

Folkestone and Hythe Joint Transportation Board

Held at:	Boulogne Room - Civic Centre Folkestone
Date	Monday, 17 September 2018
Present	Councillors Mrs Ann Berry, Miss Susan Carey, Tony Hills, Frank Hobbs, Rory Love, Mrs Susan Wallace and Martin Whybrow
Apologies for Absence	Peter Gane, Ms Janet Holben, Dick Pascoe and Stuart Peall
Officers Present:	Kate Clark (Committee Services Officer) and Fred Miller (Transportation Manager) and James Bowen (KCC Highways)
Others Present:	Matthew Arnold (Commercial Director, Stagecoach) and James Carroll (Operations Manager, Stagecoach)

8. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

9. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2018 were submitted, approved and signed by the Chairman.

10. Stagecoach

Mr Matthew Arnold, Commercial Director and Mr James Carroll, Operations Manager at Stagecoach were welcomed to the meeting. Mr Arnold gave a brief overview of the district's bus services since the timetable changes in June 2018.

Mr Arnold explained that the new timetable is under constant review and monitoring of routes is paramount. He said that changes since June will be implemented by the end of October to improve the services as there had been challenges to overcome with the new routes.

He mentioned that there had been a higher than expected number of visitors to the area over the summer which had resulted in overcrowding on buses. Inconsiderate parking remains an issue which means buses are delayed. Rural services remain challenging and some customers are unhappy with the route changes

Mr Arnold went on to say that the amended services will be circulated shortly, these included reinstating the bus route along New Romney High Street and the Folkestone to Ashford route is now quicker.

The Big Conversation at St Marys Bay held in July 2018 caused a lot of anger amongst residents with regard to the timetable changes and it was asked if the changes since June were in response to this.

Mr Arnold was unaware of this event as it was hosted by Kent County Council and more tailored to their services rather than Stagecoach's. He said Stagecoach is a commercial business and although the company can engage with customers, they do not offer a consultation process. Consultations are with the Kent County Council Passenger Transport Team and this would be to consider funding requirements.

Councillor Tony Hills advised members that he is planning on a twice yearly forum in New Romney with Stagecoach, the town council and high street businesses to engage and find solutions to any ongoing problems with bus services.

Members asked various questions and Mr Arnold responded as follows:

- Bus stop infrastructure. Initially the responsibility of KCC Highways who would consider safety issues.
- Internal lighting on buses. Lighting is constant for health and safety reasons.
- Length of journey time from Folkestone to Ashford. This has been improved by around 15 minutes. There are only a few passengers who make the whole journey and first choice for this route is usually by train.
- Route 91 – the frequency of this service has doubled.
- 'Tap on, tap off' technology. This had been trialled however it did not prove successful and passengers forgot to 'tap off'. Stagecoach use contactless cards along with mobile technology.
- The use of smaller more frequent buses. Again, this was trialled and Mr Arnold advised it did generate growth, however buses were becoming overcrowded and were unsustainable due to extra bus drivers required which means increased costs. Stagecoach have offered to work with KCC with the possibility of trialling smaller buses in rural areas.
- Grebe Crescent reduced service. This service only attracts approximately 20 passengers per day.
- Martello Lakes. At present there is an issue with buses turning and means buses have to reverse within this development. The main road service provides four buses per hour to Hythe and three per hour to Folkestone.

- Bus service 102 is extremely overcrowded. New routes 103 and 104 will provide extra services and compliment route 102.
- Eco-friendly buses. At present some of Stagecoach's buses produce less emissions than a normal sized car. Other variants have been looked at however this is cost prohibitive, for example, electric buses would need a charging structure in place and utility provision. Funding is available through a Government initiative, Green Bus Fund, but this is usually given to areas with poor air quality. Air quality in the district is not considered poor.

Members thanked Matthew Arnold and James Carroll for taking the time to attend this meeting and answer their questions.

11. **Highways Report**

Report JTB/18/03 updated members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2018/19.

The Chairman asked for any comments on the report.

Councillor Whybrow wanted to know if there was any update available on Cycle Routes Phases 3 and 4. James Bowen, KCC Highways, will check and advise.

Councillor Love asked if there was an update available with regard to the controlled crossing point outside Morrisons. Mr Bowen advised that the lights have been re-erected but not yet operational. An update will be provided.

Members raised a query with regard to the red light enforcement camera at Cherry Garden Avenue and if data is available. An update will be provided.

It was noted that Wards quoted in the Highways report were out of date. An up to date list will be provided to James Bowen. Also, on page 17 of the Highways report, the Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste needs to be updated.

In learning that Richard Heaps, Schemes Project Manager, has moved to a different area within the County, Councillor Tony Hills would like to thank him for his help and advice during his time in the district.