

## KIRKLEES METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

<b>BOARD:</b> CABINET	<b>DATE:</b> 18 JUNE 2007
<b>STATUS OF REPORT:</b> PUBLIC	
<b>CABINET PORTFOLIO:</b> TRANSPORTATION AND GREEN SERVICES	
<b>AREA COMMITTEES/WARDS AFFECTED:</b> NEWSOME, HUDDERSFIELD SOUTH AC	
<b>TITLE:</b> HUDDERSFIELD FREE TOWN BUS SERVICE	
<b>WHY IS IT COMING HERE? / WHAT DECISION IS REQUIRED?</b> For Cabinet to consider progress of the Free Town Bus trial and decide whether it should be made permanent.	
<b>IS THIS AN URGENT ACTION APPROVED BY CHAIR OF SCRUTINY?</b> NO	
<b>WHAT ARE THE KEY POINTS?</b> <b>Background</b> <u>Free Town Bus Trial</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. On 2 August 2006 Cabinet approved a nine-month trial of the Huddersfield Free Town Bus (FTB) and the service commenced on 30 October 2006.</li><li>2. Metro covered all the costs for the first six months of the trial (£261,000 capital, £60,000 revenue). For the last three months of the trial (May-July 2007), Cabinet approved joint funding of the service with Metro (£15,000 revenue each).</li><li>3. Targets for patronage, modal shift, accessibility, mobility and trip generation were included in the original report to allow the success of Free Town Bus to be measured.</li></ol> <u>Traffic Arrangements</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. In order to provide a circular route that linked all the desired destinations, the one way traffic flows along Cross Church Street and Queen Street have been reversed by the introduction of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) for the duration of the service trial (see Appendix 1).</li><li>5. Due to the layout of the junction between King Street and Cross Church Street and to protect pedestrians crossing between Upper King Street and the Kingsgate Centre it has also been necessary to reverse the direction of traffic flow on Lower King Street and a small section of Zetland Street.</li><li>6. A petition was received at Council on the 24 November 2006 from the Kirklees Hackney Carriage Association objecting to the reversal of the one-way system on Cross Church Street, Queen Street and Lower King Street. The petition response stated that if the Free Town Bus is made permanent then a full Traffic Management Assessment will be undertaken and appropriate changes will be made. For example, it would be necessary to re-establish the contra-flow cycle lane on the opposite side of the road and review the parking and taxi rank arrangements on Cross Church Street. It may as a result be necessary to make physical changes to the narrowing outside the Kingsgate main entrance.</li></ol> <u>Current Position</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. In March 2007 Metro and Kirklees surveyed 700 passengers and Metro provided data recorded by the bus drivers.</li><li>8. The patronage target is an average of 10 passengers per journey or 4200 per week. Within a month of the service commencing it was exceeding target and is now consistently carrying an average of nearly 12 passengers per trip, over 5000 passengers</li></ol>	

per week and is continuing to grow. Appendix 2 shows patronage throughout the trial.

9. The target for modal shift is for a 2% shift of FTB passengers from car to public transport. In the survey, 10% of passengers who responded said that, had FreeTownBus not been running, they would have used their car for the whole or part of the journey. The target has therefore been exceeded and the service has achieved twice the modal shift of Leeds Free City Bus. Extrapolating this figure forward, this equates to a reduction in car trips of 25000 per annum in the town.
10. Using the Government's new accessibility software, Town Centre accessibility has improved by 16% as a result of the introduction of this service.
11. In the survey, 38% of passengers declared themselves to have impaired mobility which exceeds the 16% target, and is over double the proportion on Leeds Free City Bus. Two of the numerous positive letters that have appeared in the local media are included in Appendix 3.
12. 9% of respondents said that they would not have made the trip into town at all had the service not run, which is far above the 1% target for trip generation. Extrapolated forward, this would mean 22000 extra shopping trips per annum into Huddersfield Town Centre, encouraging increased economic activity.
13. Lower King Street is a pedestrianised street, with access only, between Zetland Street and Cross Church Street, for loading and unloading, (midnight to 10am and 4pm til midnight.) Prior to the reversal of the one-way for this trial, it was subject to widespread abuse. Reversing the flow has reduced the attractiveness of the route as less abuse now takes place.

