

RELBUS

Minutes of meeting held on 26th October 2016 in Haddington Town House 1900hrs.

Present:

Harry Barker, Chairman; Jenny Cormack, Morag Haddow, Shena Jamieson, George Rapson, Barry Turner.

Apologies: Jacqui Bell, Gavin booth, Allison Cosgrove

Competition and Markets Authority calling in of acquisition of First Group Musselburgh and North Berwick operations by East Coast Buses Ltd.

Harry Barker advised that the CMA was examining the above transaction to ascertain if a monopoly situation existed, and until its outcome was known no integration of the acquired operations would be permitted. RELBUS have made a representation to the CMA supporting the acquisition along the lines that it had received more complaints about First's operations than all the other operators in total over the years, and to date only a handful of complaints had been made regarding East Coast Buses Ltd. There was little else that can be done other than to await the outcome.

Comments on new services replacing First Group's operations.

Apart from some criticism regarding the East Coast Buses 107 both with regard to overcrowding in the peaks, and occasional timing issues, the general consensus is that a vast improvement is evident over First's operations. For further comments on Perryman's 253, see below under Innerwick issues.

Haddington to Humble service 109

The service is operated by Campbell of Tranent. Publicity has been very poor and it seems is in breach of the Bus Charter in that times were not up at key stops. A new printed leaflet, some four months after introduction, has been produced which is incorrect in that it fails to show the days of operation as Monday, Wednesday and Friday and this will require to be addressed. There are no intermediate timings available, although a driver on the route put up some at Bolton proving they are known. The timings in the leaflet only state the Haddington time as being at Roodlands, and not the High Street main stop. In addition, the bus has been seen on one occasion only carrying the 109 route number without a destination (working inward to Haddington).

Concern was expressed that if the proposed review was to be undertaken after 6 months, any perceived lack of usage would have to take into account the poor publicity.

Planning objection

Barry Turner has produced an objection to the proposed Local Development Plan which should come from RELBUS. The plan fails to specify in its policy that every property should have a bus service within 400 yards where there are housing estates. Barry will forward to Morag Haddow his thinking on this for Morag to circulate round members for quick comment, as objections have to be lodged by 7th November. Harry Barker will lodge the objection by then.

Bus / rail connectivity update

Harry Barker stated that following a constructive meeting with ScotRail, the current non clockface timings of trains would be looked at with a view to introducing a clockface timetable which in turn would enable a robust, disability compliant bus/rail interchange to be introduced at North Berwick

Perryman's 253 and Innerwick

Jacqui Bell, in her absence, asked for the position of passengers for Innerwick on the above service where journeys which did not serve Innerwick having to alight at Torness, cross the A1 and walk up the unlit road to Innerwick. This is considered dangerous and should anyone be injured or worse as a result the position would immediately hit the headlines.

However, the meeting view was that Innerwick had the best bus service it has ever had, and East Lothian Council subsidise a number of journeys to take them off the A1 to serve the village, and further it was possible with an extended journey time to change buses in Dunbar and reach the village. It was felt that rather than alter the bus service, additional safety measures be put in place to make the position safer for the small number of individuals affected.

East Saltoun and East Coast Buses 113

With the advent of additional housing at East Saltoun, the natural direction of travel, especially for those in employment, will be towards Edinburgh. The current Eve 123 Gifford Circle service is considered to be over complicated and not serving the Edinburgh direction requirements of East Saltoun residents. It is suggested that some selected journeys on the existing ECB 113 be extended from the current terminus to East Saltoun, turning right at the Church to West Saltoun and into Pencaitland where it would also serve the council houses these currently not properly served. A similar route in reverse would also be possible. This would negate the 123 linking East Saltoun with Pencaitland, and that service could be totally redrafted to a simpler, and potentially more frequent operation running Pencaitland – Haddington direct, onto Gifford and East Saltoun. The possibility of running it in three sections – Pencaitland – Haddington direct; Haddington – Bolton – East Saltoun, and Haddington – Gifford would also be possible.

Transport HUBS

Morag Hadow raised the issue of information at Transport HUBS in the major towns. In particular she feels there is a missed opportunity to inform car drivers of the locations that buses go to from the HUBS so when they are driving past they could easily see a sign that says 'Buses towards Edinburgh' or something similar.

Matters for consideration at the Bus Forum

In Harry Barker's absence chairing another transport related meeting in England that day, Barry Turner will attend the Bus forum and present the following for discussion:

109 Haddington – Humble

253 Innerwick safety concerns

123/113 East Saltoun ideas for the future

Transport HUBS information

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