

## West Gateshead Consultation Report

This note summarises the results of our West Gateshead consultation, which was carried out in August 2010 to inform the changes we made to services in West Gateshead and the Tyne Valley on 7 November 2010. Just over 300 responses were received, which provided a good sample of customers' views alongside other recent surveys in this area.

The key findings were as follows:

### Service 49/49A

- **66%** of respondents were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our plans to increase the frequency of service 49 to every ten minutes. **32%** expressed 'no view', whilst **3%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this.
- **55%** of people were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our proposal to link the 49/49A across Winlaton to allow more local journeys to be made without needing to change buses. **42%** of people had 'no view', whilst **3%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this.
- **25%** of respondents said they would travel more frequently if more powerful two-door buses were used on this route to improve reliability and timekeeping. **73%** said this would not affect their travel patterns, whilst **3%** said they would travel less frequently.
- **91%** of people said they would experience no problems as a result of us replacing the Saturday and Sunday morning service 63 with new journeys on the 49/49A. **9%** of people said this would cause a problem, but the majority have alternative buses available on the 49/49A or 96/97.

### Services 48 and 95/96

- **41%** of respondents were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our plan to replace service 48 by amending the 31 around Winlaton and the 95 around Gateshead. **23%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this, while **36%** expressed 'no view'.
- **87%** of people said they would experience no problems with their journey as a result of this change. **13%** said they would have a problem, but none would have to make more than one change of bus.

### Service 47

- **91%** of respondents said that retiming service 47 by 15 minutes would cause no problems for them. Only **9%** said they would experience problems.
- **27%** of people said they would travel more frequently if better quality vehicles were used on this route, including more powerful engines to improve performance on the steep hills west of Rowlands Gill. **71%** said this would not affect their travel patterns, whilst **2%** said they would travel less frequently.

- **Just over half** of respondents were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our proposal to move driver changeovers from High Spen to the Metrocentre to improve reliability and timekeeping. **46%** had no view. Only **4%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this.
- **92%** of people said they would experience no problems if the early Sunday morning journey on the 47B were to run via Metrocentre rather than Scotswood Road. The remaining **8%** said they would experience problems, either in terms of the longer journey time or accessing employment sites on Scotswood Road.

### Service 31/32

- **42%** of respondents were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our plan to divert service 31 via Metrocentre between Blaydon and Newcastle. **14%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this, whilst **44%** expressed 'no view'.
- **37%** of people were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our proposal to increase the frequency of the 32 to run every 20 minutes at Monday to Friday peak times between Winlaton and Newcastle. **11%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this, whilst **52%** had 'no view'.
- **55%** of respondents were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our plan to co-ordinate the times of the 32 and 604 between Blaydon and Newcastle giving a bus every ten minutes at Monday to Friday peak times and every 15 minutes at other times of the day. Only **6%** were 'against' or 'strongly against' this. **39%** expressed 'no view'.
- **53%** of people said that their preferred route for travel between Blaydon and Newcastle is via Scotswood Road. **44%** preferred the route via Metrocentre, whilst **3%** chose other options.
- **One-third** of respondents said that we should try to cut out stops for our services along Scotswood Road to speed up journeys to/from Newcastle. **27%** said that we should not do this. **40%** expressed 'no view'.

### Service 604 and local links around Prudhoe

- **56%** of respondents were 'in favour' or 'strongly in favour' of our proposal for a regular fast service between Prudhoe town centre and Newcastle running every 20 minutes at Monday to Friday peak times and every 30 minutes at other times of the day. Only **7%** of people were 'against' or 'strongly against' this. **37%** expressed 'no view'.
- **40%** of people said that a dedicated minibuss service would be the best way to meet the local travel needs of Prudhoe residents. **14%** dis-agreed with this. **46%** had 'no view'.
- 'Good connections with other buses' were seen as the most important feature of a local minibuss service in Prudhoe. This was followed by 'good connections with trains at Prudhoe Interchange'.

## Other

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 about the high price of fares for local travel within Prudhoe
- Requests for a more frequent service between Crawcrook, Ryton and Newcastle Business Park at peak times
- Concerns about the potential loss of service in parts of Winlaton as a result of changes to services 31, 48 and 49/49A

Most of the changes proposed in the consultation were introduced on **Sunday 7 November 2010**. However, we did make the following alterations to our plans in view of the consultation results and comments received from customers:

- We introduced a three-way split of the 49 route between Blaydon and Winlaton (as 49, 49A and 49B). This was done to maintain a half-hourly service along all of the streets previously served by the 31, 48, 49 and 49A.
- The early Sunday morning journey on service 47B continues to serve Scotswood Road rather than the Metrocentre.
- We introduced a flat single fare of £1.10 for travel in Prudhoe to improve the value of local trips. We also plan to launch a Prudhoe Day Ticket early in 2011
- We will review our stopping arrangements along Scotswood Road early in 2011 to identify the impact of cutting out stops on services 11 and 32.