday am	Town Centre - Branksome		Tender
Alternative to part of existing contract for service 18.	Daytime Mon -Sat	The Broadway		Either negotiate de-minimis agreement or Tender if required to replace existing service.
DBC0808 - 11	Saturday am	Town Centre - Red Hall		Tender
DBC0808 - 11	Sunday am	Town Centre - Red Hall		Tender
DBC0809 - 6a	Daily late eve ¹	Town Centre – Harrowgate Farm	Extend to Whinfield Monday to Thursdays only	Tender
DBC0809 - 6a	Mon - Sat eve ¹	Town Centre – Harrowgate Farm	Extend to Whinfield Monday to Thursday only	Tender
DBC0810 - 3	Mon - Sat eve ²	Town Centre - Mowden		Tender
DBC0811 - 12	Mon - Fri am	Town Centre - DTVA		Tender
DBC0811 - 12	Mon - Sat eve	Town Centre - Hurworth - Neasham	Option 1) as present Option 2) Hourly frequency between Darlington and Neasham	Tender
DBC0811 - 12	Saturday am	Town Centre - DTVA		Tender
DBC0811 - 12	Sunday	Town Centre - Hurworth - Neasham	Option 1) as present Option 2) Hourly frequency between Darlington and Hurworth	Tender
DBC0812 – 5a	Mon - Sat	Brafferton diversion		Continue de-minimis

				agreement
DBC0813 – 30/31a	Mon - Sat pm	Town Centre - Skerne Park/Albert Hill and Mowden Circulars		Tender
DBC0813 – 30/31a	Sunday	Town Centre - Skerne Park/Albert Hill and Mowden Circulars		Tender
DBC0814 - 20	Mon - Sat	Town Centre - Neasham	Option 1) as present Option 2) 16 seat bus Option 3) revised route dependent on further analysis.	Tender

Existing Contract No/service No	Times of Operation	Route	Specification (where different to that at present)	Recommendation
DBC0815 - 19	Mon - Sat	Town Centre - West Park	Option 1) as present. Option 2) revise timings. Option 3) with Sunday service Option 4) omit extension to Newton Aycliffe (dependent on further analysis).	Tender
DBC0816 - 16	Mon - Sat	Newton Aycliffe - Mowden - Town Centre	Option 1) as present Option 2) revise timings and extend hours of operation (dependent on further analysis)	Tender
DBC0817 - 17/18	Mon - Sat	Town Centre – Sadberge - Bishopton	Option 1) revised route 18 omitting The Broadway. Option 2) with revised route 17 (dependent on further analysis) Option 3a/b) with 16 seat bus	Tender
Durham CC contract Service 1b	Daily early Sat morning and daily evenings	Town Centre – Bishop Auckland - Crook		Continue funding part of service (West Auckland Road)

Durham CC contract Services (6a, 6b), 75 & 76	Mon – Sat evenings	Use of service 75 bus on route 6a/b Town Centre – Harrowgate Hill between 1900 & 2300 approximately.		Continue funding of bus since it is linked to DBC contract for services 6a/b.
Durham CC contract Service 7	Mon – Fri early mornings	Town Centre to Durham		Continue funding part of service (North Road)
Durham CC contract Service 8c	Mon – Fri	Town Centre to Bishop Auckland		Continue funding part of service (Newton Lane)
North Yorkshire CC contract Service 29	Mon - Sat	Town Centre to Richmond		Agree contract variation to serve Blackwell Village and Carmel Road South.

¹ The majority of evening service 6a/b supported bus journeys are provided using the bus for the Durham County Council contract for Service 75. This interworking is a more efficient solution. The Council's contracts are for journeys leaving the town centre at 1830, 1843 & 2330.

² Two evening journeys at 1815 & 1835.