



Equality Impact Assessment

Subject:

Date: 3 December 2013

Equality Impact Assessment

What is the organisation strategy or policy being assessed? Hebden Bridge Bus Network Review	Department: Bus Services	Date: 3 December 2013
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1. Responsibility and Ownership

Service Area: Bus Services
Lead Officer: Neale Wallace, Assistant Director Transport Services
Members of the assessment team: Clive Hopkinson, Bus Services Co-ordinator Clare Davies, Consultation Team Leader
Any others involved in the assessment (peer review / external challenge): None

2. Terms of Reference

Briefly describe the aims of the strategy or policy you are assessing:

The aim of the Hebden Bridge bus review was to provide a sustainable minibus network which meets the needs of passengers (within budgetary constraints).

Metro has carried out 2 phases of consultation in Hebden Bridge during the last year.

Stage 1 Consultation

The first phase was about trying to solve some of recent problems with the vehicles operating the local minibus services (reliability of vehicles, breakdowns, use of larger vehicles which couldn't fit around the route etc.).

Consultation information was made available from 4th December 2012. Public consultation closed 18th January 2013

Public consultation events:

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Thursday 10 January 2013	10:00 – 16:00	Hebden Bridge Town Hall
Thursday 10 January 2013	18:15 – 19:45	Mytholmroyd Community Centre

In April 2013 there were some changes to services A and B in response to concerns raised by Dodd Naze passengers. A new community link (Service F) was also provided to Fairfield and Eaves – this service operates using a small minibus on an experimental basis and is free of charge.

The original proposal was to withdraw the bus services to Cragg Vale on evenings and Sundays (except the summer). Due to the numerous complaints received from passengers this plan was aborted.

Stage 2 Consultation

In the early summer First made Metro aware that they were planning some major changes to their commercial services, including the withdrawal of services 591 and 593 to Heptonstall and Old Town.

This review has been carried out in partnership with the commercial operator, First, and the consultation incorporated their proposed changes to services 591 and 593. This Equality Impact Assessment covers the tendered services which Metro has responsibility for and not all the commercial proposed changes.

During summer 2013 Metro consulted on a revised set of routes and timetables for the Hebden Bridger network in anticipation of First withdrawing services 591 and 593. Metro also sought to improve rail connections and to coordinate the Hebden Bridger services with Metro funded services 500 (to Keighley) and 900/901 (to Huddersfield). The review has also provided the opportunity to review the success of the trial service to Fairfield and Eaves.

Throughout the consultation Metro made people aware that there was a possibility that the new network may have to be operated by smaller vehicles which may not be low-floor accessible. This was due to a number of factors including availability of accessible vehicles which would fit round the routes, price etc. The accessibility and size of the vehicles dominated the consultation responses. Thankfully Metro was able to secure a reasonable tender price from

TLC Travel Ltd who is buying brand new, accessible vehicles for the network (similar to those already in operation).

Another major concern expressed in the consultation was in regard to ticketing as people don't want to have to pay more for journeys that they currently make. The cost of changing buses between operators isn't a problem for a large number of bus users (elderly and disabled) as they travel for free. Metro and all of the bus operators in the area are in discussions regarding through ticketing proposals and we hope to be able to publish proposals by the end of 2013.

This review has been carried out during a time when a reduction in central government funding to local government has resulted in Metro seeking to decrease expenditure on tendered bus services by 25% across West Yorkshire. Metro has actually had to greatly increase expenditure in Hebden Bridge as result of this review in order to place the Hebden Bridger services on a more stable, sustainable and reliable footing. An additional fourth bus has been introduced to enable us to maintain a half hourly frequency between Hebden Bridge and Heptonstall and Old Town following the withdrawal of 591 and 593. This additional bus comes at a financial cost which may not be sustainable unless passenger use increases. Metro will therefore fund the four bus operation on a trial basis until August 2015. If after the first full year's operation, passenger use has not increased, Metro will consult on a revised network reverting to three buses.

Public Consultation events (held until 18:30 to give commuters the opportunity to attend):

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Wednesday 7 August	10:00 – 18:30	Hebden Bridge Town Hall
Thursday 15 August	14:30 – 18:30	Halifax Bus Station

Metro endeavoured to make the consultation as inclusive as possible. A range of Stakeholders were invited to participate including; all Calderdale Councillors, Passenger Consultative Committee (PCC) Members and Town and Parish Councils in the affected areas.

- Calderdale Councillor Briefing, Halifax Town Hall, Tuesday 16th July
- PCC briefing, Tuesday 16th July

People were encouraged to complete a survey via Survey Monkey and via feedback form (freepost address provided) or email their comments.

