

Appendix A

Joint DCSC Meeting - Bus Information Strategy 2019-24

14:00-16:00, Friday 19th July 2019, Cloth Hall Court

Activity 1 - What information outputs do you use when planning journeys?

Accessing information:

- People often use a mixture of methods for obtaining travel info, commonly using printed timetables then real time displays and real time information via an app.
- For frequent buses, tend to just turn up and wait.
- 87% of people use smartphones – but what % of these 87% are public transport users across West Yorkshire?
- Talking buses are useful on key routes/places – can be frustrating at first but has benefits.
- Inconsistency around bus timings and route numbers on timetables and front of buses. This is challenging for less frequent bus users.
- Some find that would trust real time information over a printed timetable
- Some people use call lines when the bus is late.

Thoughts around printed timetables

- Printed timetables are invaluable for times without access to the internet
- Useful when you know where you are going
- Still need local knowledge to be able to use any timetables well
- It is difficult to download and print yourself in current format, would need to be re-done
- Should account for not just residents but also visitors, would need to print timetables for visitors.
- How many people print the information found online? Similarly, some people take photos at the bus stop of the times.
- Useful for first time for checking a bus
- Visitors also need to be able to access timetable information
- Still need to find places to stock printed timetables, e.g. at travel centres or tourist information.

- Some people use multiple printed timetables to see and compare bus timings and options
- Feelings that it wouldn't be such an issue if the number of times a timetable was revised was reduced.

Barriers to accessing information online

- The travel planning aspect of the website is hard to use
- Not all apps/websites let you favourite/bookmark stop data
- Journey planner website doesn't give you all the information and bus stops, might not show you one 5 mins away, have to know it's there. Not user friendly.
- Some lack of awareness/understanding of the different and best tools for journey planning – depends on knowledge and location
- Journey planner works and is trusted for trains, but seen as less reliable for buses.
- Find that not all bus stops are listed on the apps so need to rely on local knowledge more to make the connections.
- Can find that when the apps are incorrect or unreliable, its easy to lose trust in them.

Route maps

- Printed route maps are useful for a new area, without them it would be harder and take longer to plan journeys.
- Are useful as a reference point
- Would be useful to create an interactive one online that shows and lists all the bus stops and highlights which are high frequency services. This would make the digital offer much more attractive.

Apps – key features

- Being able to reduce the favourite stops – then get the same information quicker
- Having multiple bus services linked on to the same app
- Expanded to include local knowledge
- Suggestions of high frequency services
- Need to be able to edit and take into account different abilities/disabilities for walking and estimated walking times.
- Provide accurate real time information

Activity 2: Route Maps & Timetables

Printed Timetables

- Members were happy in principle with the new version of the proposed timetable, however, they would like to see the service number in large font size and route line map on the front page.

Suggestion: to include service number / line colour on the timetable holder / rack at Travel Centres.

- The proposed timetables could be printed on a booklet sized one-third of A4, similar to how Transdev print their timetables. These are cheaper to produce than our current A6 size timetables.

Suggestion: the majority of the DCSC Members stated that they prefer the current size (A6) as it is easier to carry in pockets / handbags.

- There are two audiences for the route maps included in the leaflets:
 - Frequent travellers - won't need route maps
 - Visitors – route maps would be helpful
- There were mixed views regarding the inclusion of the route description in the leaflet:
 - It is helpful for a passenger to follow the route description if they are travelling to a new destination
 - It is not useful for regular passengers
- To provide all bus service timetables in one booklet - similarly to rail timetables booklet (not ideal as bus service changes take place 6 times a year). Metro previously produced timetables in ring-binder folder?

Suggestion: to limit the number of service changes to two per year so the full leaflet doesn't have to be printed many times.

- The Combined Authority could produce the proposed timetable. Operators could add additional information, such as, coloured route maps and operator details at their costs.
- Timetables printed on recycled paper, however, will still need a two colour process (red colour for 'M').

General comments

- A question was asked about who the CA were targeting for the proposed timetable.

- When asked who uses printed timetables, the responses varied:
 - On the table at the far end near the window, one member stated they use printed timetables with another confirming they download them via our website.
 - On the middle table, almost two-third of the members use printed timetables.
- Members are able to print the timetables, however, they are required to use a lot of paper to print the whole timetable for one service. It should be tailored so that passengers can print out only the services they require. (I.e. one service rather than all services in the timetable group).
- A Member highlighted that South Yorkshire City Region Combined Authority withdrew from printing any timetables. Operators are required to fund and print these themselves.

Route maps

- The group liked the full coloured route map. This is similar to what Greater Manchester Combined Authority provide.
- Suggestion: to highlight where the bus stops are (dots) and include key landmarks.**
- The route map only shows frequent services. This may confuse passengers as there could be an infrequent service which could get them to their destination more quickly.
 - Consideration will need to be given to the route line colour used so passengers can differentiate between the route i.e. red line in Bradford and Leeds.
 - The route maps are helpful for visitors.
 - The current area maps are very useful and well liked, however, they do not print out very well via our website.
 - A Member stated that Preston has a line route map for each service at bus stops. This would be helpful in West Yorkshire.

Activity 3 - Use of Digital Information

- There was a preference for use of either Google or the operator's website rather than Metro's (although Arriva's website isn't seen as particularly user friendly)
- Frustration that you can't bookmark individual bus stops through Metro's website Google isn't good for train information or public transport disruption information (bus or rail);
Should The Combined Authority provide the information or depend on third party outputs?

- Use third party front ends
- You can get everything in the same place through Google
- If Metro's website was more 'proactive' and 'reactive' it would be more useful – giving you timetables to get to places and linking to social media / ticker-tape information line when things go wrong
- Could the Metro website be more two-way, i.e., as well as providing information out to the public, there is an active way for the public to feed information (e.g. damage, delays, suggestions on travel routes) back in to Metro which are then shared?
- Is there greater potential to link to Parish Council websites / social media feeds, etc?
- Need to present fares information on the website and journey planner (e.g. single and return ticket prices)
- Many people use both paper timetables and digital information, often for different purposes
- Real time displays at stops should show when buses have been cancelled more often
- Metro's 'Yournextbus' is felt to be better than First's
- The new real time displays are a significant improvement over the old ones;
- Urban / rural split – if the bus is cancelled it's even more important within a rural context because it could be a long time before the next bus is scheduled to arrive. Sometimes the real time displays show that a service is 'due', then the bus disappears from the display without arriving
- It is felt that the disappearance of buses from the real time displays do nothing to build trust
- Why are buses still missing from the real time displays when the information is now drawn from the (new) ticket machines – surely they should all show now?
- Could a guide be produced to tell people how to access the digital information and specifically the real time information online / using a smart phone?
- Are all of the changes made by operators to the timetables entirely necessary?
- The national rail website is very good – could we draw experience from their successes?

- There is a challenge for Metro to overcome which is that people consume information in very different ways today. Some people live their whole lives through their smart phones, others use it on an as and when basis but will also use traditional channels. We need to cater for both segments of the market.