

Confidential

Shropshire Council Passenger Transport Group

Shrewsbury Park & Ride Review Research of other English Park & Rides Summer/Autumn 2019

Introduction

A 'Review' of Shrewsbury Park & Ride (P&R) was launched Summer 2019 by Shropshire Council with a view to modernise the service and increase passenger numbers, and to better support the economy of the county town and become eco-friendlier.

To research 'best practise' of other Park & Ride services in England, a number of visits were undertaken by the Passenger Transport Group in later Summer/Autumn 2019 across England and the reports on these visits are shown below at Report 'A' to 'G' below.

These reports are officer technical reports provided to allow a more in depth understanding of the main Park & Ride Report.

It should be noted that the information given to Shropshire Council staff was on an informal 'colleague to colleague' basis and does not necessarily represent the position of other councils. As such, these reports should be treated in this context and with appropriate discretion.

We wish to record here our thanks and appreciation for the help and hospitality we have been provided with by other councils and their staff in this research. This has been really helpful in progressing the review of Shrewsbury's Park & Ride services and in demonstrating best practise across England.

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Report 'A'

Report on Meeting with Oxford City Council and Visit to their Pear Tree Park & Ride – Wednesday 21st August 2019

Staff from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group travelled from Shirehall, Shrewsbury to Oxford's Pear Tree Park and Ride at OX2 8BF and arrived just after 12.30 pm. Pear tree P&R is one of Oxford city Council's three P&R sites and is situated to the north of the city. The other two are Thornhill to the east and Redbridge to the south.

The County Council also run Seacourt P&R site to the west of the city, and Oxford Parkway for train use to the north, near Pear Tree P&R.

We were told afterwards by Oxford City Council that their total three site car capacity is around 4,000 cars. The Parkway site which provides a train link to London in 60 minutes and costs £2 to park daily.

Both the Parkway and Seacourt sites are being taken over by Oxford City Council in September 2019, after an agreement between the two councils.

P&R Parking

There was a £2 charge for parking and we used their automated telephone system 'Ringo' to pay our £2, which we felt was a little tedious but would become quicker once registered. We could have paid at the ticket machines in the bus shelter, or on line.

The car park held 1,100 cars and spaces were very few, with over 1,000 cars parked up on the site when we arrived.

We walked quite a way across the car park to the bus shelter, which was modern and clean, but with no added facilities, apart from the ticket machines. The site had CCTV & lighting & felt safe to walk through even parked at the furthest point of the car park. There was a map showing the route & various locations in the city centre & a timetable of the service which operated 7 days a week.

P&R Service

The bus was at the stand and we boarded immediately, and in addition to the £2.00 parking charge the driver asked for a £2.40 return fare each – with hindsight we're not sure if we could have paid this fare at the parking ticket machines or not. The driver had asked us what parking fee we'd paid and hence charged our fare accordingly.

We understand that a University owns part of the site and charge Oxford City Council a significant lease for its use - the parking charges are levied to help fund this lease payment.

Bus Journey into City

Buses leave every 10 minutes and there was no queue to get on our bus. Another 20 passengers or so traveled with us into the city, on a journey of about 20 minutes to our destination at Westgate.

We overheard one of the passengers had complained to the driver as he boarded at the P&R site that another P&R was totally full, and he couldn't park, even though the display board was showing spare places – the driver said he couldn't help with that.

During our journey we were surprised that the bus stopped and picked up passengers at LBS bus stops as we got further into the city, but this was later explained to us by Oxford City Council – P&R is a commercial service not subsidised or controlled by the Council. The two bus companies in Oxford (Stagecoach and Oxford Bus Company) work together and the former has the express service into London and the latter the P&R.

The bus was a diesel bus but was modern and clean. It was a double decker. It had both audio and visual displays announcing the stops coming up.

After a couple of stops in the city centre, the driver told us we were at Westgate, and we thanked him and got off. He directed us to our meeting location with Oxford City Council at Oxpens Car Park in Oxford City Centre, OX1 1RQ. This seemed to be the last stop. The driver told us to pick up the return bus on the opposite side of the road.

Westgate is a new development and a modern, airy shopping Centre with roof top restaurants – we were told this had changed and improved the city Centre a lot, but some smaller shops at the margins had suffered. Saturdays were always very busy in Oxford.

Meeting with Oxford City Council

We met the Customer Relations Team Leader, Oxford City Council and his colleague at Oxpens Car Park in Oxford City Centre, OX1 1RQ at just after 1.00 pm, after a 5-minute walk from Westgate.

We spent nearly 1 ½ hours in their meeting room discussing a whole range of P&R, traffic, congestion, retail/tourism, economic and parking issues.

The notable highlights for us were:

- P&R is commercial – there is no taxpayer subsidy
- Their P&R is well used, very successful and thriving
- Their P&R fares are realistic and commercial, and buses frequent and modern
- Parking tariffs and P&R charges are geared to encourage P&R usage – parking tariffs included rates of £7 for 3-4 hours and £18 for 6-12 hours, but P&R was only £2.40 return for the whole day
- There was still traffic congestion in the city, but around 4,000 cars were kept out of the city at the three orbital P&R sites run by the City Council

- The city car parks were still well used though, with drivers seemingly happy to pay £35 for the day to park on Saturdays, for instance
- The Oxford city economy was doing well, but only places like Bath and London offered any serious competition – Oxford was clearly a tourist hot spot and commercial centre for the region
- They had lots of coaches bringing in foreign tourists as well as other visitors and tourists, and shoppers – a facility for coach stacking had been made at one the P&R sites, to ease city coach parking & charged £10 per coach to park. (passengers are dropped off within the city centre)
- Also, express buses to London also used a P&R site where cars could be parked for the day – although not helping the Oxford economy, it was for the greater good
- There were no EV buses in the city, but there were some hybrid buses on LBS – P&R buses were modern diesels
- We informed our Oxford counterparts that Shrewsbury's P&R was losing passengers, not really very successful and not really geared to our town centre parking strategy – he understood why we wanted to improve things

Return P&R Journey

We picked up the P&R at the stand opposite Westgate – there was a countdown display telling us how many minutes our Pear Tree bus was away, which was reassuring – we saw it count down from 10 minutes to 1 minute, and it then arrived

It was a decker again and only a few passengers getting on with us. We then slowly travelled through city centre traffic and lights, and after 5 minutes or so stopped at another stand in the city where about 40 passengers got on.