The consultation was advertised in the following ways:

- The information was also available on Metro's website www.wymetro.com/consultation/busreview (with the email address for comments well promoted).
- Information flyers sent to all operators of affected bus services for passengers to pick up.
- Posters displayed on all affected bus services.
- Posters prominently displayed at local bus stations (Halifax and Todmorden)
- Posters put up at affected bus shelters
- Press releases – a number of articles were printed in the Hebden Bridge Times
- Contract Monitoring Officer travelled on the buses handing out information and questionnaires
- Contract Monitoring Officer handed out information and questionnaires to rail

commuters

- Information was also posted on Heb Web discussion forum which kick-started a lively debate.

Appendix A shows what has changed as a result of consultation.

As a result of the review some areas will end up with a reduced bus service frequency or loss of service on a Sunday. Metro has, however, managed to reduce the detrimental impact of the commercial service withdrawals.

The revised bus services in Hebden Bridge will be introduced on 26th January 2014.

Who is intended to benefit from the outcomes of the strategy or policy?

The aim of the latest review was to mitigate as far as possible the impact upon communities of First's decision to withdraw service 591 and 593 and the Metro's subsequent revisions to the local minibuss network.

What objectives are intended to be delivered by the strategy or policy?

The review has provided an opportunity to consider a number of elements of the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, which sets out a 15 year strategy for developing and managing an integrated transport system that will support economic growth, reduce carbon dependency and improve quality of life.

- The establishment of a public transport hierarchy in the Hebden Bridge area, with core commercial bus services identified and promoted.
- The development of transport hubs.

Please list other strategies and policies and operational areas which relate to this strategy or policy:

ITA Policies
LTP 3

3. Equalities implications

Is there reason to believe that any people who share a protected characteristic could be *adversely* affected by this strategy or policy?

Protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

Yes.

Which people sharing a protected characteristic are affected?

Bus services are used by all sectors of the community though consultation has generated most feedback from older and / or disabled people.

4. Evidence of adverse impact or unmet needs

What is the concern about adverse impact or unmet needs on the grounds of:	What evidence do you have for this?
Age	Data not collected as part of the consultation but the National Travel Survey and Metro's Tracker Survey 2012 shows that bus use is highest amongst 16-24 year olds and those aged 65+. Changes to services could impact these groups disproportionately. Older people from Heptonstall and Old Town may experience more difficult journeys due to the need to change buses and walk between bus stops in the centre of Hebden Bridge. See Section 5 for more detail.
Disability	Data not collected as part of the consultation but the proportion of adults with a disability increase with age and these groups are more likely to be reliant on public transport. Disabled people from Heptonstall and Old Town may experience more difficult journeys due to the need to change buses and walk between bus stops in the centre of Hebden Bridge. See Section 5 for more detail.
Gender reassignment	Data not collected as part of the consultation. No evidence this group will be adversely impacted.
Pregnancy and maternity	Data not collected as part of the consultation but they may experience more difficult journeys due to the need to change buses and walk between bus stops in the centre of Hebden Bridge. See Section 5 for more detail.
Race	Data not collected as part of the consultation. No evidence this group will be disproportionately impacted.
Religion or belief	Data not collected as part of the consultation. No evidence this group will be disproportionately impacted.
Sex	Data not collected as part of the consultation however the National Travel Survey indicates a greater proportion of bus users are female.
Sexual orientation	Data not collected as part of the consultation. No evidence this group will be disproportionately impacted.

5. Decisions and recommendations

Following the assessment, is further action required?

Metro undertook extensive consultation to understand the impact of the proposals. A number of changes have been made to the timetable after analysing the consultation feedback (see Appendix A).

Some passengers may need to change buses in Hebden Bridge as a result of First's decision to withdraw services 591 and 593 and Metro is working to ensure that information is available to help these passengers. Passengers for Dodd Naze / Old Town will be able to board a 596 bus (from Heptonstall) and travel on the bus to Hebden Bridge Rail station where it will become a 595 service to Dodd Naze / Old Town. This should assist those passengers that are unable to walk to Commercial Street. Passengers / to from Heptonstall will be able to easily interchange on New Road

The revised network will offer an increase in frequency for passengers travelling to / from Dodd Naze and there will be much better connections provided with train services. The revised network (operated with new vehicles) should be more reliable, reducing waiting time to a minimum.

Metro and all of the bus operators in the area are in discussions regarding through ticketing proposals and we hope to be able to publish proposals by the end of 2013.

What are your recommendations? Do you need to:

- **Take any immediate action?**

Appendix A shows the changes which have been made as a result of consultation. The tendered bus services will be reviewed in August 2015.

Metro is working to provide information regarding Interchange opportunities and a ticketing agreement with bus operators.

- **Prioritise the problems identified and develop equality objectives and targets for people who share protected characteristics based on this assessment?**

Not applicable.

- **Conduct to a more detailed impact assessment?**

Not applicable.

