

Report to: West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Date: 25 April 2019

Subject: **West Yorkshire Bus Alliance**

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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<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 of this report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the development of the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance.
- 1.2. To set out the next steps in developing the Alliance into a formal agreement incorporating key performance indicators and a delivery plan.

2. Information

- 2.1 The bus is the biggest mover of people in West Yorkshire and has a critical role in our transport network: it is essential for providing access to jobs and training. However, in line with national trends, we have declining patronage in 2017/18, 147.8 million journeys were made on local buses in West Yorkshire, which represents a decrease of 21 million journeys (12.6%) since 2009/10. This disconnect between the central role of the bus and the declining patronage means there is a real need to understand and deliver interventions that could provide a different and more attractive offer to the customer.
- 2.2 Bus 18 was an informal collaboration between bus operators and the Combined Authority. It established a set of pledges and a programme of work

supported by an informal and flexible governance arrangement. It set out to be the first stage in delivery of the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy approved by the Combined Authority in August 2017.

- 2.3 Bus 18 developed a shared purpose and momentum to improve bus services in the region. Its achievements are set out in Appendix 1 and include the MyDay, which was launched in July 2018 as the new all-day £2.60 county-wide bus ticket for West Yorkshire's under 19s, replacing the current half metro day ticket. In August 2018 15,300 tickets were sold, whereas 12,000 equivalent tickets were sold in the same period last year.
- 2.4 Bus 18 demonstrated how collaborative working between bus operators, the Combined Authority and local authority highways teams could deliver benefits for bus passengers. However, to move forward a more structured approach is needed backed by a formal agreement.
- 2.5 The Bus Services Act 2017, which provides for Advanced Quality Partnership, Enhanced Partnerships and Franchising are all relatively new, untested, provisions. It is proposed that in the short term focus is placed on making tangible improvements for the customer rather than entering into lengthy negotiations and legal process that are needed to establish a statutory arrangement.
- 2.6 Transport Committee on the 9 November 2018 endorsed that Bus 18 should move towards a non-statutory alliance (technically known as a Voluntary Partnership) with a view to migrating to a statutory partnership model as it matures. Appendix 1 provides further detail on the background to the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance.
- 2.7 The key aim of the Alliance is to deliver the objectives of the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy and the commitments agreed as part of the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme submitted to DfT in 2016.
- 2.8 The overarching objectives are to contribute towards:
 - To enable economic growth in West Yorkshire by improving connectivity to areas of economic opportunity
 - To realise environmental aspirations, including significantly reducing local emissions
 - To support local communities by improving access to health services, education, employment, leisure and retail destinations
- 2.9 The Alliance will set and monitor against the following measures of success:
 - Increased bus patronage - working towards increasing bus patronage by 25% across West Yorkshire and by 50% in Leeds
 - Reliable Service Delivery – using aggregated performance data on schedule adherence, average passenger waiting time (for frequent services) and journey times

- Customer Satisfaction – for which the Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey is the key indicator offering comparisons across the country

2.10 On the 11 January 2019 Transport Committee endorsed the commitments proposed for delivery through the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance. The table below provides a summary of the themes, work streams and commitments.

Theme	Work Stream	Commitments
Customers at the Heart	Network Legibility	A bus network clearly identifiable to users and non-users
	Ticketing and Retail	Account based ticketing
	Ticketing and Affordability	Simple fares structure and fare offers for young people
	Travel Information	Live journey planning information, real time and disruption collaboration
	Customer Service	Consistent customer service offer, improved on board bus customer facilities
	Communication and Engagement	Promotional engagement to encourage behavioural change
Keeping Buses Moving	Highway Infrastructure	Highway Improvement Programme to reduce journey times, congestion relief programme, improved bus waiting infrastructure
	Service Provision	Extended operating hours, Review of the bus network structure, improved network security, better emergency planning, major highway events planning and resilience
Sustainable Bus Network	Clean Bus Technology	Delivery of a clean bus technology programme
	Economy of the Bus Network	Better data availability, review of the economy of the bus network

2.11 West Yorkshire Combined Authority, alongside the West Yorkshire Councils and bus operators are currently in the process of identifying a delivery plan for each commitment identified in Table 1. The delivery plan will be considered in detail by the Transport Committee in July 2019 and a finalised version will be provided to members of the Combined Authority.

2.12 The delivery plans identify the following:

- Description of the output for the commitment.
- How the commitment will be delivered.
- Funding - identification of source of funding or requirement for funding.
- Outputs that can be delivered early.

- Dependencies
 - Performance management -how the output will be measured.
- 2.13 Priority will be given in the delivery plans to actions which will promote affordable travel for young people. It is anticipated that the first actions emerging from this will be announced in summer 2019.

Governance and Reporting

- 2.14 The Transport Committee will oversee the Alliance. The Chair of the Transport Committee will lead the Steering Group of the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance comprising senior managers of the bus operators and officers of the Combined Authority. Transport Focus will represent passenger interests and there will be close liaison with local authority highway teams. It is planned to share learning with the Bus Partnership in York. The governance structure is set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.15 The West Yorkshire Ticketing Company Ltd (WYTCL) is the Joint Venture Company co-owned by the Combined Authority and bus and rail operators to manage the MCard multi-modal smart ticketing scheme. WYTCL will play a key role in delivering the ticketing and information commitments of the Alliance.
- 2.16 In addition to the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance Steering Group, it is proposed that an officer group for each District area be established to facilitate collaboration between local authority highway teams, Combined Authority officers and bus operators. These groups will seek to identify opportunities, operational processes and highway schemes which are aimed at speeding up bus journeys and improving reliability.

Partnership Agreement

- 2.17 The commitments approved by Transport Committee together with the delivery plan will be incorporated into a formal West Yorkshire wide Voluntary Partnership Agreement, the terms of which will be considered by the Transport Committee prior to signature with bus operators. As the partnership matures then aspects of the commitments will be developed into Advanced Quality Partnership and Enhanced Partnerships using the Bus Services Act 2017.

3. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 3.1 An effective and affordable bus network will support the objectives of inclusive growth.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Costs involved in the development of a Bus Alliance will be met from approved budgets. Where costs are shared with bus operators these will be recovered through the mechanisms in place with West Yorkshire Ticketing Company Ltd.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 This report proposes the development and signature of a Voluntary Partnership Agreement between the Combined Authority and bus operators.

6. Staffing Implications

- 6.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

7. External Consultees

- 7.1 The work to develop the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance has involved engagement with bus operators, district highways officers and Transport Focus. It seeks to address the feedback obtained from extensive public consultation prior to the Combined Authority's adoption of its Bus Strategy in 2017.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That the Combined Authority endorse the steps taken to develop the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance and the commitments to improve bus services.
- 8.2 That the Transport Committee oversees the development and signature of a Voluntary Partnership Agreement which will establish the form and processes of the Alliance.

9. Background Documents

None.

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance including the governance structure