#### Next Steps

14. If Cabinet decide to make the service permanent, the Council's contribution of £60,711 will be funded from the Council Wide Initiative (CWI) Energy and Transport budget in 2007/8, as approved in the initial Cabinet report. It will be necessary to identify future years funding during 2007/08. The Metro contributions will be subject to the approval of a PTA meeting on 22 June 2007.
15. Should Cabinet take a decision not to fund the Free Town Bus beyond the trial period, the service will cease operations on 22 July 2007. If the service is discontinued, Metro would offer the two buses to another district for a similar trial.
16. Should the service continue to be funded, Metro will install real time information displays on bus stops in this financial year. This will further boost patronage and performance.
17. Kirklees and Metro are currently pursuing sponsorship funding opportunities from the private sector in Huddersfield. Early discussions have been opened with Kingsgate and the University of Huddersfield. Any sponsorship obtained would reduce both partners' contributions on an equal basis.

#### **OFFICER ADVICE**

1. Subject to the approval of continued funding of the service from the PTA at their meeting on 22 June 2007, that Cabinet make the current 9 month trial of the Huddersfield Free Town Bus permanent.
2. That Cabinet approve a funding commitment £60,711 from the CWI Energy and Transport Budget in financial year 2007/08.
3. That the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, introduced to support the changes to the one-way traffic flows, be made permanent following a full Traffic Management Assessment. This Traffic Management Assessment will cover the impact of the reversed traffic flow on the local business community and the public. This assessment

will be based on information, comments and consultation responses during the consultation period, and on site investigations of the traffic flows in the area. It will identify works necessary to make the temporary changes permanent, and what additional works are necessary to ensure compliance and legal enforcement. It is likely that these works will cover:

- the permanent relocation of on street parking on Cross Church Street, which will then allow the re-instatement of the contra-flow cycle lane
- permanent relocation of the Taxi rank, remedial works necessary to ensure this rank accessibility and of the correct length
- permanent re-alignment of the Cross Church Street / Kirkgate junction to enforce the mandatory right turn
- permanent extension of the “Bus Gate” on Kirkgate
- review of all signing and lining

### **PORTFOLIO HOLDER’S RECOMMENDATION**

I welcome the success of the Free Town Bus and would seek agreement to the continuation of funding for this financial year and would ask that consideration be given to future years funding.

The objection from Kirklees Hackney Carriage Association be overruled and the petitioners be informed that the TRO will now be made permanent.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the continuation of funding for this financial year be agreed and that consideration be given to future year’s funding

### **CONSULTEES AND THEIR RESPONSES**

All local Members were consulted prior to commencement of the trial and were happy with the proposed reversal of the one way system on Cross Church Street, Queen Street and Lower King Street. They have been consulted again on this report and no adverse comments have been received.

Cllr Andrew Cooper said: “No problem from me on this one.”

Cllr Ann Denham said: “I fully support the free bus service and the route it takes. Anecdotally it seems to me to be a great success.”

Local stakeholders were consulted prior to the introduction of the trial scheme. We have now asked for their views on whether or not they consider the trial (including the new traffic arrangements on Queen Street/Cross Church Street/Lower King Street) has been a success and their thoughts on the service being made permanent.

See the individual responses below:

Police – no objections to the changes becoming permanent.

Emergency Services – no objections. Ambulance Service consider the change to be an improvement.

### **CONTACT OFFICER AND RELEVANT PAPERS**

Contact Officer: Victoria Podgorski      Direct Dial (01484) 225506  
Email: victoria.podgorski@kirklees.gov.uk