List the specific actions that will be taken to address the problems you have identified:

- See Appendix A. A number of services were amended following consultation.
- Metro will speak to bus operators regarding a ticketing agreement
- Metro will advertise and promote interchange opportunities.
- Metro will seek ideas from Community representatives regarding marketing the network.

Who will do this?

Bus Services Team with assistance from Facilities and Assets Team and Marketing Team

Signature of lead officer:



Name of lead officer: Neale Wallace

Date: 3 December 2013

HEBDEN BRIDGE BUS REVIEW - SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT IN SUMMER 2013

What has changed in the timetables following consultation?

Service 595 (Dodd Naze – Old Town – Pecket Well – Crimsworth)

No change to proposals

Service 596 (Heptonstall – Slack – Blackshaw Head)

The proposed Monday - Saturday 22:15 Hebden Bridge Station - Blackshaw Head and 22:35 Blackshaw Head to Hebden Bridge Station journeys will instead operate 20 minutes later throughout in order to connect with the 22:28 train arrival from Leeds. This means that late evening departures from Hebden Bridge to Heptonstall and Blackshaw Head will be at similar times to current services.

Service 597 (Hebden Bridge – Mytholmroyd – Banksfield Estate – Nest Estate)

A later journey will be provided at 16:05 on Monday -Saturday from Hebden Bridge Station.

Service 599 (Old Town – Pecket Bar – Hebden Bridge via Keighley Road)

Two additional early morning journeys numbered 599 will be provided on Monday - Friday linking Old Town with Hebden Bridge via Keighley Road. These will continue beyond Hebden Bridge to Mytholmroyd and Cragg Vale as Service 901. Through fares will be available.

Services 900, 901 (Hebden Bridge – Mytholmroyd – Cragg Vale)

The proposed 06:53 Monday - Saturday journey from Cragg Vale will not operate on Saturdays.

The proposed 16:37 and 17:37 Monday -Saturday journeys from Hebden Bridge to Cragg Vale, returning at 16:53 and 17:53 respectively will now operate at 17:03 and 18:03 and run approximately 26 minutes later throughout. This is to provide a better spread of departures in the evening peak and to make better connection with train arrivals from Leeds and Manchester.

The proposed 23:00 Monday - Saturday Hebden Bridge – Cragg Vale and 23:14 Cragg Vale – Hebden Bridge journeys will now run 10 minutes later throughout making this journey the same as on the current timetable.

There will be minor changes to running times in the evenings and on Sundays on the Hebden Bridge - Cragg Vale section of Service 901.

Sunday journeys between Hebden Bridge and Huddersfield **will now run all year round** but will operate direct via Stainland as Service 901 rather than via Krumlin and Barkisland as Service 900.

All journeys on services 900 and 901 will now operate from Hope Street in Hebden Bridge, irrespective of operator.

Flexibus

No change to proposals

Key issues arising from consultation

Number of feedback forms received:	242 feedback forms received
Number of emails and letters received:	34 emails and letters
Heb Web Discussion	19 contributors
Details re Petitions received:	None

- Size of vehicles. Will there be overcrowding? Concern mainly expressed by Heptonstall and Blackshaw Head passengers.
- Accessibility of vehicles
- Loss of direct buses to Halifax from Heptonstall and Old Town (people don't want to change buses or pay more for having to catch 2 buses)
- Need for a ticket arrangement between all local operators.
- Need for interchange in Hebden Bridge to be as easy as possible
- New minibus network needs to be reliable. People are not confident that buses will connect.

Comments *x – number of specific written responses received (only things mentioned by 5 or more people are listed in this summary)*

Theme	Issue	Response from Metro
Loss of direct bus services to Halifax	63 people provided comments expressing concerns about the loss of direct services to Halifax from Old Town and Heptonstall	The 591 and 593 are commercial services and First have decided to remove the service and to redeploy the resources to increase the frequency of bus services between Todmorden and Halifax. There was some support for the proposal with 103 people (out of 242 feedback forms) saying that they like the plan to improve the bus service to Todmorden.
	Need a ticketing agreement with all local operators so people don't have to pay more for the journeys they currently do if they have to change buses / operators. Request that the ticketing arrangement extends to Halifax. x44	We will seek agreement from all local operators before services change.
Ticketing	Request for cheaper fares x18	Fares are set by Metro and the bus operators – the level of fares must reflect the cost of operation and the ability of passengers to pay.
	Request that ticket arrangement also includes the 500, 900 and 906 bus routes x14	We will seek agreement from all local operators before services change.

