

WHITEFIELD & UNSWORTH TOWNSHIP FORUM

Notes of Public meeting with First Bus Friday 2nd November 2012

Present: Paul Turner (Director, First Bus), Guy Warren (First Bus), Councillors Joan Grimshaw (Chair for the meeting) Councillor Bernie Vincent, Councillor Noel Bayley, Councillor David Jones Kim Griffiths (Township Co-ordinator and note taker for the meeting)

Apologies: Councillors Ken and Ann Audin

92 members of the public were present

Introductions:

Councillor Joan Grimshaw opened the meeting and introduced Councillors and First Bus representatives. She briefly explained that previous meetings had been held with First Bus as a result of issues raised via the Township Forum. Following the last Township Forum meeting a group of councillors and residents from the Township Forum had attended a Transport for Greater Manchester bus sub group meeting at Manchester Town Hall. This led to a further discussion with the Director of First Bus who said that he would look at the issues raised and see what could be done to help. Paul agreed to meet today to feed back results.

Paul Turner- First Bus:

Paul Turner (First Bus) said that concerns that had been raised had been taken seriously. As a result

- 93 bus will be re routed every half an hour. Will go back down Stanley road so people can access Morrisons, health centre, Metro station and Whitefield centre.
- The 94 will be re routed during shopping hours to service Pilsworth and Blackford House.
- Further services to the 94 are being considered during peak times but this needs to be reassessed due to traffic issues at peak times. Businesses, medical centre etc will be spoken to and will be asked to promote the services also.

Mr Turner said that planning will be completed by end of November. Still time for minor alterations. Introductions will come into force end January. They cannot be done earlier as 8 weeks notice has to be given to the traffic commissioner.

A number of other issues were raised by members of the public:

- Councillor Vincent asked why the bus cannot be rerouted down the old road from Unsworth. There are 11 different buses that travel the New Road and only

the 135 on the Old Road. Having to change bus is very inconvenient for people, especially people with pushchairs, shopping, walking difficulties, the elderly.

Mr Turner said that the environment around the bus stop at Besses is not ideal and this will be looked at in detail. Whitefield interchange in the centre will now be an alternative place to change bus to the 135

- Why not just use a small bus so that people can get to Bury old Road without having to change buses?

Mr Turner will discuss with TfGM

- Councillor Bayley- with regard to 135 there are often 2 or 3 buses turn up together followed by a 30 minute wait. Bury New Road is an arterial route into Manchester and therefore preferable to the Old Road from a commercial point of view.. many bus stops are not adequate especially around Besses.
- Councillor Bayley also said that single decker buses in the rush hour are packed and double deckers in the evenings with very few people on them First also boast that their buses are accessible to all, but not all of them are accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs

Mr Turner replied that a few of the buses are not disabled friendly but may be used to replace a broken down bus for eg. There are only about 6 or 7 in bury that are not DDA compliant. Double decker buses in the evenings are more environmentally friendly but during the day these may be required on other routes

- 137 has been taken off- now no means of getting direct to Leicester Road. This has made life very difficult for some people that have now to make several bus changes to get to Broughton/ Lester Road. Bus doesn't always take the correct route and relying on a bus timetable is impossible.
- Pam Taylor (Township Forum Member) Commended Mr Turner and his efforts so far. The only request that was originally made to First Bus was an extension of the service to include Pilsworth. However, now the area of Leicester Road and Cheetham Hill is not being serviced at all. Is it worth First bus asking Transport for greater Manchester to subsidise services for Cheetham Hill and Leicester Road area?

MrTurner said he will certainly speak to TfGM about this possibility

- Bus passes. These are supposed to be scanned but bus drivers just wave people on. These passengers are not being counted. Cllr Jones asked if the scanning equipment was adequate?

Mr Turner replied that the driver should scan tickets. However as a fall back they can press a button and this may be what is happening. The

figures re usage do not appear to have changed since the introduction of the scan machine so drivers may be using this fall back.

- Marlene Dawson (Township Forum Member) asked why the 137 has been re routed round market street when this is hardly ever used.

Mr Turner will look at this as part of the review

- Unsworth and Hollins people use St Monica's. Some from Prestwich side use Castlebrook. Often pupils have to be going to or from school outside the normal school hours. Have any of these complained re not being able to get to school easily?

Mr Turner will be visiting the schools to speak to them

- Why did bus numbers change as well as routes- this confuses people even further

Mr Turner said that by changing routes and not the numbers this also confuses people- a no win situation.

- Both the 93 and 94 divert around Carr Clough. There is no need for the 93 to take this diversion-that would be a way to save time.

Mr Turner said this is a good point and he will look into this

- Manchester city centre-diversions around cathedral a nightmare

Mr Turner is in discussion with local councils re access to Manchester Centre. This is being looked at in detail with various options to consider.

At the end of the meeting, Mr Turner undertook to look at all the issues raised and said that he would attend the next meeting of the Township Forum meeting on 20th November 2012 at 1pm.

**Kim Griffiths
6th November 2012**