We then travelled north out of the city, and the journey was tedious and slow as there was congestion.

We got back to the Pear Tree P&R site at just before 4.00 pm and got off the bus and went back to the car. We left the car park through their 'automated vehicle number recognition system' and commented again on how well signed the P&R site was, particularly with the live display board showing spaces available and other info.

Overall, we were very impressed by Oxford's P&R system and their wholistic planning of parking and traffic management.

Passenger Transport Group

Date of Report - 27th August 2019.

Authors – AE/FR

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ENDS

Report 'B'

Report on Visit to Chester Park & Ride – Friday 23rd August 2019

A member of Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group travelled to Chester's Broughton Heath Park and Ride (on the eastern side of the city) on the late morning of 23rd August. This is one of their 4 x P&R sites, the others being at Sealand Road (west), Upton (north, at the Zoo) and Wrexham Road (south).

It was surprising how few cars there were in the Broughton Heath P&R car park and how few people were using the P&R, particularly as it was a Friday in the August during the summer holidays.

The buses were clean and modern, with electronic displays inside and outside, and *clearly signed 'Chester Park & Ride'*.

The side of the buses advertised *'Free 4G Wi-Fi, Air Chill, Green Travel and USB charging'*, with a *'Service frequency of 12 minutes and 15 minutes on Sundays and Bank holidays'*.

Broughton Heath P&R Parking

There was no charge for parking, although a new sign on the site says:

"New machines will soon be available on this site which will both offer 'Park Only' and 'Park & Ride' options. Charges for both options will shortly be displayed near to the pay stations"

From looking at the car park, it was estimated it had spaces for about 700 cars or thereabouts, with Chester and Cheshire West and Chester Council later confirming 750 spaces.

The site was secure, with height barriers protecting it at all entrances from 'travellers' and other trespassers, unlike our Harlescott site which is regularly disrupted by trespassers.

It was estimated that the car park was only around 30% full and this was a Friday at the end of August, in the summer holidays, when you might expect it to be a lot busier.

Parking was reasonably close to the bus pick up point, it was only a 30 second walk to the ticket machines, which were next to the bus stand, where the bus was parked up.

The P&R charge was not displayed anywhere I could see and was only apparent when I started keying the ticket machine. There was also an option to buy *"6 days for the price of 5"* which was £20.

Bus Journey into City

The bus was at the stand and I boarded immediately after purchasing a £2 return P&R ticket from a pay machine, in the shelter close to the bus stand.

The driver punched the ticket on boarding.

Buses leave every 12 minutes.

There were 14 other passengers on the bus.

The bus was a large diesel-powered single decker bus.

On the bus, there was an electronic display which showed which P&R it was (in this case 'PR2 to Boughton Heath P&R').

Below this display, there was a TV showing 'live' (?) CCTV images of the inside of the bus.

Disembarkation was at the Chester Bus Interchange (aka Chester Bus Station), on George Street – this is a large, modern bus station.

Traffic had been light.

Travelling time was 12 minutes start to end.

At the Interchange, there were electronic countdown displays showing how many minutes various buses were due to arrive in, and this seemed impressive. It included Boughton Heath P&R with three separate entries showing arrivals in 3, 14 and 26 minutes, which with hindsight must have reflected scheduled times I guess, not real time information, although I speculate that the system many well update scheduled arrivals with real time arrivals at some point, may it not(?).

Chester City Centre

The City Centre seemed very busy in what was the August holiday period. Also, the weather was very warm and sunny.

Additional pedestrianisation had taken place on Frodsham Street and Foregate Street in recent times, although it did appear that buses and taxis were allowed through.

A lot of central Chester has been pedestrianised for many years.

The Chester economy probably relies as much on the leisure/tourist industry as it does on retail.

Chester is not particularly easy to navigate or that car friendly, but the Council has 14 x car parks totaling 2,220 car spaces. The tariffs at their car parks seem to vary widely – some are free, some 20p for two hours, or 50p for two hours; others are £1 for an hour, or £5 for over 6 hours; and then

one £7 for over 7 hours and one £8 for over 12 hours. Clearly, there doesn't appear to be any strategic direction in these charges.

NCP also have three car parks providing 599 spaces. And there'll be other car parks as well.

The 4 x P&R sites have spaces for 3,170 cars in total.

So, the small P&R ridership that was observed on 23rd August is perhaps easier to understand with so many city centre car parks and such low parking tariffs on offer.

And maybe Broughton Heath P&R is a lot less well used than some or all the other three P&Rs sites?

That said, Broughton Heath is on the A41 trunk road into Chester from the west midlands, and this is an extremely busy road, often with traffic queues trailing back south a few miles to Hatton Heath and beyond, trying to access the major (and seemingly inadequate) Broughton Heath traffic light-controlled road junction. The point here is that this volume of traffic should generate quite a bit of P&R patronage at Broughton Heath P&R, even if most of this trunk road traffic is heading to North Wales or Merseyside.

NB The A41 is a major trunk road in England that links London and Birkenhead, although it has now in parts been superseded by motorways. It passes through or near various towns and cities including Watford, Kings Langley, Hemel Hempstead, Aylesbury, Solihull, Birmingham, West Bromwich, Wolverhampton, Newport, Whitchurch, Chester and Ellesmere Port

Return P&R Journey

Whilst disembarkation was at Chester Bus Interchange (aka Chester bus Station), on George Street from the inbound P&R journey, for the return journey the choice was to embark at the bus stop on Foregate Street.

The on-bus electronic display showed that the next stop, as per 'Next Stop: Broughton Heath P&R'.

There were 15 other passengers.

Traffic was a little heavier than on the inbound journey.

Travelling time was 15 minutes start to end.

Summary

The P&R was efficient and modern but under used for what you might have expected in August. Clearly a lot of people in Chester city centre had accessed the city via other transport modes than the Broughton Heath P&R.