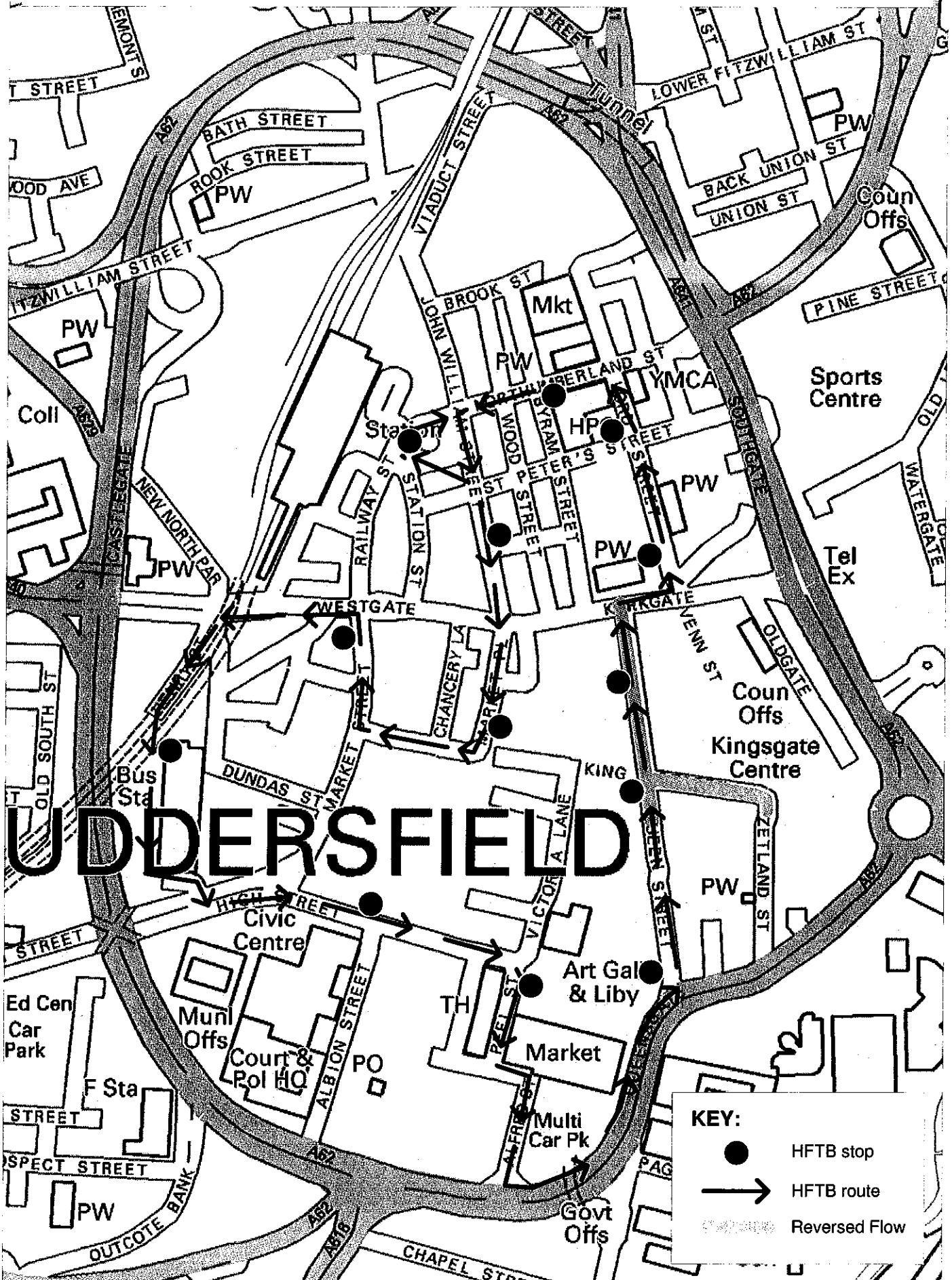
Assistant Director for Highways & Transportation: Jacqui Gedman

