

CONSULTATION PROCESS AND FEEDBACK - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary presents a brief overview of the public and stakeholder consultation on proposals to optimise the Doncaster bus network, undertaken by South Yorkshire Passenger transport executive (SYLTE) on behalf of the proposed Doncaster Bus Partnership (DBP).

1. Context and Purpose of Consultation

Sheffield City Region's Devolution Deal aims to deliver an efficient and integrated bus network that:

- is co-ordinated, for better delivery of limited resource;
- minimises congestion and pollution by avoiding excess duplication;
- is efficient, more sustainable to both Operators and the taxpayer;
- has improved performance (reliability & punctuality);
- is integrated, providing better access to other services;
- allows buses to be reinvested to improve access or reduce fares;
- supports long term economic growth and helps reduce worklessness; and
- encourages future modal shift to support patronage growth.

Public and stakeholder views have been sought on network plans developed by Doncaster Bus Partnership to meet this objective.

2. The Consultation

The Doncaster Bus Partnership network consultation was undertaken by SYLTE on behalf of the proposed DBP from 9 November – 18 December 2015.

The consultation focused on three primary areas in order to understand individual or group travel needs and how the proposals would impact on their bus journey – About You, Your Travel, Your Ticket.

People could take part in the consultation online at travelsouthyorkshire.com/dbp, by completing a paper feedback form available from Doncaster, Barnsley, Adwick, Rotherham, Meadowhall and Sheffield Interchanges and Doncaster Council's Civic Office reception or by attending any of the consultation drop-in sessions held across Doncaster.

3. Consultation methodology

The consultation reached an audience over 85,000. The following section lists activities undertaken as part of the consultation process.

Online

The consultation was hosted on a dedicated webpage on the Travel South Yorkshire (TSY) website (travelsouthyorkshire.com/dbp). A 'coming soon' news story and banner on the TSY website raised awareness of the consultation before it started between 29 October and 8 November. A 'take part now' news story and banner publicised the consultation when it was live, 9 November – 18 December.

A direct link to the consultation webpage was supplied on all forms of communication. The travelsouthyorkshire.com/dbp page received 5353 views, 3968 visits and 3505 visitors between 9 November and 18 December.

The consultation was also promoted via a banner on operator websites.

Paper copies

Paper copies of the consultation questionnaire and Doncaster Network Map and Guide were available from the Customer Service Desks at Doncaster, Barnsley, Adwick, Rotherham, Meadowhall and Sheffield Interchanges and Doncaster Council's Civic Office reception, and at the consultation drop-in events. 10,000 copies of the Network Maps were produced and distributed as required. People could contact Traveline or e-mail the dedicated consultation e-mail address doncasterbuspartnership@syppte.co.uk if they had any questions or if they required information in an alternative format

Drop-in events

Fourteen drop-in consultation events staffed by DBP representatives were held at Doncaster Interchange and community venues across Doncaster between 23 November and 10 December. The drop-in events provided people with the opportunity to ask questions about the consultation, receive assistance in completing the consultation questionnaire, or take away information in paper format.

Venue	Date	Time
Victoria Hall, DN7	23 November	3 – 6pm
Doncaster Interchange, DN1	24 November	3 – 6pm
Askern Community Library, DN6	25 November	11am – 2pm
Doncaster Interchange, DN1	26 November	8 – 10.30am
Bentley Area Community Library, DN5	26 November	3 – 6pm
The Ivanhoe Centre, DN12	27 November	3 – 6pm
Thorne Library, DN8	30 November	10am – 1pm
Intake Community Centre, DN2	30 November	3.30 – 6.30pm
Carcroft and Skellow Community welfare Association, DN6	01 December	3 – 6pm
Dunsville Community Centre, DN7	04 December	3 – 6pm
Balby Community Centre, DN4	07 December	2 – 5pm
Armthorpe Community Centre, DN3	08 December	3 – 6pm
Doncaster Council Building, DN1	09 December	2 – 5pm
Rossington Miners Welfare, DN11	10 December	3 – 6pm

Media

Two news releases were issued regarding the consultation on 9 November and 9 December. Extensive print coverage in local newspapers, including Doncaster Free Post which had an article reach of 123,460 people and an Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) of £3,037.

Social media

TSY Twitter and Facebook accounts were used throughout the consultation to promote participation. 55 Tweets signposting to the consultation from the @TravelSYorks Twitter account were seen by 39,843 people (referred to as Tweet 'impressions'), 30 people engaged with the Tweets (@ retweet or favourite), allowing the Tweets to be viewed by a further 75,062 people. 124 clicked through to the consultation webpage (travelsouthyorkshire.com/dbp).

Seventeen TSY Facebook posts promoting the consultation reached 12,562 people and achieved 510 clicks.

E-marketing

A dedicated TSY e-mail newsletter regarding the consultation was delivered to 5582 contacts via SYPTE's customer relationship management (CRM) system on 13 November and had an open rate of 2914 (27%) and a click through rate of 385 (5%), achieving above average e-mail marketing standards. An additional e-mail went to 893 contacts registered for timetable updates in Doncaster on 1 December and had an open rate of 407 (24%) and a click through rate of 168 (11.98%).

