

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED FOR THE BUS USER GROUP MEETING
TUESDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2019 – RCC COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Thank you to everyone who submitted questions and we have provided answers to as many as possible. We will arrange for these to be published on our web page, but if anyone would like a copy posted or emailed then please give contact details to Karen Newman at the end of the meeting.

We did receive some questions however that we are unable to answer because they were not clear or did not ask a specific question, but if you feel that your question has not been answered then please contact the Transport Department after this event to clarify your question and they will endeavor to provide a response.

- Q1** In RCC's revised Passenger Transport Strategy it is stated that "Changes instigated by operators of services not 100% supported by RCC are unlikely to involve public consultation due to timescale involved." Can you please clarify which services this applies to and what the implications are for the role of the Bus Users Group?
- A1** Services 9, 747, 202 and 182 are not fully funded (or funded at all) by RCC. This means changes are not controlled by RCC and as such the commercial operator is unlikely to give enough notice for a full public consultation. Therefore in these circumstances unless RCC can negotiate a longer time period before changes are implemented then the BUG is unlikely to be consulted.
- Q2** How does RCC propose to meet the need to reduce carbon emissions when public transport is absent from the options proposed to reduce car use in the Revised Passenger Transport Strategy? Evidence suggests that the typical maximum distance for utility (day to day) walking is 1km (0.6 miles) and the equivalent for cycling is 4km (2.4 miles). RCC's own figures show that currently over 70% of journeys in Rutland (apart from journeys to school or college) are made by car. Many of these journeys are likely to be between settlements and therefore longer than the distances typically walked or cycled on a regular basis.
- A2** Encouraging and assisting people with making more sustainable travel choices will be dealt with in our sustainable travel statement which will be completed by early 2022. We acknowledge the role the bus has in helping people to make sustainable travel choices, however the network must prioritise those that need to use the bus for essential trips as a priority within the limited funding available. Hopefully an effective bus network will also encourage people to shift from the car to the bus for some trips. Also please note that our local transport plan is a living document and we are committed to encouraging sustainable transport.
- Q3** Government figures (Department for Transport Bus Statistics Table BUS0110a) show that Rutland has the lowest bus use in England with 2.4 journeys per head of population per year. The same table shows that there are other rural Local Authority areas where bus use is achieved with Norfolk and Cambridgeshire both reaching 30.7 journeys and Nottinghamshire 36.2. With the aim of increasing bus use, why has RCC not sought to enter into partnership agreements with bus companies as permitted under laws passed in

1985 or investigated the possibility of establishing an arm's length company to operate council supported time-tabled bus services?

- A3** These figures come from operators returns which are not always accurate – we have discussed this with the Department for Transport in the past but have not yet reached a resolution. Our own figures are around 11 journeys per head of population. This is likely to be lower than other authorities because we don't have any large urban areas and the population is more dispersed. This means that people make fewer bus journeys and there are no large "trip attractors" like there are in Nottinghamshire for example. Also Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Nottinghamshire contain much larger settlements than Rutland (cities in the case of the first two, and large towns in the latter). Quality Partnerships are difficult to establish when the supplier market is limited as it is in Rutland. The Bus Services Act (2017) means that local authorities are not able to establish their own bus companies.
- Q4** Would it be possible to have a service from Oakham to Market Harborough, even a weekly one would help.
- A4** Registered local bus services are restricted by length- within 15 miles (measured in a straight line) of where they got on. The current RF1 service is broken down into 2 separate registrations due to the mileage of the route from Melton through to Corby. There is not a possibility of further extending this existing route. The hourly service to Corby opens up access to other bus routes through to Market Harborough from there.
- Q5** Is there a likelihood that there will soon be a bus stop for residents of the Spinney Hill development in Oakham ie in the Mount Pleasant area?
- A5** Yes. Our Highways team are currently involved with the development and 2 bus laybys with bus stops will be implemented there in due course.
- Q6**I have recently received my bus pass on reaching pension age. I was hopeful that this would enable me to travel to Peterborough by public transport.....As you will be aware there is only one bus per day (none at weekends) R47, leaving at 0721 [Barrowden]. I am told by the bus company that I cannot use my bus pass as this is before 0930. Is there any possibility that this rule could be relaxed in circumstance like this?
- Centrebus inform me that there are buses via Stamford running after 0930 (no.12 10:43→11:19 and 201/202 12:00→12:39) This would take almost 2 hours!
- A6** Bus Passes are issued in accordance with the guidelines set by the English Concessionary Travel Scheme set up by the Dept for Transport offering free travel between 0930 & 2300 Mon- Fri & all day at weekends and bank holidays. Free travel here would be available on the return journey. Call Connect may be a suitable alternative as mentioned at our summer road show as journeys can be booked from Barrowden to Stamford with connecting journeys to Peterborough available.
- Q7** Are drivers permitted to cut short the journey if they have an empty bus? (There could be persons waiting at further bus stops in the missed out villages.) Please detail your policy, and do you check thoroughly and regularly?