*(Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report - 28th August 2019.*

ENDS

Report 'C'

Report on Meeting with City of York Council and visit to their Poppleton Bar Park & Ride – Monday 16th September 2019

Staff from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group travelled from Shropshire to York's Poppleton Bar Park and Ride at YO26 6QF and arrived at 12.50 pm. Poppleton Bar P&R is one of the City of York Council's six P&R sites and is situated 4.4 miles to the west of the city centre. Clockwise from Poppleton Bar, the others are at Rawcliffe Bar to the north, Monks Cross to the north east, Grimston Bar to the east, Designer Outlet to the south and finally Askham Bar to the south west.

The capacity of Poppleton Bar is for 600 cars. It is a modern P&R site, well set out, with a modern central building holding toilets, staff room, ticket office, general office and waiting room, clad in wood to fit in with its rural surroundings. The site had rapid EV chargers fitted.

It goes without saying that York constitutes one of the UK's major historical sites and as such is a major tourist and visitor centre. Their P&R services need to be considered in this context.

York's P&R services are all commercially operated (with no taxpayer subsidy) and moreover they generate a significant income for the Council.

P&R Parking

There was no charge for parking and the car park was about $\frac{3}{4}$ full when we arrived, midday on a Monday.

We parked the car near the main building and the bus stands, which were a thirty second walk away. The parking was designed in a crescent around the main building and was well signed and well laid out. All parking spaces were close to the main building.

The site was protected with height restriction barriers and there was no indication of trespass problems. There was a barrier controlled adjacent car park for higher vehicles such as camper vans, holding about 20 vehicles.

P&R Service

We went into the P&R building where there were ticket machines and a ticket office, but a member of staff told us to buy our tickets from the driver on the bus.

The return P&R bus fare was £3.20 per passenger. Adult singles were £2.50, Concessionaries £1.10 after 9.00 am weekdays, and a range of advance tickets from 5 days at £14.50 to annual at £500; and all-day travel on any First bus in York for £3.90.

Monday to Saturday the service operates from 07.00 to 19.45 hours. Sundays only from 09.30 to 17.30 hours. The frequency for most of the day is 10 minutes, with the off-peak end of the day being 15 minutes.

Bus Journey into York City

The bus was operated by 'First'.

We had a five-minute wait at the stand before an EV bus that had been charging at a Rapid charger moved up to collect passengers.

Buses leave every 10 minutes and there was no significant queue to get on our bus. Another 8 passengers travelled with us into the city, on a journey departing at 1.00 pm.

We paid the driver for two £3.40 return tickets.

There was CCTV on the bus but no electronic destination signs or audio, and no Air Conditioning. It was quite warm on the bus.

The bus picked up three fare paying passengers about half way into the city at 1.06 pm.

Most of the passengers got off in Bridge Street at 1.15 pm, as did we, for the short walk to the Station Rise City of York Council offices.

The off-peak journey time is scheduled to be 19 minutes, but clearly our trip was faster at only 16 minutes. Traffic was light when we travelled in. the peak time journey is scheduled for 23 minutes.

They lock their P&R car park at 20.30 hours Mon-Sat with a £50 release fee for locked in cars.

Meeting with City of York Council

We met the Head of the City of York's Council Transport Office at their Station Rise Council Offices at 1.30 pm, along with a colleague who was their P&R expert.

Their team deal with LBS, P&R and some concessionary transport, but is not involved with school or social care transport.

We had an hour's long discussion with them about their P&R services and how they were developing them.

The key points of the meeting were:

- We talked about how parking and P&R were geared strategically – it was clear that there was some tension, with free parking offered at Christmas, thus encouraging more cars into the city and discouraging people from P&R

- They had 4.2m P&R passengers pa – the loss of some retail and office employment in the city in recent years had largely been offset by an increase in leisure, tourism and visitors
- City centre car parking cost £2 an hour and there was broadly some strategic sense in the way both parking and P&R services operated
- P&R was commercial, with no subsidy, and moreover, P&R bus operators had to pay a licence fee to use the P&R site, raising funding for the Council – the licensing for site use was tendered
- The six P&R sites were managed by the Council and the licence fee mainly covered all maintenance costs
- York had several bus companies and competition was reasonably healthy
- They had several EV buses but at a 5-6-year life, batteries were down to about 70% capacity and couldn't operate all day without charging
- So, there were trickle chargers at the bus companies garage for overnight use and Rapid chargers at the P&R sites for day time use
- P&R operated on a seven-day week, with restricted times on Sundays
- There were 16 x EV double decker buses on order, arriving soon for P&R – these had been procured with a Government Low Emissions grant (LEF) of about £100k per bus, with the buses costing about £400k each
- On one P&R site existing diesels were being upgraded to Euro 6, as double deckers couldn't travel under a low bridge on the route
- There were worries that registering P&R services could result in de-registration of the LBS routes they duplicated

Return P&R Journey

We picked up the P&R at the stand on Bridge Street, where we had been dropped off. The bus was another EV bus.

We had arrived there as the bus was on the stand and departed at 2.55 pm.

There were only another 2 x passengers on the bus but at another LBS stop in Clifford Street we picked up another 8 x passengers at 3.00 pm.

And then in Station Road we picked up another 3 x passengers at 3.07 pm.

We had a smooth journey back to Poppleton Bar, arriving there at 3.25 pm.

We then returned to Shropshire.

Conclusion

We were very impressed with this P&R overall. EV buses were a clear plus, being quiet for passengers and pedestrians in the city centre, as well as being fumes free, helping reduce pollution and particulates in the city centre air.

The P&R waiting room building offered reassurance and security, with toilets, seats and staff there to support passengers.

The site was clean, modern and well-marked, with good security barriers.

We'd have liked to see a digital display board both at the site and on the bus, along with audio announcements for the stops. Air Conditioning would have made the trip more pleasant. Even though it was five years old, the bus was however clean, modern and had nice leather type seats.

Moreover, in terms of funding, the taxpayer makes no subsidy to the P&R bus operation, unlike Shropshire taxpayers. And the site licencing arrangement means that bus companies pay for the right to use the site, again reducing the burden on the taxpayer by mainly funding all site maintenance from P&R operation.

