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Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 7 July 2017

Subject: Bus Strategy

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12a, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1	

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Following the conclusion of consultation, for Transport Committee to consider the updated Bus Strategy.
- 1.2 For Transport Committee to recommend to WYCA that the updated Bus Strategy receive adopted status at the next WYCA meeting.
- 1.3 To provide an update to Transport Committee on the Bus Services Act.

2 Information

- 2.1 In December 2016, Transport Committee considered the Transport and Bus Strategies report outlining the initial analysis and conclusions from the public consultation on the draft West Yorkshire Bus Strategy. The public consultation commenced on Monday 18 July 2016 and ran for 14 weeks until Friday 21 October 2016.
- 2.2 The December report set out that the Bus Strategy consultation received over 3,300 responses. Following the committee meeting, a workshop was held on 23 January 2017 with Transport Committee members to consider the analysis of the consultation responses in detail and the next steps towards adoption of the strategy.
- 2.3 As a result of consultation responses received, Transport Committee considered at the February 2017 meeting a report which proposed the following key changes to the strategy documentation:

- Increasing the emphasis on the importance of role of the bus driver and providing the training and customer service standards to consistently meet customer expectations whilst undertaking a challenging front line role;
- Expanding the strategy to include an additional policy proposal around accessibility and usability of existing bus services, particularly for disability and equality groups. This will also need to address the recent High Court judgement around prams and wheelchairs.

2.4 Given the strong support for the vision, objectives and existing policy proposals these were not proposed to change from what was consulted on.

2.5 Since the February Transport Committee, the Bus Strategy has been updated to reflect this feedback and also the feedback received from a supplementary consultation on accessibility. A summary of the conclusions of this supplementary consultation are provided in **Appendix 1**.

2.6 In order to move towards the adoption of the Bus Strategy, an updated version of the Bus Strategy has been drafted to reflect this feedback received and is available online (http://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/Transport/Bus_Strategy/). This Bus Strategy sets out that:

Bus is a fundamental and significant component in the delivery of a modern, integrated inclusive transport network for West Yorkshire. Each week people in West Yorkshire make almost 3 million journeys on local bus services, making them the most highly used form of public transport. Buses take people to work; to school, college and university; to hospital; to shops; and to a range of social and leisure activities across West Yorkshire. In addition to the economic benefits, the bus is an effective tool of social policy for delivering inclusive growth. Vulnerable and socially disadvantaged groups in society are often the most reliant on bus networks. Bus services are fundamental to providing the jobless with access to work; young people to education and training; and providing a way out of social isolation for older and disabled people.

Our goal is to create the best bus system in Europe, where catching the bus in West Yorkshire is an attractive and natural choice for everyone. Delivering this step change is fundamental to helping to realise the ambitious economic growth targets for West Yorkshire and the City Region. To realise this, the vision for the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy is:

“To create a modern, integrated and innovative bus system which puts customer first and contributes to the delivery of West Yorkshire’s economic, environmental and quality of life ambitions as set out in the Strategic Economic Plan and the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy”

2.7 The Strategy sets the ambition as targeting 25% patronage growth from 2016 levels, over the next 10 years, but given the level of housing and employment growth

forecast, it is not infeasible to target even higher levels of bus patronage. In addition, bespoke analytical economic research undertaken to value the Bus Strategy has demonstrated that this level of patronage growth is achievable and that delivery of these policies has the potential to lead to an economic uplift to the Region's economy of £455million over a 20 year period.

- 2.8 Delivery of the Bus strategy has now commenced, the Bus 18 partnership with bus operators is seeking to deliver benefits to passengers in the early years of the strategy. The opening of the new Temple Green P&R site in June 2017 is already proving successful. The £173.5m of funding allocated by the Department for Transport to improve public transport in Leeds is focused on developing the City's bus service to meet the aspirations of our Bus Strategy. In addition to this, Transport Committee at the February meeting approved £875,000 towards the Bus Strategy Delivery Programme. These are only the first steps, and the following section sets out that Bus Services Act 2017 will provide the City Region with the powers to enable the delivery of the full Bus Strategy. Operators are also delivering new vehicles which meet the latest emissions standards across the Region.

Bus Services Act 2017

- 2.9 The Bus Services Bill received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017 and is now an Act of Parliament. Authorities are able to access the new legislative powers from 27 June 2017. The House of Lords agreed to amendments made in the House of Commons. The Act includes:
- Automatic access to franchising powers for Mayoral Combined Authorities, with other authorities having access on a case-by-case basis.
 - New powers to encourage partnership working between local authorities and bus operators.
 - A section which will require bus operators to provide audio and visual information, such as next stop announcements, on buses in Great Britain.
 - Open data powers to provide increased information to bus passengers.
 - A restriction on local authorities setting up their own bus companies.
- 2.10 However, significant details around the secondary legislation as well as the guidance to support the Act are yet to be published by the Department for Transport. The consultation on secondary legislation and guidance closed on 21st March and the April Transport Committee set out the key local issues.
- 2.11 For this region, a key outstanding issue is around the process for Non-Mayoral Combined Authorities to access franchising powers. The forthcoming updated guidance is an opportunity for the Department to clarify this process.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 Terms of Reference set out that Transport Committee is responsible for the development of the Bus Strategy and WYCA is responsible for adoption of the strategy. This report proposes that Transport Committee recommend to WYCA that, following the substantial public consultations, the updated Bus Strategy setting out the vision and policy aspirations for the Bus System for the next 20 years is adopted at the next WYCA meeting.

5 Staffing Implications

- 5.1 The development of the Bus Strategy has been overseen by WYCA Transport Policy Team.

6 External Consultees

- 6.1 The development of the Bus Strategy has been subject to substantial public and stakeholder consultation with this feedback included within the strategy.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 That Transport Committee recommend to WYCA that it adopts the updated Bus Strategy, which sets out the vision and policy aspirations for the Bus system for the next 20 years.

8 Background Documents

- 8.1 None.