Vehicles	Concern that the new minibuses won't be accessible. Request that wheelchairs and unfolded prams can be carried and that there is a level access onto the bus for people with mobility problems x55	The new vehicles will be accessible and a similar size to those currently in operation.
	Concern about vehicle size. Will overcrowding be a problem, especially to Heptonstall / Blackshaw Head? x49	Metro believes that the new vehicles will be large enough to accommodate all intending passengers. We will monitor passenger numbers on service 596.
	Support for use of smaller minibuses x15	Mainly support from people that recognise the difficulty of driving along narrow roads with obstructions and /or don't like big buses through Heptonstall
	New vehicles are needed as they are unreliable x11	The revised network will be operated by brand new vehicles.
Interchange in Hebden Bridge	Improvements in Rail Connections welcomed x26	The new timetables have been planned to improve connections however it is not possible to connect to all trains.
	Minibuses and large buses should use same stops so people don't have to walk to change buses x15. Particular concern that people will have to walk uphill from New Road to Commercial Street to catch a bus to Old Town.	Due to the lay-out of the town centre it is impossible for all buses to use the same stops. Passengers to / from Heptonstall will be able to easily change buses on New Road The 595 and 596 will interwork during the day – passengers may stay on the bus and travel via the railway station to/from New Road in order to interchange and avoid walking to Commercial Street.
	Real Time: Electronic displays in Hebden Bridge are not accurate or don't provide enough information about reasons for delays x8	It is not possible to provide information about reasons for delays. There are some reception problems in the area which means that sometimes only scheduled arrival times can be shown.
Blackshaw Head / Heptonstall	The bus services to Blackshaw Head / Heptonstall need to finish later than 22:17 x7	The proposed Monday - Saturday 22:15 Hebden Bridge Station - Blackshaw Head and 22:35 Blackshaw Head to Hebden Bridge Station journeys will instead operate 20 minutes later throughout in order to connect with the 22:28 train arrival from Leeds. This means that late evening departures from Hebden Bridge to Heptonstall and Blackshaw Head will be at similar times to current services. There will be a Flexibus at 23:35 to Heptonstall on Mon-Sat, extending to Blackshaw Head on Friday and Saturday.

	Evening buses to Blackshaw Head need to connect with trains from Leeds. Buses at xx15 are no good x6	Current proposal offers connections to Old Town – impossible to do both due to bus working constraints. Heptonstall departures are at xx15 all day so departure times are consistent.
	Buses from Heptonstall need to connect directly with buses to Halifax x8	The Halifax service will be every ten minutes so this will be the maximum wait for a connection towards Halifax. The maximum wait on the return journey will be 30 minutes.
	Please at least keep a direct service to Heptonstall at peak times x5	First are not willing to provide peak time journeys to Heptonstall.
Old Town	Would like Old Town to be served by old routes A and B. They don't like the current routes x9	The proposed network offers a more effective use of the buses available and is aimed at the sections of route which generate the greater number of passengers.
Keighley Road	The road will only be served by hourly service 500 if the 593 is withdrawn x9	Metro considers that an hourly service is adequate for the numbers of passengers currently travelling. Some additional early morning journeys have been introduced on Keighley Road (service 599)
Banksfield & Nest Estate	Objection to proposals to reduce the service to Banksfield and Nest Estate x6	The journeys being withdrawn carry less than 3 passengers per journey. If these journeys are retained other better used journeys would need to be withdrawn. A later journey will be provided at 16:05 on Monday -Saturday from Hebden Bridge Station following consultation responses.
Fairfield & Eaves	Please extend operating times x8	This could only be done at the expense of other areas where passenger use is greater
	Pleased that they are gaining Saturday services x5	Thank You!
Cragg Vale	There is a gap from 17:37 to 19:00 and buses don't connect very well with train services.	The proposed 16:37 and 17:37 Monday - Saturday journeys from Hebden Bridge to Cragg Vale, returning at 16:53 and 17:53 respectively will now operate at 17:03 and 18:03 and run approximately 26 minutes later throughout. This is to provide a better spread of departures in the evening peak and to make better connection with train arrivals from Leeds and Manchester.

First's proposal

Question 12. What do you think about the proposal to improve the frequency of buses between Halifax, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden? (242 feedback forms)

Is the proposal a good idea?

YES	43%
NO	42%
Not answered	15%

Suggestions about how the Valley Floor services could be further improved included:

- Promotional route branding
- Better vehicles
- Some limited stop services

What are your priorities for the Hebden Bridge Network?

(all were considered important, however improving punctuality and reliability of the minibuses was by far the most important). Rating out of 100

1. Improve punctuality and reliability (34.7)
2. Bus tickets to be valid on all buses in the area (20.5)
3. Improve connections with train services at Hebden Bridge Rail station (19.9)
4. Improve Interchange Information (12.6)
5. Improve bus connections (12.3)

Requests for new bus routes

- Can we have a direct service from Midgley to Hebden Bridge? x5
Not included in this review but will be considered when other Calderdale services are reviewed.