York can be rightly proud of their Poppleton P&R.

*Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 17th September 2019.*

END of REPORT

Report 'D'

Report on Meeting with Bath & North East Somerset Council and Visit to their Lansdown Park & Ride – Monday 23rd September 2019

Staff from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group travelled from Shropshire to Bath on 23rd September 2019 for a meeting with Bath & North East Somerset Council, combined with a visit to their Lansdown Park and Ride at BA1 9BJ.

Lansdown P&R is one of Bath & North East Somerset's three P&R sites and is 2.8 miles to the north of the city, with 837 spaces.

The two other P&R sites are at Odd Down which is 2.8 miles to the south of the city centre with 1,252 spaces, and Newbridge to the north west, which again is 2.8 miles from the city centre with 698 spaces.

It goes without saying that Bath constitutes one of the UK's major historical sites and as such is a major tourist and visitor centre. Their P&R services need to be considered in this context.

Bath's P&R services transport 1.8m single passenger trips annually and are all commercially operated (with no taxpayer subsidy); moreover, they generate a significant income for the Council.

P&R Parking

There was no charge for parking and on surveying the car park it was judged to be about 60% full, midday on a Monday.

There was clearly a major on-going trespass event in the far corner of the site, with around a dozen well established caravans in place, with their paraphernalia. There were no P&R user cars parked near this area.

Parking spaces were available not far from the main bus shelter, which was built of timber and sympathetic to its rural surroundings.

There was an electronic display board in the shelter which provided a count down time to the next buses - this was reassuring and informative.

The site was well laid out but was looking a little tired.

The site was not protected by any height restriction barriers, but we understood that gates were locked by a security company in the evening, with one-way crocodile teeth barring entry on the ungated exit.

P&R Service

The Lansdown P&R service included the LBS public service 31 and this was integral to its operation. Payment for the P&R bus was 'on-bus' with no ticket machines in the shelter.

The standard return P&R bus fare was £3.40 per passenger. A group ticket for two adults after 10.00 am was only £6.00.

Concessionaries were free after 9.00 am.

Monday to Saturday the service operates from 06.15 to 20.30 hours. Sundays and Bank Holidays only to 18.00 hours. The frequency for Monday - Friday peak and Saturdays are 10 – 12 minutes, with the off peak 12-15 minutes. Sundays and Bank Holidays were every 15 minutes and 20 minutes after 19.30.

Buses were double deckers that provide significant capacity.

Bus Journey into Bath City Centre from Lansdown P&R

The bus was operated by 'First'.

As the service was a combined P&R and LBS Service 31, on routes stops were anticipated.

Boarding was immediate, with payment to the driver of £6.00 for a group ticket and departure was very shortly afterwards. There was a total of 10 passengers. The journey was as per:

- Departed 12.24 pm – 10 passengers embarked
- Stop at 12.25 pm at Hamilton House and 3 more passengers embarked
- Stop at 12.27 pm at Kingwood School and 1 more passenger embarked
- Stop at 12.32 at Belvedere and 1 passenger disembarked
- Arrived Milsom Street and all remaining 13 passengers disembarked

Traffic was light and the journey quick and uneventful. The regular stops were part of the LBS service, with this P&R doubling up as an inbound commercial LBS to the city centre – this has removed the need for another bus on the same route.

There was an excellent electronic display on the bus and this was backed up by audio messages. The display told passengers what the next stop was and then told passengers the stop they were just leaving. It provided good reassurance and information for passengers, making the journey more relaxing and less stressful.

The driver was helpful and after stopping at Milsom Street, provided directions to the Guildhall.

This Milsom Street terminus was on a shopping street and had a bus shelter. There was a choked access to Milsom Street, but cars were still allowed to use it.

Meeting with Bath & North East Somerset Council

Officers met the Public Transport Team Manager and a colleague from the Public Transport Team at 1.00 pm in the Guildhall.

The team deal with LBS, P&R, rail and concessionary transport, but is not involved with school or social care transport.

They began a presentation using a recent Council Power Point document about Bath's P&R services.

The presentation and subsequent discussions lasted one and a quarter hours.

The key points of the meeting were:

- Bath's parking and P&R policies were geared strategically
- They have 3 x P&R sites
- They provide Real Time information
- They noted the trespass at Lansdown but don't know how it happened
- There were toilets on the three sites, with a cleaning company contracted to service them
- Parking was free – if they did charge for parking, VAT would apply
- They had funding of £26k pa from Wessex Water for the use of 50 P&R spaces at their Odd Down site
- 'First' are keen on bio-methane powered buses, maybe, rather than EV buses
- The P&R services are all commercial with no Council/tax payer subsidy
- In fact, the licence fees for the use of the P&R sites generate Bath & North East Somerset Council £700k pa in funding revenue from First – this indirectly helps subsidise their LBS supported service network
- This income stream also pays for all P&R site maintenance
- Lansdown P&R is an LBS and stops at all bus stops on its route. It has replaced what had been the commercial Service 31.
- The standard return adult fare of £3.40 is going to increase soon
- Parking in the city is £12 all day, which helps encourage P&R usage
- Bath never offer 'free' city centre parking, even at Christmas or at other key times
- P&R passenger numbers were 1.8m pa single trips (i.e. 0.9m return trips) but they'd check to see the trends and let us know
- The PVR (max buses needed at any time) is 9 buses for the total of the three sites
- We reflected that Shrewsbury's 20-minute P&R frequency probably wasn't enough
- We said that research suggests that P&R users will compare P&R charges with town centre car parking charges to inform their decision about how to travel
- It was also mentioned that nationally of the 51 x P&R services, 41 charged passengers for P&R, 7 just for parking at P&R sites and 3 a mixture of the two
- They said that they preferred not to charge for car parking at P&R sites – one reason was that VAT is applicable to parking charges
- Their concessionary passengers are free after 9.00 am
- Fares are all 'on-bus' fares

The key highlights from Bath's P&R 'Power Point Presentation' that are not mentioned above or are of enough importance to reiterate, are:

