

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 26 May 2023

Subject: **Review Of MyBus Primary School Services**

Director: Dave Pearson, Director of Transport Operations and Passenger Experience

Author: Steve Wainwright, Education Transport Manager

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To advise the Transport Committee of the actions taken following a review of the operation of school bus services provided to primary schools ahead of the 2023/24 academic year.

2. Information

- 2.1 The Mybus scheme was a government funded trial of North American style school bus provision, introduced in 2002, which included new services to primary schools designed to encourage modal shift and reduce school gate traffic congestion. Following the end of this funding, the Combined Authority maintained many of the services at its own cost.
- 2.2 In 2019, the Transport Committee approved a set of policy guidelines, which set out the circumstances in which a subsidised school bus service should be provided. This included value for money criteria, which, at the time, was £1.50 per passenger trip. Given subsequent economic conditions the value for money threshold for this exercise was increased to £2.00 per passenger trip.
- 2.3 The usage and performance of school bus services is kept under review to ensure service provision remains within the guidelines set by the Committee. The Combined Authority provides 38 “MyBus” services to primary schools. The MyBus scheme sought to encourage modal shift and reduce school gate traffic congestion.

- 2.4 In the light of inflationary cost pressure on school transport, a review of this provision has been undertaken with a view to obtaining savings which would offset the additional costs across this service area. This review identified 17 services which did not meet the guidelines for school transport approved by Transport Committee. A process commenced in January to engage on the potential modification or withdrawal of these services from the end of the 2022/23 academic year. This report sets out the actions to be taken following the review and engagement.
- 2.5 The engagement sought to identify particular hardships or disadvantage arising from any withdrawal or change to service, Options which addressed these issues were explored and it has been possible to protect journeys for many pupils.
- 2.6 No significant issues emerged from the engagement and subsequent Equality Impact Assessments concerning the services listed below. Arrangements are therefore being made to withdraw these services at the end of the 2022/23 academic year in close collaboration with the respective schools. There has been close collaboration with the respective schools in reaching these conclusions and engagement has taken place with ward members and in several cases constituency MPs.

Service	District	£/ passenger trip	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
P6	Bradford	£6.18	Iqra			
P23	Bradford	£4.44	Steeton			
P31	Bradford	£11.14	Cross Flatts	East Morten		
P32	Bradford	£11.51	Cottingley Village			
P34	Bradford	£5.11	St Joseph's RC	Trinity All Saints CE		
P44	Leeds	£9.67	St Theresa's RC			
P73	Leeds	£22.27	St Urban's RC			
P74	Leeds	£5.53	Iveson	Holy Name RC		
P76	Leeds	£6.82	Holy Rosary & St Anne's RC			

P99	Bradford	£8.51	Ashlands	All Saint's CE	Ben Rhydding	Sacred Heart Catholic
S13	Kirklees	£5.12	Kirkheaton			

2.7 **Service P49, Lindley CE and Reinwood (£6.51/ trip)** - concerns were raised during the feedback about the loss of this service. However, a maximum 10 children use this service, and it is often less than half this number. Most users live within a one mile walking distance of school. It is therefore intended to withdraw this service.

2.8 In response to engagement feedback, alternative arrangements which maintain most journeys, will be made in the following cases;

- **Service G3, Garforth St Benedict's RC (£9.75/ trip)**- Concerns were raised by parents and the school regarding the distance travelled and the lack of alternatives. Having considered the feedback and investigated the feasibility of a number of different options, a cost-effective solution has been found which brings the service in line with the Combined Authority's value for money criteria. This involves adapting the route and linking with another service. It is therefore intended to make the necessary contract changes which safeguards most journeys.
- **Service P45, Thorp Arch Lady Elizabeth Hastings CE (£6.03/trip)** – concerns were raised regarding the lack of alternative travel options. Having considered the feedback and investigated the feasibility of a number of different options, a cost-effective solution has been found which safeguards most journeys by adapting the route of other school bus services in the area.
- **Service P51, Holy Family and St Michael's RC School (£4.34/ trip)** - Concerns were raised about the distance travelled and the lack of public transport alternatives for the 35 children using the service. There are no opportunities to adapt other services in the area. This service will continue pending further discussions with the school and BKCAT Academy Trust with a view to co-funding the service.
- **Service P98, Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School (£7.14/ trip)**-. Concerns were raised by parents and the school regarding the distance travelled and the lack of alternatives. The feasibility of a number of different options were explored. A cost-effective solution has been found which adapts a service to St Marys Catholic School, Menston. Students for Sacred Heart school would board after St Mary's students had alighted and so there would be no overlap.
- **Service S20, Ledston Lady Elizabeth Hastings CE (£6.86/ trip)** Concerns were raised by parents and the school and the school board

of governors regarding distance travelled and no regular bus services in the area. A cost-effective solution has been found which brings the service in line with the Combined Authority's value for money criteria through co-funding, a fare increase and adapting another school service.

- 2.9 The above arrangements will be subject to regular review to ensure they are working to meet the needs of the pupils and schools affected.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 The original objective of the Mybus scheme was to encourage modal shift and reduce school gate traffic congestion. Whilst the withdrawal of services may lead to an increase in the use of private transport, in some cases it could lead to an increase in walking and cycling as some children live within a 30-minute walk of school.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Whilst the original objective of the Mybus scheme was to encourage modal shift and reduce school gate traffic congestion, it was recognised in the evaluation that the services support parents to access employment and the consequences of this were considered in the review.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of all services considered for withdrawal.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 This provision was originally funded by Government grant which is no longer available.
- 6.2 As previously reported to the Committee, the costs of providing bus services are currently subject to inflationary pressures, the c£530,000 per annum saving obtained from the actions in this report will assist in offsetting this cost pressure.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The variations and terminations of contracts required are permissible under the Combined Authority terms and conditions.
- 7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of all services considered for withdrawal in accordance with the requirements of the Equalities Act.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 An extensive public engagement has been undertaken the details of which are available as background documents.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Transport Committee notes the actions being taken to ensure the provision of MyBus primary school services remains within the policy guidelines set by the Committee in 2019.

11. Background Documents

Summary of engagement responses.
Equality Impact Assessments

12. Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.