

## North Sunderland Consultation Report

This note summarises the results of our consultation with users of the Black Cats and Doxford Clipper services, which was carried out in August 2009 to inform changes that were introduced on 25 October 2009. A total of 2,500 questionnaires were distributed on buses, providing a very good account of customers' views.

The key findings were as follows:

- **59%** of respondents were 'strongly in favour' or 'in favour' of our plans to adopt a single route for the Doxford Clipper service between Sunderland and Doxford. Only **14%** of the people surveyed were 'against' or 'strongly against' this idea.
- **72%** of consultees were 'strongly in favour' or 'in favour' of introducing a half-hourly circular route in North Sunderland. **17%** of the people surveyed had no view about this idea, whilst **11%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' it.
- **59%** of respondents were 'strongly in favour' or 'in favour' of our plans to adopt a new route for service 36A/36C in Castletown to improve access to the Hospital and the Enterprise Park. **36%** had 'no view', and only **5%** were against this.
- **60%** of our consultees said that they would not be affected if service 26 operated between Sunderland and Heworth only. Only **7%** said that they would travel less.
- **60%** of respondents said that there would be no changes to their travel patterns if service 36 were replaced by the new 36A/36C in North Sunderland and the Doxford Clipper 39 between the City Centre and Pennywell. **36%** of people actually said that they would travel more, whilst **3%** said they would make fewer journeys.
- **61%** of consultees were 'strongly in favour' or 'in favour' of adjusting the times of service 99 to fit with the 36A/36C between Southwick, Witherwack, Red House, Downhill, Town End Farm and Hylton Castle. None were against this idea.
- **62%** of respondents said that the Interchange is their preferred boarding point for buses in Sunderland City Centre. This was followed by Fawcett Street and John Street, which were selected by **17%** and **7%** of people respectively.

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:

- Concerns from people who live in North Sunderland and work at Doxford about having to change buses at Sunderland Interchange to complete their journey
- Requests for service 99 to be operated by low-floor buses, as the 'Yellow Buses' are difficult to board/alight with shopping and/or buggies
- General praise for the changes, which make the services a lot easier to understand

In view of these comments, the timetables for the Black Cats 36A/36C and the Doxford Clipper 39 were set to minimise connections for people travelling across Sunderland City Centre. Service 99 will be operated by low-floor buses from January 2010.