Relevant Papers: Report to Cabinet 2 August 2006

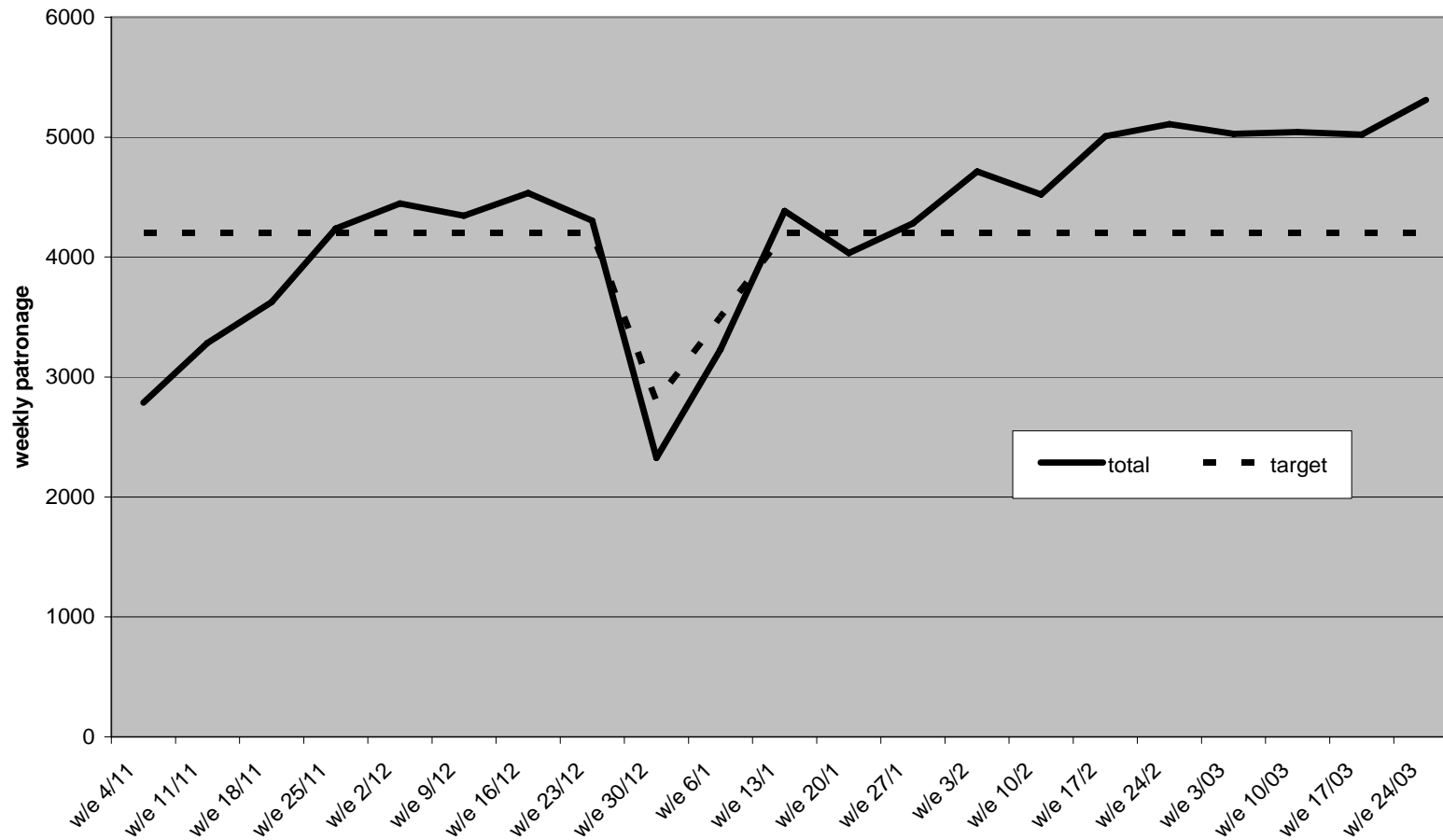
Report on Petition 789

11 June 2007 (7) (SC)

# HUDDERSFIELD FREE TOWN BUS (HFTB) ROUTE



ftb loadings



### Smashing service

AS an 81-year-old suffering from Parkinson's Disease I would like to congratulate Kirklees and Metro for putting on the new free town bus.

I am now able to board the bus in the bus station, ride to Queensgate, look round the market then board the bus again and ride to Kingsgate look round, board bus again and ride to the open market.

Lastly I catch the bus to Market Street where I catch my bus home to Deighton — shattered but happy as I have not been able to do this for ages. What a smashing driver too.

**ARNOLD HILTON**  
Deighton

EXAMINER 15/11

EXAMINER 21/11

### The bus boon

I WOULD like to thank whoever thought of the free town-centre bus service, and I'm so pleased it is a success.

This service is a boon to older people particularly and the drivers are so pleasant and helpful. It is much better being able to ride to the top end of town instead of struggling up King Street.

I hope lots of people continue to use this service so that it is made permanent. We really need it in this hilly town.

**MARGARET WAINWRIGHT**  
Newsome