

## **Western Gateshead Consultation Results**

**In December 2012 and January 2013 we consulted customers about proposed changes to Ten, ToonLink service 11, Pulse services 69/69A and Blaydon Racers services 49A/49B.**

### **Blackhall Mill, Chopwell, High Spen, Greenside and Crawcrook**

Over 7,000 surveys were distributed door to door across this area to ensure that as many residents as possible had a chance to give their views. In total, over 300 responses were received, providing a good overview of customer views. The key findings were as follows:

- 87% of respondents said that providing a 15 minute service between Blackhall Mill, Chopwell, High Spen and Newcastle was a 'good' or 'excellent' idea, with just 2% saying it was a 'bad' or 'terrible' idea, providing overwhelming support for the proposal
- Approximately half of respondents said that providing a direct bus to Newcastle from Woodside and Folly was a 'good' or 'excellent' idea. Approximately half were unaffected by the proposal, suggesting this proposal would be welcome
- 53% of respondents said that providing four buses an hour between Greenside and Newcastle was a 'good' or 'excellent' idea. 39% were unaffected by the proposal, therefore again suggesting this proposal would be welcome
- 86% of respondents thought it was an 'excellent' or 'good' idea to provide a bus from Blackhall Mill, Chopwell, High Spen and Greenside to Scotswood Road.
- Only 8% of respondents said the change to the 69A means they would no longer be able to make the journey to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. 30% said they could do so easily, and 50% could still do so with a little inconvenience. The remainder were unaffected.
- Overall, 85% of respondents think our proposals are 'excellent' or 'good'. Only 4% said they were 'bad' or 'terrible', with the remainder having a neutral opinion or being unaffected.

A number of specific comments were received during the consultation. These covered various different issues and suggestions, although three main themes appeared:

- Vehicle reliability on current ToonLink 47 – we work hard to ensure reliability is high on all of the services which we operate, but we will investigate further the concerns raised in the consultation

- Provision of an evening and Sunday service between Ryton, Greenside, High Spen and Chopwell – due to low passenger numbers, this connection was withdrawn a number of years ago. However, if the new service 11 proves successful and passenger numbers grow then we may be able to consider the introduction of an evening or Sunday service at a later date
- Support for the provision of a direct bus from Folly and northern High Spen to Newcastle, but concern over the loss of Metrocentre connection – unfortunately it is not possible to provide both the improved frequency and new links to Newcastle, as well as maintain the direct connection to Metrocentre from these areas. Given the support for these proposals we would like to implement them, and so we would recommend that passengers from these areas travelling to Metrocentre change buses at Blaydon.

## **Winlaton**

Go North East staff travelled on buses in the Winlaton area to discuss our plans to make changes to the routes of services 49A, 49B and 69 and determine what impact the proposals would have on passengers. In total, 86% of passengers said that they would travel more or about the same as they do currently.

## **Planned Changes**

Following our consultation, we will be making a number of changes to Ten, ToonLink, Pulse and Blaydon Racer services from 24th March 2013:

- ToonLink service 11 will operate every 30 minutes Monday-Saturday daytimes between Newcastle and Blackhall Mill via Scotswood Road, Blaydon, Ryton, Crawcrook, Folly, Greenside, High Spen and Chopwell. This doubles the number of buses operating between Blackhall Mill, Chopwell, High Spen and Newcastle, and also between Blackhall Mill, Chopwell and High Spen to Ryton and Blaydon, as well as recreating the Folly to Newcastle service.
- Service 10 will operate every 30 minutes to Hexham, every 30 minutes to Prudhoe and every 30 minutes to Rockwood Hill. Combined with service 11 there will be an increase to four buses per hour between Greenside and Newcastle.
- Pulse service 69A will be curtailed to operate Metrocentre to Wardley only, as service 67. Between Blaydon and Blackhall Mill, the service is replaced by revised ToonLink 11. There are a number of alternatives available for passengers wishing to travel to other destinations from Western Gateshead, such as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
- Blaydon Racers 49A will operate via Parkhead Estate South instead of Gibside View, with service 49B now omitting Parkhead Estate South,

operating direct from Shibdon Bank to Winlaton. This will help to improve reliability of the service.

- Pulse service 69 will operate the current route of service 49A between Blaydon and Winlaton, to ensure a service continues to be provided around Gibside View.
- A small number of journeys on ToonLink services 31, 32 and 47 will be retimed.

## **Service 10 - Northumberland Consultation Results**

In December 2012 and January 2013 we consulted customers about proposed changes to TEN service 10 and ToonLink service 11 in Northumberland.

