

**Report to:** Transport Committee

**Date:** 5 July 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 To provide an update on the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance, obtain approval for the work stream delivery plans and to sign the Voluntary Partnership Agreement.
- 1.2 To set out the next steps to enable delivery of the Alliance.

## 2. Information

### Background

- 2.1 The bus is the biggest public transport 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 The key aim of the Alliance is to deliver the objectives of the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy. The overarching objectives are to contribute towards:

- Enabling economic growth in West Yorkshire by improving connectivity to areas of economic opportunity.
- Realising environmental aspirations, including significantly reducing local emissions.
- Supporting local communities by improving access to health services, education, employment, leisure and retail destinations

2.3 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 by 25% and by doubling patronage in Leeds both against a benchmark of 2017.
- 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

### **West Yorkshire Bus Alliance Work Plans**

2.4 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.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Work Stream</b>	<b>Commitments</b>
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	Air Quality	Delivery of a clean bus technology programme
	Economy of the Bus Network	Better data availability, review of the economy of the bus network

2.5 West Yorkshire Combined Authority, alongside the West Yorkshire District Councils and bus operators have worked together to develop a delivery plan for each work stream. The delivery plans have been developed using a number of forums:

- Identifying co-leads for each work stream, this includes a WYCA lead and an Operator Lead.
- An Officer and Operator Away Day was held to discuss each work stream in detail and ensure the deliverables covered the broadest requirement.
- A workshop event was held involving senior/ middle managers from bus companies, the Combined Authority and Councils (“The Big Meet Up”) – a challenge session was undertaken at the Big Meet Up to allow for further discussion and review of the content of the delivery plans.

2.6 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.

2.7 Appendix 1 contains the current delivery plans which will be kept under review by the Steering Group.

2.8 The Alliance intends to deliver a number of customer focused early priorities, including:

1. A fare deal for young people –identifying a maximum fare and promoting the opportunities for young people to save money on bus fare
2. A driver training programme to deliver further training to improve driver interaction with customers.
3. A proposal to make the bus network more legible and easier to use –the accompanying paper on the Committee’s agenda regarding Core Bus Network Presentation details early proposals in this regard.
4. Shared ticketing agreement which will allow customers to use services offered by different bus operators during times of disruption, such as bad weather, broken down vehicles and other major incidents.

### **Voluntary Partnership Agreement**

2.9 At its meeting on 23 April, the Combined Authority endorsed the steps taken to develop the Bus Alliance and delegated the Transport Committee to oversee the development and signature of a formal agreement. The commitments

approved by Transport Committee together with the delivery plan will be incorporated into a formal West Yorkshire wide over-arching Voluntary Partnership Agreement. Appendix 2 sets out the key Heads of Terms included as part of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement

2.10 It is proposed that the Voluntary Partnership Agreement is signed by the following parties:

- West Yorkshire Combined Authority, on behalf of the West Yorkshire districts
- Arriva Yorkshire
- First West Yorkshire
- Transdev Blazefield
- Yorkshire Tiger
- Association of Bus Operator West Yorkshire (ABOWY), representing most small/ medium sized bus operators. Engagement is currently underway with the smaller bus operators to either encourage them to become members of ABOWY or sign up in their own right.

2.11 The Voluntary Partnership Agreement will include the over-arching agreements that will be used to structure the Alliance. This includes:

- Governance
- The Work Streams and how they will be monitored
- Funding and constraints
- Data sharing, availability and data protection
- Intellectual property rights
- Terms of termination
- Confidentiality
- Competition and procurement law
- Amendments

2.12 Setting the core principles will provide flexibility should new major highway infrastructure that is likely to reduce journey times for buses be developed and delivered over the course of the Alliance.

2.13 It should be noted that there is no compulsion on bus operators to sign up to the Voluntary Partnership Agreement. The following link summarises the Department for Transport Frequently Asked Questions on developing Voluntary Partnership Agreements.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664318/bus-services-act-2017-new-powers-and-opportunities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664318/bus-services-act-2017-new-powers-and-opportunities.pdf)

### **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, officers of the Combined

Authority and an officer of one of the West Yorkshire districts. 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.

2.15 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.

2.16 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.

### **Next Steps**

2.17 On approval of the Delivery Plans and to progress with signing the Voluntary Partnership Agreement the Combined Authority will identify a resource to manage the Alliance and ensure the Key Performance Indicators can be achieved.

## **3. Financial Implications**

3.1 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.

## **4. Legal Implications**

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

## **5. Staffing Implications**

5.1 The Combined Authority will delivery the management of the Alliance within existing resource. Specific projects may require a dedicated staff resource

## **6. External Consultees**

6.1 The work to develop the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance and associated delivery plans 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.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1 That the Committee endorses the establishment of the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance as a voluntary partnership and the signature of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement by the Chair of the Transport Committee.
- 7.2 That the Committee endorses the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance Delivery Plans as set out in Appendix 1 of this report

## **8. Background Documents**

None.

## **9. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Work stream Delivery Plans

Appendix 2 – Voluntary Partnership Agreement key Heads of Terms