1. There is a site gap to the east but it's not likely that their Administration will return to its plans to install a fourth site; rather they'll look for some smaller orbital sites in the east
2. 'On bus' advertising revenue is shared between the Council and First
3. All but two buses were Euro 6 diesels (the odd two being Euro 5 diesels)
4. WIFI and next stop announcements on all buses
5. Enhanced P&R services for events, Christmas, rugby, etc.
6. Operator has exclusive licence to operate from P&R sites
7. Plans for later evening operation
8. Re-tender of P&R services in 2020
9. SWPTI research via focus groups shows bus users comparing costs with driving, but P&R users comparing costs with parking – and P&R users are not typical bus users and don't see it as 'bus use'; they expect good frequency and reliability
10. Bath prefer bus fares not parking charges for P&R users – parking charges makes all users pay, incurs VAT, has a higher headline rate and cash collection and maintenance costs
11. Re concessions, ENCTS applies to all registered services (and Bath's P&Rs are all LBS registered) and so concessions must travel free
12. Bath's list of 'not to do' – don't over complicate payments, don't provide too many sites/spaces, don't undercharge, don't underestimate the customer, don't pay VAT re parking charges
13. And Bath's list of things 'to do' – short and reliable journeys, 10-minute frequency, rational pricing, generate off peak demand

They subsequently confirmed their passenger numbers trend – he said it fluctuates from year to year but it is still going up, and they've had 4.5% growth since 2010/11.

Return P&R Journey

The return journey was as per:

- Boarded bus at 2.55 pm
- Departed 3.00 pm from Milsom St – 10 passengers plus 2 embarked
- Stop at 3.04 pm at Alfred St and 2 more passengers embarked
- Stop at 3.05 pm at Balance St and 1 passenger disembarked
- Stop at 3.06 pm at St Steven's Church and 2 passengers disembarked
- Stop at 3.07 pm at Sion Rd and 4 passengers disembarked
- Stop at 3.09 pm at Hamilton House and 2 passengers disembarked
- Arrived at Lansdown P&R and the remaining 5 passengers disembarked

Conclusion

We were very impressed with this P&R overall.

The highlight was seeing an excellent P&R with sound finances, with the P&R services making a net contribution of £700k pa to the Bath & North East Somerset Council.

The P&R site may have been a little tired, but the buses were frequent and the journey quick and comfortable.

Operating as an LBS public service on its route in and out of the city centre was another apparent plus, as it meant that the historical service 31 bus was no longer needed, and P&R could serve two purposes at the same time.

The digital display and audio stop information on the bus was impressive, as was the real time displays both on the site and at the stops in the city.

Perhaps the 2020 tender will result in more environmentally friendly buses, which would enhance the service even more.

Charging realistic fares helped promote the service we thought, as well as contributing to Council coffers, rather than being a drain on the taxpayer.

Bath can be rightly proud of their Lansdown and other P&R services.

*Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 24th September 2019.*

END of REPORT

Report 'E'

Report on Visit to Coventry Park & Ride at the War Memorial Park – Friday 27th September 2019

Introduction

Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group visited Coventry Park & Ride on 27th September at CV3 6PT, 2.5 miles south west of the city centre. The service terminates at the Coventry Transport Museum. The service is operated by Coventry City Council.

There are no other Coventry City Council P&R sites.

The Park & Ride service is a registered LBS route and part of the X17 service operated by Stagecoach.

Coventry is a major city in England and 9th largest in terms of population. As such, Coventry has a major public service bus infrastructure.

P&R Parking

It was estimated that the War Memorial Park car park had capacity for around 400 cars and it was about 2/3 full at mid-morning at the time of the visit.

There was no charge for parking.

The bus turning circle was close to the entrance of the car park, which was sited just off the Kenilworth Road in Coventry.

There were no electronic display boards in the shelter or anywhere else, although there was an X17 timetable.

The site was well laid out and walking distances to the bus shelter at the bus turning circle were reasonable.

There was a height restriction barrier which spelt out the name of the car park (i.e. War Memorial Park'), so it looked more like an elegant sign than a security barrier, which would be more pleasing to passengers.

P&R Service

The Coventry P&R service was part of the LBS public service X17 from Warwick, which operates between Warwick and Coventry. Payment for the P&R bus was 'on-bus' with no ticket machines in the shelter.

The service operates every 20 minutes and has a journey time of between 10 and 15 minutes.

The standard return P&R bus fare was £3.30 per passenger.

The buses were operated by Stagecoach and the ones observed were from 2013, with Euro 5 diesel engines. The inbound bus was a double decker and the return bus a single decker.

Bus Journey into Coventry

There was a 10-minute wait for the bus to arrive and 6 passengers boarded for the inbound journey to the city centre.

The bus had come from Warwick and had 'X17' in its display board.

Once arrived at the P&R site, the driver waited for 7 minutes prior to departure.

After 5 minutes travelling time, the bus was in the city and dropped off 6 passengers in Queen Victoria Street. Another 2 passengers got off in Corporation Street and finally 2 in Hales Street, after a total of 9 minutes travelling.

Coventry City Centre

The city centre was busy and most of the retail area was 2/5 mile to the east of the three P&R bus stops.

The P&R terminus was adjacent to Coventry Transport Museum and again the bus stop was just a road side glass type bus shelter, similar to those in Victoria St and Corporation St..

There were many other buses using these stops and it was clear that P&R was only a very small part of the overall bus network and it didn't have any dedicated/bespoke facilities.

The X17/P&R stops were very accessible for the city.

Return Journey to War Memorial Park

After a 14-minute wait at the bus stop, the X17 bus departed Hales St with 3 passengers, and via Fairfax St stopped at Cox St 2 minutes later when another passenger boarded.

Another stop at Warwick Road saw another passenger board, which was another 5 minutes into the return journey.

At the War Memorial Park all 5 passengers disembarked and the journey had taken a total 15 minutes.

Summary

The Coventry P&R is essentially just one stop on the X17 public service (LBS). The War Memorial Park car park is on a key city access route from the south (i.e. Kenilworth Road). The car park is well maintained and has spaces for 400 cars but it is also a car park for people visiting the War Memorial Park at its southern end, so this will take up some parking spaces.