### **Prudhoe and West Wylam**

In the Prudhoe and West Wylam area, over 2,500 surveys were distributed door to door to ensure that as many residents as possible had a chance to give their views on our proposals. In total, nearly 200 responses to the consultation were received, providing a good overview of customer views. The key findings were as follows:

- 81% of respondents said the plans to provide more seats on service 10 would make them travel the same as they do now or more often. Only 6% said this would make them travel less. The remainder would be unaffected by the proposed change.
- 59% of respondents said that replacing service 11 with service 10B would make them travel the same as they do now or more often. 28% said they would travel less than they do now. The remainder would be unaffected by the proposed change.
- 74% of respondents said it was a 'good' or 'excellent' idea to provide a 10-minute peak service to Newcastle. 3% of respondents said this was a 'bad' or 'terrible' idea. 6% thought it was 'neither a good or bad idea', with the remainder unaffected.
- 79% of respondents thought it was 'very important' or 'important' to maintain connections to Scotswood Road at peak times. 2% of respondents thought this was 'unimportant' or 'very unimportant', 5% 'neither important nor unimportant', with the remainder unaffected.
- Overall, 72% of respondents thought that our proposals were 'excellent', 'good', or would have no effect on them. 28% thought our proposals were a 'bad' or 'terrible' idea.

A number of specific comments were received during the consultation. These covered various different issues and suggestions. One main theme arose, which was the provision of a direct service to Newcastle from West Wylam Estate and Oaklands Estate. Unfortunately, it is not possible to reinstate this route for a number of reasons. These include delays caused by parked cars in these estates,

and the additional time required to operate around these roads would require an additional bus to operate, but because of lower passenger numbers within these estates, the cost of operating this extra vehicle would not be covered by the fares from passengers.

### **Hexham, Corbridge, Riding Mill and Stocksfield**

Between Hexham and Stocksfield, Go North East staff travelled on the buses to discuss our proposals for this end of the route with passengers and to determine what impact the changes may have on passengers. 98% of respondents in this survey said that the changes would not cause them any significant problems.

### **Planned Changes**

Following the results of our consultation, we will be making a number of changes to TEN service 10 and ToonLink11 from 24th March 2013:

- The service 10 group will be revised to operate every 30 minutes to Hexham as service 10, every 30 minutes to Rockwood Hill as service 10A and every 30 minutes to Prudhoe Rail Interchange as service 10B, replacing service 11.
- This provides four buses an hour between Prudhoe and Newcastle, and two buses an hour between Hexham, Corbridge, Riding Mill, Stocksfield and Newcastle. Although this is a reduces the number of buses, there will be more seats provided with an investment of £2.6million in brand new buses, meaning there is less chance of passengers having to stand. The frequency of service between Newcastle and Prudhoe at peak times when buses are busiest will be higher than this.
- Connections to Newcastle Business Park and Newcastle College will continue to be provided at peak times with service 11A. At other times, passengers for Scotswood Road will be required to change buses at Blaydon.

### **East Gateshead Pulse Consultation Results**

In January 2013 we consulted customers in East Gateshead about proposed changes to Pulse services 69/69A. 2,000 surveys were printed, being handed out on board buses by Go North East staff, and distributed door to door, ensuring that as many residents and passengers as possible could provide their views.

In total, around 150 responses were received. The key findings were as follows:

- 42% of respondents said it was an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ idea to leave the 69 largely unchanged. However, 38% felt that this was a ‘bad’ or ‘terrible’

idea, suggesting that there are a number of residents who also wish to see service 69 follow the new route

- 83% of respondents said it was an ‘excellent’ or ‘good’ idea to provide a faster service to Metrocentre. Just 3% said this was a ‘bad’ or ‘terrible’ idea, with the remainder unaffected or having a neutral opinion.
- 84% of respondents said that providing new connections along Albion Street was a good idea, with just 4% saying this was a ‘bad’ or ‘terrible’ idea, providing strong support for this rerouting.
- 64% of respondents said the proposals will make their journey ‘a lot easier’, with 15% ‘a little easier’. 9% said it would make their journey ‘a little harder’ or ‘a lot harder’, with the remainder being unaffected.
- Overall, 81% of respondents think our proposals are ‘excellent’ or ‘good’. Only 9% said they were ‘bad’ or ‘terrible’, with the remainder having a neutral opinion or being unaffected.

A number of specific comments were received during the consultation. These covered various different issues and suggestions. The main theme which appeared was support for the reinstatement of the service on Albion Street.

### **Planned Changes**

Following our consultation, we will be making a number of changes to Pulse 69/69A services from 24th March 2013:

- The route of service 69 will be largely unchanged, to ensure that existing connections between Wardley, Leam Lane, Felling Square, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Low Fell, Whickham and Winlaton are maintained. There will be some minor changes to route at Fewster Square and Beacon Lough, and between Blaydon and Winlaton it will follow the route of service 49A to provide new connections in Parkhead Estate
- Service 69A will be renumbered 67, and will operate between Wardley and Metrocentre only. The western end of the route between Blackhall Mill and Blaydon will be served by revised ToonLink 11. Passengers travelling from East to West Gateshead will still be able to do so on service 69, or by changing buses at Metrocentre.
- Service 67 will operate direct along Sunderland Road in Wardley, and there will also be a small rerouting in Dunston. The service will be diverted via Albion Street to create new links from this area, as supported by the consultation results. All of these route changes have the advantage of combining to provide faster journey times to Metrocentre.