

Questions to Transport Advisory Group – 25th October, 2023

Question 1 – Councillor Castledine-Dack

Bus Operator – Stagecoach

In Dinnington, we are aware that public transport services between Thurcroft and Dinnington Interchange have recently been disrupted as a result of antisocial behaviour. We are told that groups of youths have been surrounding the bus and activating the emergency exit. What steps are Stagecoach taking to protect passengers and drivers and are they in contact with local police officers about these incidents?

Answer:- I have liaised with the Safer Transport team and the police. We are collating CCTV evidence to pass onto the police. There are regular patrols undertaken by the police in Dinnington and Thurcroft. When an incident occurs we react very quickly in diverting the service for the safety of our customers and employees. The group of youngsters responsible for this anti-social behaviour have been brazen to fire BB pellets at our drivers, on two occasions these pellets have hit our drivers on the head and face. My next step would be to speak with the parishioners of these wards to see if the local residents can assist with identifying these youths.

Stagecoach and SYMCA are working directly with South Yorkshire Police via the Joint Community Safety Department so that services can resume normal operations. Unfortunately, antisocial behaviour at this time of the year escalates and areas of Grimethorpe and the whole of Thurnscoe are currently unserved due to ongoing attacks on bus services.

SY Police have informed SYMCA that the Rotherham district and the South team are implementing plans for ASB prevention and intervention operations for the upcoming Dark Nights period. Due to the recent increase in incidents in these areas and specifically on the public transport network, the team are working on a problem solving plan with increased high visibility patrols with more engagement with the community, business and partners to provide support and reassurance and to continue with proactive enquiries to identify and process the nominals involved.

Operators have been asked to review and provide any CCTV to assist with enquiries to identify the individuals involved. For all involved it is important that incidents are reported, and an online portal for non-emergency incidents has been provided to the bus operators to report and upload information, including CCTV.

There are now more visible patrols in the specific area where the buses are being targeted. There is an opportunity for officers to engage with drivers and accompany the route if required.

Please be assured that SY Police are committed to reducing ASB through effective prevention and early intervention work together with partnership working.

Question 2 – Councillor Pitchley

Bus Operator

Why can't the residents of Aston not have a bus service we deserve! The 27 was a well-used service . Our residents are in uproar all about the 27. Please can this be looked at again from a service user's perspective.

Answer:-

Service 21 has been introduced to replace services 26, 27 and 29 which were commercial bus routes previously operated by First that they cancelled in October 2022 and SYMCA are now having to fund partial replacements for. SYMCA have limited funding and if the bus goes to Crystal Peaks it will no longer be able to serve villages in South Rotherham as the bus cannot be in two places at once. Additional resources to provide a separate service, that SYMCA are not able to commit to, would have to be introduced to reinstate the Crystal Peaks/Beighton service. There are no plans to reintroduce the Rotherham to Crystal Peaks service which was predominately used for leisure, social and access to amenities by Rotherham residents travelling to Crystal Peaks.

Question 3 – Councillor McNeely

Bus Operators

What help can you give when Buses and Emergency Services try and access a road that is blocked with inappropriate parking of cars etc and what other restrictions apply when/if the road is unadopted.

Answer:-

Public highways roads that are regularly blocked due to parking and result in bus services being diverted are discussed with the operators and the local authority highway/transport teams. Parking restrictions and passing points for buses can be looked at but historically SYMCA have had difficulty getting support for these measures from the Ward Councillors. As an example, service X78 no longer serves Pitt Street near Meadowbank Road as parking restrictions were not supported.

Where the issue is a small number of cars and repeated bad parking then we can use local SY Police support to encourage the residents to park more considerately.

Unfortunately, where there is not support for parking restrictions or the road is not adopted then its more challenging. Thankfully there are very few unadopted roads and those as part of a new development are usually adopted fairly quickly.

Question 4 – Councillor Hoddinott

Bus Operators

Is there an agreed protocol between bus companies, utility companies and highways for minimising disruption from roadworks? Unfortunately I have had complaints from residents about notices and signage not reflecting what is actually happening on the ground.

Answer:-

Assuming this relates to Northfield Lane then SYMCA produced diversion information for the planned works and information was posted at the correct stops that were impacted on journeys from Rotherham.

Unfortunately, the utility company initially implemented a full closure, which was not agreed, and then a closure in the wrong direction to what was agreed. This was raised with Rotherham highways who immediately had the traffic management changed later that afternoon. Buses resumed normal route on journeys towards Rotherham at approximately 16:30 when SYMCA had confirmation that the traffic management had been set up correctly. The one-way diversion of buses from Rotherham remained in place until works were completed.