A7 Any bus service registered to the fare-paying public is subject to strict operational rules. The registered route approved by the Traffic Commission must be adhered to at all times. Any variances to the route/timetable can only be made if following an official diversion when a road is closed or by submitting an application to the Traffic Commission (with local authority written support) to amend a route/timetable either temporarily or permanently. The Traffic Commission will enforce licence penalties and/or fines to operators found not to be operating the correct registered routes.

RCC undertake regular inspections, however we also encourage members of the public to notify us if they believe the journey is being terminated too soon so we can investigate further. If a member of the public wishes to report such an occurrence they would need to let us know the date, time, route number and point of termination.

Q8 If the RF1 is late (because of closed level crossings) getting into John Street will the number 9 for Stamford still be there?

A8 Connections are not guaranteed as buses must operate to their registered timetables or risk penalties. Where possible, drivers may communicate a delay and if a wait is appropriate, they will try to assist passengers by doing so.

Q9 Friday 20th display.....not live display.

A9 RCC officers have reported the fault to VIX systems who manage the equipment and the electronic data. We will continue to chase up our logged call for this to be rectified.

Q10 My friend with a wheeled frame says that it is difficult to get onto the bus. Can the bus be lowered?

A10 Buses now have facility to rise & lower for disability and pushchair access. If buses can park up at designated stops with appropriate kerb height then the function works. A user can ask the driver to lower the bus if necessary prior to boarding. Users can also ask the driver for assistance if necessary – they are they to help. **Centrebus can corroborate this and confirm this but it does also depend on the height of the kerb.**

Q11 I hope that the 113 will still run as it is handy to get to Gates Garden Centre; also if the RF1 has already departed there is the possibility of catching the 113.

A11 Leicestershire County Council are currently reviewing all of their bus services and service 113 has very low passenger usage. Service 113 will continue in its current form until next Easter but going forwards there may be changes.

Q12 Is there a bus up to the Medical Centre/Hospital?

A12 The 146 (Oakham Hopper) stops on Cold Overton Road opposite the surgery/hospital.

- Q13** The last bus from Peterborough to arrive back in Oakham is 1.30 pm. This does not give enough time for shopping. Also we need a better Saturday service Oakham/Peterborough.
- A13** Monday to Friday the 47 leaves Peterborough at 1600 arriving in Oakham at 1728. Saturday trips can be made with a change in Stamford or by using the train.
- We have added a journey and amended the timings on the Saturday Oakham to Saturday service.
- Q14** I only saw this by chance in the library. Should have been advertised so questions could be asked.
- A14** We're sorry to hear you did not know about the event until you visited the library. The event was advertised in local press, website, radio, Facebook, twitter, the bus station and the customer service desk at RCC.
- Q15** Large information board in Bus Station is not working. Why? When will it be fixed?
- A15** This fault has been reported to the provider and we have been chasing them to fix it as soon as possible. We're sorry that this fault has not yet been rectified. In the meantime timetable information is available via the paper timetables in the bus station.
- Q16** Follow up on query regarding a bus to Nottingham.
- A16** An indication of who would use a shopper bus service is required in advance of putting one on. An individual request for this is being investigated by Mark Bland Travel at the moment.
- Q17** Would it not be possible to allow the re-routing of the CallConnect 4 bus to its original route through the village [Ryhall]? The new route along the road by passing the village is quite a distance from old and infirm from Francis Court, old people's bungalows and the rest of us that live in the centre of the village.
- A17** The previous service 4 had been following the incorrect route (not the route registered with the Traffic Commission) which followed the A6121 around the edge of the village and not through the middle. This came to light when Lincs CC changed the contract so the 4 is now following the registered route. We may be able to request a change but would this then be detrimental to those villagers for whom the current arrangements are more beneficial. We will undertake some survey work to establish whether or not it would be appropriate to request a change.
- Q18** Why doesn't the number 4 bus come via Ryhall Square anymore? What does Coppice Road adj mean? Is that adj to Ryhall Road or adj to Rutland Way?
- A18** 'adj' does not appear on RCC timetables but does appear on the one produced by Lincs CC. The bus shelters on the A6121 fall between the turn offs to Rutland Way and Coppice Road.