

Director: Dave Pearson, Director
of Transport Services

Author: Dave Pearson



Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 17 November 2017

Subject: Bus 18 Update

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 To update the Committee on progress with Bus 18 and to endorse the priorities for 2018.

2 Information

- 2.1 Each week, people in West Yorkshire make over 3.5 million journeys on local bus services making them the most used form of public transport. Earlier in the year, the Authority established its Bus Strategy up until 2040 following extensive consultation. Emerging from the feedback obtained during this consultation, the Committee identified the need to make early progress on addressing the issues that matter to bus passengers.
- 2.2 Discussions were therefore held with the Association of Bus Operators in West Yorkshire (ABOWY) seeking a mechanism to work collaboratively with bus operators to achieve our shared objective of reversing the decline in bus patronage. This resulted in a programme of initiatives entitled Bus 18 which:
- are deliverable before 2018;
 - provide tangible benefits to the customer;
 - are deliverable within the current legislative framework;
 - minimise any additional governance requirements; and
 - do not constrain any party in terms of the longer term strategy.
- 2.3 WYCA has worked closely with bus operators to identify and progress initiatives under the following themes. A Steering Group has been established comprising the Managing Directors of the major bus operators, the ABOWY and senior officers of WYCA. Transport Focus has been invited to the Group to provide a customer perspective.

- Ticketing
- Network Stability
- Young People
- Air Quality
- Punctuality & Reliability
- Customer Service
- Information

2.4 Achieving successful outcomes for customers is the key focus in all of the themes. The impact of Bus 18 on bus passengers' satisfaction and non users' perceptions will be monitored through the annual tracker survey. Respondents are being interviewed throughout the autumn and the findings will be provided to the Committee early in 2018. A further survey will be taken in autumn 2018.

2.5 The Bus 18 initiative was formally launched in Bradford on 24 March 2017 when the Combined Authority and the bus operators made the following pledges to address issues which are important to passengers:

To make buses easy to use we will:

We will develop a simpler bus network with fewer changes, more reliable services, smarter information and more ways to pay in advance.

To reduce emissions

We will introduce more environmentally friendly buses with less emissions to improve air quality.

To improve customer satisfaction and passenger experience

We will agree a customer promise to increase satisfaction with bus travel and engage with young people to understand what is needed to make buses more useful to them.

2.6 The following progress has been made on the Bus 18 themes :

- **Ticketing**- a Day Saver smart carnet product and the MCard android app are now available
- **Network Stability** – an agreement has been made with bus operators to consult on major bus route changes and to limit changes to six times of the year
- **Young People**- engagement with Youth Parliaments
- **Air Quality** - buses in West Yorkshire now display an Eco Star star rating which identifies their environmental performance. Fleet replacement plans are being agreed with operators
- **Punctuality & Reliability** – a £1m programme of work to address bus “punctuality hotspots” is now in progress
- **Customer Service** - any customers not happy with their bus journey can claim a free travel voucher from the major bus operators. Customers can call a taxi and claim the cost back from either First, Arriva or Transdev if their last bus doesn't arrive within 20 minutes of the scheduled time.
- **Information** – WYCA and bus operators have collaborated on a new design for bus stop information which is being rolled out from November 2017.

2.7 Whilst progress has been made, further impetus is needed in order that bus passengers see and experience the benefits from Bus 18. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Transport Committee met with the Bus 18 Steering Group to agree the following priorities for 2018;

- **Young People** – a strongly promoted, discounted “go anywhere” day ticket
- **Air Quality** – to maximise the funding opportunities provided by central government to facilitate low emission buses
- **Punctuality & Reliability** – a strong focus on punctuality and reliability with clear visibility of performance against targets
- **Customer Confidence** – a campaign to increase public awareness of the recent investment in buses and the steps taken to increase patronage

2.8 The success or otherwise of Bus 18 will enable the Committee to come to a view as to the best way of utilising the new powers available in the Bus Services Act.

3 Financial Implications

3.1 All Bus 18 initiatives are jointly funded by WYCA and bus operators. WYCA costs are within existing budgets.

4 Legal Implications

4.1 At this stage, Bus 18 has no formal status as a partnership. Whilst new powers to establish formal partnerships between Transport Authorities and bus operators are available in the Bus Services Act. Secondary legislation and guidance on these powers is needed to progress them. The Department for Transport is consulting on the detail of these documents at present with WYCA’s input being made through the Urban Transport Group. It is anticipated that the Committee will be able to consider its approach to these powers in early 2018.

5 Staffing Implications

5.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

6 External Consultees

6.1 Bus operators, the Association of Bus Operators of West Yorkshire and Transport Focus.

7 Recommendations

7.1 That the Committee notes the progress made on Bus 18 to date and endorses the priorities for 2018 as set out in this report.

8 Background Documents

8.1 Bus 18 pledges and action tracker.