A reminder e-mail was also sent to 5954 contacts via the CRM system on 11 December and had an open rate of 1770 (18%) and a click through rate of 147 (2%).

Doncaster Chamber of Commerce also included a news article with a link to the consultation in one of their December e-newsletter reaching an audience of 2,800 people and had an open rate of 23% and a click through rate of 2%.

Posters

Posters were displayed in Doncaster Interchange, on board First, Stagecoach and Arriva services operating in Doncaster and at each drop-in venue. Posters were designed to encourage people to take part in the consultation via the Travel South Yorkshire website, by completing a paper questionnaire or by attending a drop-in event and denoted details of each drop in event.

Passenger Information Displays

Real Time Information displays at bus stops/shelters across Doncaster displayed a message encouraging people to take part in the consultation. Additionally the consultation was promoted on the screens at Doncaster Civic Building throughout the consultation.

Disability groups

46 e-mails or letters were sent out to a variety of disability groups across Doncaster, including Doncaster and District Deaf Society and Doncaster Disabled People's Alliance. The letter asked the groups to share the consultation with their members, encouraged them to take part and advised them to contact doncasterbuspartnership@sypte.co.uk if they wished to receive any paper copies of the feedback form to share with their members.

Community groups

77 e-mails and letters were sent to various community groups, and touch points across Doncaster, including, Age UK, Job Centre Plus, Doncaster College, Doncaster Federation of Tenants and Residents Association (TARA). Contacts within the local authority were also asked to promote the consultation through their community links. A number of these groups included people with protected characteristics such as Age.

Posters and consultation packs were also posted out to libraries in Doncaster asking them to help us publicise the consultation by displaying the information included in the consultation packs.

Transport user groups

53 e-mails and letters were sent to two transport User Groups (Doncaster and South Yorkshire Transport User Groups). The members of these groups represent various community groups and disabled, young and older people. Transport User Groups were asked to respond to the consultation and to help promote it within the wider community.

MPs, Councillors and Parish Councillors

97 e-mails or letters were sent to all Doncaster MPs, Councillors and Parish Councillors asking them to take part and to encourage their constituents or Parish members to give their views.

A members briefing session was also held in Council Chambers on Tuesday 3 November and councillors were invited to drop in at any time during the session to ask questions and discuss the proposed changes with the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE) and bus operator representatives in attendance.

4. The respondents

A total of 801 respondents took part in the Doncaster Bus Partnership network consultation, including 789 responses from individuals/households/families and 12 responses from groups/organisations.

467 of the overall submissions were via the online survey and 334 in paper format. One petition was also received.

Petitions			
Service	Reason	Lead petitioner	Signatures
67	Restore service 67 between Hatfield and Doncaster	Pru Winder	260

Postcodes where the highest volume of responses came from are DN5 (33%) and DN4 (21.2%). The other postcode areas were stated by less than 6% of respondents. 4.9% of respondents did not state their postcode.

The majority of respondents belonged to the 65-74 age group (24.2%), followed closely by the 75+ age group (20.1%) with 14.4% in the 45-54 age group.

Age Category	Not Stated	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75+
Respondents	2.0%	6.9%	6.0%	9.7%	14.4%	7.4%	9.4%	24.2%	20.1%

438 (54.7%) of respondents indicated they were female and 334 (41.7%) male.

254 (31.7%) of the 801 respondents said they considered themselves to be disabled. A total of 370 disability types were stated as some respondents stated they have more than one disability condition. 168 respondents (66.1%) stated they had mobility related issues.

Disability/health condition	Respondents	%
Mobility related	168	45.4%
Hearing related	53	14.3%
Hidden disability	53	14.3%
Visual related	34	9.2%

Other	27	7.3%
Learning disability	12	3.2%
Prefer not to say	11	3.0%
Mental health service user	9	2.4%
Speech/language impediment	3	0.8%
Total	370	

The data provided in the About You section of the consultation allows us to make sure responses received are broadly representative of the wider population and helps us understand specific needs in more detail.

This is a slightly higher percentage of respondents than the 25.3% of public transport users that indicated in the SYPTE's Have Your Say consultation (4 September – 4 October 2015) that they have a disability. The Have Your Say consultation is open to members of the public in South Yorkshire and is designed to be representative of the South Yorkshire population.

5. Summary of consultation responses

The consultation asked respondents to tell us about how they currently travel, what they thought about any proposed changes to their bus service, and asked about the type of ticket they currently use.

5.1 Your travel

The Your Travel section of the consultation asked respondents about how they currently travel and what they thought about any proposed changes to their bus service.

The majority of respondents (89.6%) told us that they currently use the bus and 7.4% said they did not and 3% did not state. The main reason that would make respondents use the bus more was more frequent buses (34.2%), followed closely by a more reliable service (33.2%). Cheaper tickets were an incentive for 15.2% of respondents. However, as the majority of respondents (49%) indicated they currently use a senior/disabled pass to travel, a cheaper ticket may not be an incentive for improved travel.

