

Tyne Valley Consultation Report

This note summarises the results of our Tyne Valley consultation, which was carried out to inform changes that are planned for services 10, 602, 604, 684, 687, X11 and X12. A total of 2,000 questionnaires were distributed along these routes in May 2010, covering all of the places served. The form was also available on-line at www.simplygo.com. Just over 300 responses were received, providing a good sample of customers' views.

The key findings were as follows:

- **48%** of respondents said they would travel more frequently if the 10 and 602 are combined, with buses running every 20 minutes between Crawcrook and Hexham. A further **48%** of people said they would not change their travel patterns. **4%** said they would travel less frequently.
- **52%** of people said they would travel more frequently if we use high quality, air-conditioned Mercedes buses on the combined service. **43%** said this would not affect their travel patterns. Only **5%** said they would travel less frequently.
- **73%** of respondents were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our plans to refurbish the buses that are currently used on the 602 and transfer them to other local services. **22%** had 'no view', whilst **5%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this.
- **71%** of people were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our plan to standardise the stopping pattern for the 10, with all journeys running non-stop from Metrocentre to Newcastle. Only **9%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this. **20%** had 'no view'.
- **82%** of respondents said they would experience no difficulties if the combined 10/602 follows the current 10 route between Crawcrook and Newcastle. This would not serve the existing 602 route from Blaydon to Swalwell and along Derwentwater Road in the Teams. **16%** of people said that they would experience problems, mainly accessing the B&Q store at Swalwell. **2%** did not answer this question.
- **47%** of people said they would travel more frequently if we provide a regular hourly service to Hexham in the evening and on Sundays. **51%** said this would not affect their travel patterns, whilst **2%** said they would travel less frequently.
- **32%** of respondents said they would travel more frequently if we introduce a regular hourly service between Newcastle, Metrocentre, West Wylam, Prudhoe and Prudhoe Interchange in the evening and on Sundays. **63%** said this would not affect their travel patterns, whilst **5%** said they would travel less frequently.
- **55%** of people were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our plans to provide an hourly Monday to Saturday daytime service on the 684, with all buses running through from Newcastle to Hexham. Only **3%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this, whilst **42%** expressed 'no view'.
- Only **9%** of respondents would experience difficulties if the 684 is withdrawn from Horsley. **91%** of people would not be affected by this.

Several other comments were made in the consultation, although not in response to the specific questions. There were **three** particular themes in the points made, as follows:

- Concerns that all evening and Sunday buses would run via the Metrocentre, leaving no services between Newcastle and Blaydon via Scotswood Road, which would cause problems for people who work in this area.
- Complaints about the timekeeping of services 602 and 604, especially early morning journeys towards Newcastle.
- Requests for the times of the proposed hourly 684 to be co-ordinated with the Arriva 685 to give the best possible choice of buses along this route.

We are very pleased that the majority of our plans received a positive response from customers. Based on the results of the consultation and detailed analysis of travel patterns, we will be making our proposed changes to the 10, 602 and 604 from **Sunday 8 August 2010**. We will also be working with Northumberland County Council (NCC), which supports the 684 and 687, to agree a plan of action for these services.

In view of the additional comments received in the consultation, we will be diverting evening and Sunday journeys on our Blaydon Racer service 31/32 to run via Scotswood Road. We will investigate the reported timekeeping problems on the 602/604 and we will review the timings of the 684 if we can agree with NCC to improve the frequency of this service.