It is assumed that some years ago the City Council saw that with the simple addition of a fixed bus stop at the War Memorial Park for the X17 service, they could create a new P&R service at a stroke at little/no cost. So, this P&R is simply an extra stop to the X17, inbound and outbound.

The P&R is well signed from the Kenpas Highway road network to the south of the city and the concept seems to work well. Essentially, Coventry have been able to provide a whole P&R service without any need for significant additional infrastructure nor for any extra (dedicated) P&R buses or additional operating costs.

Clearly the P&R will keep some cars out of the city centre, but the operation is quite a modest one, with no more than a 400-car capacity. Other smaller towns/cities have P&R services with overall capacities in the thousands of car parking spaces.

Whilst it will not have any major impact on Coventry's overall transport infrastructure, it is a useful service and a 'quick win' for the city at minimal cost.

*Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 30th September 2019.*

END of REPORT

Report 'F'

Report on Meeting with Nottingham City Council and Visit to Queen's Drive Park & Ride – Wednesday 2nd October 2019

As part of the visits to other English P&R services, staff from Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group went to Nottingham on 2nd October 2019, to meet Nottingham City Council and see their Queen's Drive Park and Ride at NG2 1AR.

Queens' Drive P&R has 1,000 spaces and is 2.6 miles and 12 minutes to the south of the city centre. It is one of Nottingham City's nine P&R sites with a total of 6,500 car spaces, and of these seven are Tram P&Rs.

Of the other eight P&R sites, five are north of the city, the most northerly as far out as the village Hucknall which is 7.1 miles and 24 minutes away.

Toton lane is a Tram P&R to the west of the city with 1,400 spaces and is 6.2 miles and 17 minutes from the centre.

Clifton South is another Tram P&R and is 5.9 miles and 15 minutes SW of the city with 1,000 spaces.

Finally, Racecourse P&R is 2.4 miles and 10 minutes to the east of the city and charges per car.

On arrival two meetings took place, one with Nottingham City Council Public Transport Operations Team Leader and one with Nottingham City Council Queen's Drive P&R Site manager. They provided a raft of information about the P&R service and the P&R site respectively.

It goes without saying that Nottingham is one of the major cities of England with a population of 289,000. Specifically, it is a university city, with over 60,000 students and it is forever linked with the Robin Hood legend. Council staff tell us that their related historical sites are disappointing for visitors (e.g. the Castle is now a Manor House and the remaining parts of Sherwood Forest are poor).

So, modern Nottingham is more a commercial, educational and shopping centre than anything else.

Nottingham's P&R services are successful, commercially viable and integral to their public transport network.

P&R Parking

Queens' Drive is a modern site and well secured, with height restriction barriers, CCTV cameras, rising bollards activated by buses, a Control Centre, Eco hub for charging EV buses and a central P&R office unit, amongst other things.

Nottingham City Council Queen's Drive P&R Site manager did say that they do have trespass events, with travellers sneakily tailgating buses as they travel through rising bollards on to the site, for

instance. She said that they attempt to trespass at selected times of the year (Summer Bank Holiday) but the Council know when.

Nottingham City Council has a contract with private Bailiffs and if there is a trespass event, the Bailiffs are contacted, and they deal with it. The event normally starts early evening and the Bailiffs will serve orders on them the following morning, so they leave the site by evening of the same day. If they don't leave the Bailiffs can call on the Police and on recovery equipment to remove the trespassers physically, which sometimes happens.

There was no charge for parking and on surveying the car park it was judged to be virtually 100% full, with no spare spaces visible. Apparently, Wednesday was their busier day of the week, but even so, it was impressive.

The bus pick-up areas were centrally located and so walking from any car bay wouldn't too onerous.

There was a visitor bay reserved at the main office in the centre of the site for the Shropshire visitors.

Queen's Drive P&R is a bus P&R and two separate bus stands, one for the city centre bus P&R and one for the Medicare P&R which services the QMC hospital for patients, visitors and staff. Queen's Drive also hosts their Eco hub where there are more than 50 EV charging points, mainly buses.

The chargers for EV cars were elsewhere on the public side of the site.

There are ticket machines in the bus shelters or payment can be to the driver.

The main office was in sympathy with its wooded surroundings, clad in wood.

There were electronic display boards in the shelter which provided a countdown time to the next buses - this was reassuring and informative.

P&R Service

The Queen's Drive P&R buses are numbered Navy 49 and use a fleet of new, low emission bio-gas double deck buses.

It operates every 15 minutes on Monday to Saturday daytimes to City Centre stops, including Lace Market, Victoria Centre (George Street), Elite and Old Market Square.

The P&R fare is £4.20 per adult return, if you're travelling on your own and using Park & Ride, or £4 per car, which is up to 5 people (any age) for a return journey between the Park & Ride Site and the City Centre, and which is effectively a group ticket for up to five people, so it's the cheapest fare if you're travelling as a twosome or more. <https://www.nctx.co.uk/park-ride-pricing>

One of their discounted tickets is a £3.78 per return trip via their Easyrider Anyday.

There were no parking barriers providing tickets, so the on-site ticket machine nor driver cannot verify how many people are in the car or whether a group of up to five ticket should be issued.

Parking is free at all the park and ride sites, you just pay for your journey on either bus or tram.

You can also buy season tickets and an Easyrider Everyday for people travelling on 4 or more days per week is weekly £18 – up to £3.60 per day, or monthly £58 – up to £2.90 per day, or annually £570 - up to £2.43 per day.

As mentioned above, for people travelling 2 or 3 days per week their Easyrider Anyday is 5 days - £18.90 - £3.78 per day or 10 days - £35.70 - £3.57 per day or 20 days - £67.20 - £3.36 per day.

Older persons and disabled concessionary passes are valid after 09:30 weekdays.

One payment method provided is the 'Robin Hood Card' – this is a useful smartcard with an electronic purse from which the cost of travel is automatically deducted as you travel around Nottingham. There are Adult and Under 19 options available for use on tram and most bus operators. You can pick up a PAYG card from one of the 150 on-street ticket machines (first card is £3). When travelling around the Robin Hood Network passengers can top up their card at any of the on-street ticket machines too, you can add amounts of £5, £10, £20 or £50 to your card.