Q. What would make you use the bus more?	Respondents
More frequent buses	440 (34.2%)
More reliable service	427 (33.2%)
Better connections	225 (17.5%)
Cheaper tickets	195 (15.2%)
Total responses (multiple answers allowed)	1,287

Respondents were asked how often they would use their bus service on the proposed new network and what they would use if for. 985 responses were received as each respondent could comment on up to three services. 355 (36%) use the bus 3-4 days a week, 354 (35%) use the bus 5 or more days per week, 196 (19.9%) 1-2 days a week, 35 (3.6%) once a fortnight, 33 (3.4%) less than once a month and 21 (2.1%) once a month.

200 respondents (25%) would use the service for Shopping and 136 (17%) would use the service for social/leisure, whilst work, personal business, visiting friends/relatives and going to the Hospital/Doctors is similarly distributed between 12% and 15%. Education was the main journey purpose of only 3% of respondents.

Q. For what purpose(s) would you use this	Respondents (%)
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service?	
Shopping	25%
Social/leisure	17%
Hospital/Doctors	15%
Visiting friends/relatives	15%
Personal business (e.g. bank)	13%
Work	12%
Education	3%

The consultation wanted to understand how the respondents thought the proposed changes would impact on their bus journey. 418 (44%) of respondents said their journey will be made much worse. 179 of these respondents are over the age of 65. 223 (23%) said the change will not have an impact on them 49.7% of these are in the age groups 35-64), whilst 132 (14%) said it will improve a lot (with 50% of these being aged between 65 and 75+.

The most commented upon service on the proposed network is 41/42 (115 comments). This was followed by service 57 (65 comments), 49 (64 comments) 222/220/X20/221 (64 comments). The majority of comments received for each of these services were regarding the negative impact the proposed changes would have on their journey.

Q. How will the proposed changes impact your journey?	Respondents (%)
Make much worse	44%
Neither	23%
Improve a lot	14%
Make a bit worse	14%
Improve a little	5.3%

5.2 Your ticket

The Your Ticket section of the consultation wanted to understand travel patterns, the type of ticket people currently use and whether they would pay more for a multi-operator ticket.

When respondents were asked how often they travel using different bus operators 37.5% (300) answered frequently, 37.3% (299) said infrequently, 15.7% (126) stated never and the remaining 9.5% (76) did not state.

When asked about the type of ticket they use to travel 395 (49%) of the 801 respondents indicated Elderly/Disabled pass. 221 (28%) people use tickets valid for a single bus operator, 41 (5.1%) use multi modal (valid on bus and train) and 32 (4%) use a ticket valid for any bus operator.

First are the main bus operator in Doncaster, therefore the utilisation of multi-operator tickets will be lower than in other areas of South Yorkshire. 48% (145) of people who use different operators frequently are in the 65-74 and 75+ age categories, having flexibility of the free travel across all bus operators within the validation period. 78.7% (311) of respondents who use an Elderly/Disabled pass also belong to these two age groups. Concessionary pass holders would only have to purchase operator tickets outside of the pass validation period, likely to be in an infrequent manner. The majority of their travel will mainly be in the free period; similarly students can also take advantage of the concessionary fares available for them. Use of tickets valid for one bus operator is highest in age group 45-54, being used across all age groups between 16 and 64. This reflects their journey purpose being mainly to work and education. These age groups will be fare paying passengers purchasing operators commercial tickets.

Q. Which ticket do you currently use to travel?	Respondents
Elderly/disabled	395 (49%)
Ticket valid for a single bus operator	221 (28%)
Multi modal (valid on bus and train)	41 (5.1%)
Ticket valid for any bus operator	32 (4%)

Respondents that indicated they currently use a ticket valid for a single bus operator were asked why they buy this type of ticket and how much more they would be willing to pay for a multi-operator ticket.

Of the 211 respondents currently using single operator tickets 67% stated they purchased a single operator ticket as only one operator works on the route they use. 14% indicated that they have a choice of operator but choose their ticket based on services or performance and 13% stated it is better value for money.

With regards to the question of how much more respondents would be willing to pay for a multi-operator ticket, as expected the majority 142 (64%) said they would pay nothing, 52 (23%) were willing to pay 5% more and 19 (9%) would pay 10% more.

The high percentage (64%) of respondents that indicated they would not be prepared to pay more for a multi-operator ticket is expected given the majority of respondents (67%) stated that their main reason for buying a single operator ticket was that there is only one operator on the route they use.

Q. How much more would you be willing to pay for a multi-operator ticket allowing you to use all buses?	Respondents
Nothing	142 (64%)
5% more	52 (23%)
10% more	19 (9%)
Not stated	8 (4%)
<i>Total</i>	<i>221</i>

6. Next steps

- The feedback from the proposed DBP network consultation has been used to inform bus service changes, the details of these are given in the main report.
- Lessons Learnt – SYPTTE will reflect on the feedback received on the consultation process used to ensure, as far as practicable, lessons learnt from this exercise are incorporated in to proposals for future similar exercises.
- This Executive Summary is part of the report which informs the Transport Committee of the findings of the consultation.