

North Yorkshire Congestion Consultation (Harrogate)

Response from Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)

Introduction

The Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT) is recognised by the Government as the UK trade body for bus and coach operators with in excess of 90% of bus fleet, and the majority of coach fleet within its membership numbering around a thousand business members.

In the wider Yorkshire region, CPT represents over 60 different operators including the Major bus operators as well as SMEs which in Harrogate include both Transdev and Connexions.

National and Local Context

Congestion is the biggest single factor affecting reliability of bus services, which in turn can lead to the 'bus' being less attractive and discourages modal shift. In Harrogate, buses remain the mass transit solution for the majority of residents. Nationally buses carry more passenger journeys than all other forms of public transport put together (*Source: DfT National Travel Survey 2017 Tables NTS 0308, 0313*).

Congestion continues to be a major problem. Congestion in the UK's largest cities is 14% worse than five years ago, and Nationally, traffic speeds in city centres are forecast to fall by almost 5mph from 17mph to an average of 12mph by 2030, and significantly slower in peak hours, according to a recent report by Greener Journeys.

In terms of air quality benefits, a new diesel bus creates less emissions than a new diesel car, and has 15 to 20 times the capacity. In addition, Transdev has invested in Harrogate to create a low emission bus town by introducing electric vehicles onto local Town services.

For congestion to reduce, local policies and infrastructure must be supportive of the role of the bus and its recognition of a means to help deliver significant modal shift – this can be delivered in the short term.

Core Interventions

- **Provision of Real Time Information**

Consistent provision of real time information on bus stops and shelters enhances the overall journey experience and helps to remove some of the barriers to bus travel such as locating information and dependency on its accuracy. As a short term quick win we would urge a work stream working with operators to identify gaps and need within the local network.

- **A Quality Waiting Environment**

The waiting environment is an important aspect in the whole journey experience especially during poor weather conditions. Provision of bus shelters can not only provide refuge in poor weather but also provide seating for disabled and older passengers. Shelter provision and cleaning regimes appear inconsistent. CPT recommend a working group with operators to provide a baseline on current provision and to work on improving standards and provision.

- **Review of Traffic Lights and Crossings**

Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) and Traffic Light Priority (TLP) should be used at key junctions to prioritise bus movements by extending green-time and giving buses priority triggers. This will be vital if we expect more people to see the bus as a credible alternative to the car. Data is already available from on-bus ticket machines to feed into traffic light controls. Some current systems can additionally apply extra priority to the most delayed buses (versus their scheduled time) along the route. Bus priority is a proven way to achieve benefits for public transport ahead of the car as required by the DfT (reference Manual for Streets and other documents). CPT strongly urge a partnership approach with the local authority for consideration of mutual data exchange to speed up bus journeys using available data.

- **Bus Priority Schemes**

Speeding up bus journeys is an important element in encouraging modal shift and reducing congestion. Bus priority means bus passengers can enjoy faster journey times that can compete and even beat car trips, the visibility of buses moving past traffic jams is also an important image to see in promoting modal shift. In many cases bus priority can be provided inexpensively and quickly, even simple schemes using paint on the road surface can help deliver priority. CPT urge working with operators to identify where bus priority measures could be delivered.

- **Review of Car Parking Policy**

The area must become more hostile to the car and especially where high quality, reliable alternatives exist in the local bus network. Parking must be high cost and on street parking reduced in places to enable wider benefit. An in depth review of parking could consider street by street analysis; in places bus priority, improved waiting experience or improved public realm could be easily and quickly achievable. CPT urge the local authority to review parking policy and provision.

- **Park & Ride**

Park and Ride schemes are an excellent means of removing cars from Town and City Centres with a high quality, attractive alternative. We believe Transdev would be open to discussions on existing high frequency bus corridors thus meaning an ongoing financial commitment may not be necessary. This would require capital investment and a small ongoing maintenance cost but provided it could be delivered with accompanying bus priority measures to ensure no impact on journey time, there would not be any need for revenue support. Park and ride services in Leeds have been delivered at capital cost of between £2.8m and £9.6m, including land purchase.

CPT Urge the Local Authority to work with operators to review viability of park and ride opportunities using the existing network.

- **Coach Parking**

Harrogate is a popular destination for coach trips and for group travel both for the charm of the Town and for the Conference Centre. Coaches deliver similar capacity benefits to local bus services but Harrogate can be a hostile town for visiting coaches and groups. Existing coach parking at Dragon Lane is inconsistent due to requirements of the Conference Centre. CPT would be happy to work with the local authority on developing a coach strategy and working towards Coach Friendly status.

- **Summary**

It is impossible for any one single organisation(public or private) to eradicate traffic congestion and thus a partnership approach is essential. The economy of local buses is linked to the local high street economy and the local visitor economy is linked to the coach economy.

Operators on a daily basis know and understand the local road network including its issues, inconsistencies and also have the solutions to help reduce congestion. They cannot deliver this in isolation and the local authority must tap into this expertise. Local bus operators are also the largest single user of the local network transporting thousands of passengers on a daily basis.

Specific feedback on Proposed Packages

More detailed feedback in response to the packages can be found by viewing the response from Transdev (The Harrogate Bus Company) which CPT fully supports.