Buses are operated by Nottingham City Transport (NCT) which is a Community Transport organisation, set up by Nottingham City Council. One arm of the business operates under a s.19. the other using an 'O' license.

Eco Hub

Shropshire visitors were invited for a tour around the Eco Hub which was adjacent to the Medicare bus stop. The Eco hub was a large site.

At the time of the visit, it had about 20 EV buses hooked up to EV Rapid Chargers. We were told that four sub-stations had to be built to provide the power for this and the rest of the site, including the EV Car chargers in the main public car park.

There was an inspection of a bus on rapid charge and the engine bay was exposed, and details of how trickle and rapid charging systems worked, with different cables used for each. There were two battery packs, one on the left that travelled a significant way down the bus and one on the right.

The balancing technology software controlling the charging of both sets of batteries was explained.

There was then a tour of the control centre, with about four staff in there monitoring CCTV images of the site and which also had access to all the cities' highways cut cameras.

All the buses were tracked in real time, as was their battery charge status.

Bus Journey into Nottingham City Centre from Queen's Drive P&R

The bus was operated by NCT and was gas powered.

As the service was a combined P&R and LBS Service 49, on route stops were anticipated.

A member of the City Council accompanied the Shropshire visitors who had Robin Hood cards to swipe on the bus ticket machine. We were told that the fare was £4 adult return.

Boarding was immediate, with payment to the driver of £6.00 for a group ticket and departure was very shortly afterwards. There was a total of 10 passengers. The journey was as per:

- Boarded 12.12 pm
- Departed 12.14 pm – 9 passengers embarked in total (i.e. 6 + 3)
- Stopped at 12.17 pm at Electric Ave +2 passengers
- Stopped at 12.18 pm at Pork Farms +1 passengers
- Stopped at 12.19 pm at Prestgate Drive -1 passenger
- Stopped at 12.21 pm at Home Base +2 passengers
- Arrived at 12.24 pm at Nottingham Tram Station -6 and -3 passengers

Traffic was reasonably light and the journey uneventful. The regular stops were part of the LBS service, with this P&R doubling up as an inbound commercial LBS to the city centre – so this will have removed the need for another bus on the same route.

There was an excellent electronic display on the bus and this was backed up by audio messages. The display told passengers what the next stop was.

Meeting with Nottingham City Council offices at Loxley House

Shropshire visitors were taken into Loxley and there was a meeting with staff dealing with Contracts and Operations. A range of matters were discussed involving P&R, transport infra structure and the city.

Key things discussed included were:

- £9m spend on concessionary travel annually
- £1.5m on bus subsidy
- EV buses required two buses for everyone needed, because of limited range (max around 60 to 70 miles) and charge limitations
- Whilst the EV buses were originally funded via a Government emissions grant/green bus fund, they were not sure where the funding would come from for their replacements, when the day came
- Most of the bus network was commercial
- Nottingham didn't have any of the big five bus companies
- NCT operated in the urban area
- And Trent operated in both urban and rural areas
- They got £200k BSOG pa
- They imposed an employers' Work Place Parking Levy which generated significant sums for the city
- There were 60,000 university students in the city (about 20% of the total population)
- There were tensions between parking and P&R strategies
- Parking was £4 per day but £8 a day at the train station
- Medi Link from Queen's Drive was a major cooperative service with the Queen's Medical Centre for staff, patients and visitors

- Public services and P&R were used by students, shoppers, commuters, workers, Boots staff
- Nottingham was a major science location which also generated travel needs
- They also had a good nightlife in the city
- They have two Universities and one College
- There were 6,500 spaces at their P&R sites, serviced by Trams and buses, depending on the site
- The passenger profiles for P&R were roughly 1/3 concessions, 1/3 staff and 1/3 fare payers

Return P&R Journey

The return journey was on a different service bus than we went into the city on, and from the top deck of the double decker gas powered bus there was no observation of passengers embarking or disembarking), as per:

- Arrived 2.10 pm at Carrington St bus stop near Station Rd
- Boarded bus at 2.15 pm
- Departed at 2.15 pm
- Stopped at 2.20 pm at Queens Walk
- Stopped at 2.22 pm at Riverside
- Stopped at 2.24 pm Crossgates
- Stopped at 2.26 pm B&Q
- Disembarked at 2.27 pm at Clifton Blvd adjacent to QD P&R

Conclusion

The whole of the Nottingham transport operation was most impressive, one of the best we have seen.

Their EcoHub for charging EV buses was large and very impressive. The staff were enthusiastic, and their control room was state of the art and looked very capable. The links with the QMC are eminently sensible and a good example of joined up thinking between agencies. Such a large urban hospital would probably find it difficult to fully function without a resource like the QD P&R.

And moreover, they have electric and gas-powered buses for their overall public transport system, including P&R. And their novel CT business arrangement is something very different but seems to work.

The P&R service was commercial and apart from QMC, without any public taxpayer subsidy.

*Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 3rd October 2019.*

END of REPORT

Report 'G'

Report on Visit to Cambridge Park & Ride at Trumpington – Wednesday 9th October 2019

Introduction

Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Group visited Cambridge's Trumpington Park & Ride Wednesday 9th October 2019 6PT, which is 3.3 miles south south west of Cambridge city centre, a journey time of 17 minutes.

The service is managed by Cambridgeshire County Council and operated by Stagecoach.

Trumpington is one of Cambridge's five Park & Ride sites and is their flagship site. It is close to the M11 and hence very accessible.

The other four sites are at Milton 4.6 miles to the north of the city, Newmarket Road 3.9 miles to the east, Babraham Road 4.6 miles to the south west and Madingley Road 3.3 miles to the west.

The Park & Ride services are registered LBS routes and hence integrated into the Cambridge public transport network.

Cambridge is a historic city in England renowned for its University, tech industries and city centre cycling. It has a population of 115,000

P&R Parking

On entry into the car park at midday on Wednesday, it was evident that it was overly full, with every space taken and cars double parked, parked on verges and flower beds and up against trees.

It was subsequently explained that Cambridge is very much an unfriendly car city that is dominated by the bicycle. Hence P&R is one vital means of access to the city.

The car park currently had about 1,400 spaces, with some 200 spaces currently out of commission for development work.

There was cycle storage for many bikes.

There was no charge for parking.

The P&R bus pick up area was close to the car park, but because of its size, many car spaces were some distance from the bus stop.

There was another stand close to the P&R stand for LBS buses, serving other than the city centre (e.g. Addenbrookes Hospital).

The site was well laid out and modern, and was the show piece P&R for Cambridge.

There were height restriction barriers to protect the site from trespass.

There was also a significant modern wood clad building that provided a manned reception desk, a waiting area and toilets, offices, along with other facilities. This was spacious and most impressive.

P&R Service

The Trumpington P&R operates Mon-Sat every 10 minutes from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm, with less frequent buses after 6.00 pm, ending at 8.10 pm.

There is a 15-minute service on Sundays.

The adult return fare is £3.00.

Coach services also operate from Trumpington to London, Norwich, Stansted, Heathrow, Gatwick and Brighton.

There is also a major bus service that serves Addenbrookes Hospital which is 2.6 miles to the north east of Trumpington.

There are also a few other LBS serving local towns and villages.

P&R Bus Journey in and out of Cambridge

There was a 5-minute wait for the bus to arrive at the Trumpington stop and up to 20 passengers boarded for the inbound journey to the city centre at about 2.15 pm.

Payment of the £3 return fare was on-bus and via contactless debit card onto the bus card reader machine - this was an easy way to pay and the system worked well.

The bus was modern a Euro 6 double decker.

The journey into Cambridge was uneventful with a couple of LBS stops on route. Passenger numbers on the bus were moderate and the journey took just over 15 minutes.

On arrival in Cambridge city centre it was clear that this was different to most town/city centres, in that major elements were pedestrianised and there were hundreds of cyclists moving around the centre. There were few car/vans in sight. Clearly Cambridge is an historic centre with many historic and university buildings in view. The city was busy and bustling, with many tourists, which apparently is now a year-round phenomenon.

The return journey involved a lay over period of about 7 minutes at the city centre P&R stop, which felt slightly frustrating.

The return bus had a significant number of passengers on it.

The return journey left at just after 3.30 pm and was longer in time than the inbound journey as traffic was heavier, and negotiating jams and junctions was not so easy.

The bus arrived back at Trumpington at just before 4.00 pm and the passengers disembarked.

Meeting with Cambridgeshire County Council

Prior to the journey into Cambridge, a 1.00 pm meeting was held with Cambridgeshire County Council in their offices in the P&R building at Trumpington.

The key things tumbling out of the meeting were:

1. There was a major effort to link Addenbrookes Hospital with Trumpington P&R, thereby providing the hospital with parking for staff and easier access for patients and visitors
2. Cambridge's five P&R sites had a total of 5,500 spaces
3. They had 3.5m passenger return P&R trips pa – in 2014 it had been 3.8m but now the trend was back up again;
4. The 2014 drop off in passengers was because of the introduction of a £1 parking fee which was withdrawn in 2018
5. And in 2018, passenger numbers went up by 14%
6. They offered a 'bike and ride' facility at no cost – but also said that they had hundreds of abandoned bikes and it was difficult to manage their disposal; Cambridge was 'cycle city'
7. They had full electronic signage at the site
8. They thought the future of bus power units was hydrogen, not EV/battery – they had neither type of buses on their P&R at present and no plans for either
9. Passenger number trips were going up overall
10. Cambridge operated some guided bus ways, but there had been conflict with cyclists
11. Parking in the city was £28 per day, so P&R was very popular at £3 per adult return
12. There was a degree of tension between Council and City councils
13. The Council charges Stagecoach an access fee for the use of the P&R sites, thus generating income for the Council
14. There was no taxpayer subsidy of the P&R service, although Council funding was required to maintain the five sites – gross site costs including staff were £1.3m pa, offset by access fee income of £260k pa
15. The city was very much 'anti car'
16. Even though they had site height barriers, they still had trespass events, from the 'travelling community' and it was difficult to get them removed quickly – this led to worries about site safety and crime; clear up costs for rubbish removal and damage repairs were often around £2k per event
17. They said Stagecoach didn't offer free Concessionary Fares on P&R, even though the services were registered as LBS – he said as it was a fundamentally a P&R service, you didn't have to offer free concessions
18. P&R had a 10-minute frequency
19. The team didn't sit in the Council's passenger transport team, but instead they were placed in the highways group
20. They were bemused by Shrewsbury's P&R £1.60 fare, as they said these fare levels were last seen in the 1990s
21. CCC owned the P&R sites

22. CCC were looking at providing 3 or 4 more site for P&R, adding 2,000 to 3,000 extra spaces in the coming years

Summary

The Cambridge P&R services are modern, well used and vital for access to the city where the car is not welcome.

Like many other P&Rs in England, the bus operator runs the Cambridge P&R service, not the Council, and moreover the bus operator pays CCC for the privilege. The Council restricts itself to managing the site and tendering the site access fees.

There £3 adult return fare is at the lower end of national fare rates. They did experience an 8% drop off in passenger numbers when they introduced a £1 parking charge in 2014, but this was removed in 2018 and passengers' numbers are now trending upwards.

For a city devoted to cycling it's perhaps odd that P&R still operates diesel buses, unlike some other P&Rs in England. This may be because the bus operator determines the operational profile of the P&R service whilst CCC focuses on site management.

Like other English P&Rs, CCC generate an income from their P&R service, unlike Shrewsbury P&R where there is significant taxpayer subsidy. Their site costs seem high, but they are very modern sites (Trumpington) and seem to be run at, near or over capacity.

Like many other P&Rs, this P&R is integrated into the LBS network, or at least it offers that facility on its journeys in and out of the city.

Overall Trumpington P&R was most impressive – it's only a couple of minutes away from the M11 that leads to London, it's modern, efficient and is vital in providing one of the major access routes into Cambridge city centre.

*Shropshire Council, Passenger Transport Group
Date of Report – 30th October 2019.*

END of REPORT