

**Report to:** Transport Committee

**Date:** 8 November 2019

**Subject:** **Bus Information Strategy**

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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 Combined Authority has a duty under the Transport Act 2000 to determine what bus information should be made available to the public and the way in which it should be made available. This report seeks Transport Committee approval to formally adopt an updated Bus Information Strategy 2019 - 2024 (**Appendix 1**) following consultation.

## 2 Information

- 2.1 At its meeting in March 2019, Transport Committee endorsed the key objectives of the draft Bus Information Strategy 2019 – 2024 and gave approval to consult wider with stakeholders.
- 2.2 A detailed consultation plan was developed, promoted and executed, running from 1 July – 25 August 2019 (8 weeks). A full consultation report is attached at **appendix two**.
- 2.3 The consultation was promoted via digital screens in bus shelters, posters in bus stations and travel centres, email and across social media channels. Significant coverage was generated via the regional media.

- 2.4 Officers conducted face-to-face drop in sessions at bus stations and focus groups with community, accessibility and young people's groups along with the District Consultative Sub-Committees. The key feedback from these groups was to maintain a mix of digital and more traditional information channels. Feedback from older people was to continue the provision of paper based information. Younger people generally used smartphones but needed timetables at bus stops as a 'fall-back' when their phones may be out of charge. Disability groups were using a variety of applications to help them about their daily life. Those that they use for journey planning, utilise data supplied by the Combined Authority. Disability groups also raised the requirement for the person to person service provided by MetroLine and at bus stations to be maintained.
- 2.5 The consultation generated 1,012 online and paper survey responses which have shaped the focus of the updated Strategy. Older age categories were slightly over-represented and younger groups slightly under-represented. Whilst the sample is generally representative of the West Yorkshire population; 29% of total responses came areas identified by the Index of Multiple Deprivation as the most deprived leaving these areas slightly under-represented.
- 2.6 Further focus groups are to be held at colleges in November 2019. Any further findings from these sessions will be incorporated into the strategy.
- 2.7 Whilst a majority of respondents were in support of the 'Digital First' principles of the draft Bus Information Strategy; 21% disagreed with this objective. More detailed analysis of the feedback shows that this disagreement appears to largely result from the proposed move to reduce the production and availability of paper timetables.
- 2.8 The initial draft strategy proposed the scaling down of traditional printed outputs such as paper timetables. Feedback from the consultation has identified that paper timetables are required by passengers in order to plan their journeys. 32% of respondents stated they used timetables at least once per week and 18% said they would not have any alternative to finding information if timetables were withdrawn completely and 11% had no access to the internet.
- 2.9 In response to consultation feedback and to reflect the Combined Authority's inclusive growth objectives, officers have now developed a cost-effective solution to maintain the provision of printed timetables. The revised strategy now includes for this.
- 2.10 A high number of respondents also stated that they used printed timetables at bus stops, 49% of whom used them on a daily/weekly basis. As a result the Strategy commits the Authority to developing a new design for timetables and maps that will make using the network easier for new and existing passengers.

- 2.11 The consultation highlighted that real time information is the most frequently used source of information with 59% of respondents using electronic real time displays at bus stops and 36% of respondents accessing real time bus information via their phone on a daily/weekly basis. We have committed to increasing the provision of information and will seek an innovative approach to the procurement of a new system and to provide data openly for third party developers to use and innovate with.
- 2.12 Of those using the internet to obtain bus information, 59% are using the WY Metro online journey planner. At present over 6 million visits are made to the WY Metro website by approximately 2 million people each year. The Combined Authority is committed to delivering a cost-effective journey planner that provides customers with real time, disruption and fares information by working with Transport for the North and Local Authority partners across the North of England.

### **Policy Context**

- 2.13 The Combined Authority has a duty under the Transport Act 2000 to determine what bus information should be made available to the public and how it should be made available. The Combined Authority fulfils this duty by publishing a five-year Bus Information Strategy.
- 2.14 This latest draft proposes to replace the Bus Information Strategy adopted in 2012 and sits alongside the Digital Payment for Travel Strategy, which Transport Committee endorsed in January 2019. These strategies will help to deliver the key objectives of the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy 2040, particularly the target of a 25% increase in bus patronage across West Yorkshire by 2027 as outlined in the adopted Bus Strategy. The objectives of our emerging 'Local Industrial Strategy' and the 'Strategic Economic Plan' have also been considered in the drafting of the Strategy.
- 2.15 The draft Bus Information Strategy addresses a number of policies within the Transport Strategy 2040 through the provision of accessible and reliable travel information, which presents the bus system as a single network, improving passenger information for greater availability and ease of use. Working with partners the strategy seeks to develop new easy-to-access customer information, allowing greater choice between travel modes, and re-planning of journeys if disruption occurs, while ensuring travel information remains available in non-digital and accessible formats.
- 2.16 The 'Digital Payment for Travel Strategy' identifies the development of a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) app to enable people to plan for and purchase their travel in a seamless fashion. The new disruption messaging and open data streams resulting from the Bus Information Strategy will assist in the delivery of the new MaaS app. This is one example of means by which this draft strategy endorses the 'Smart Futures' core theme of the Transport Strategy 2040; by harnessing the advancement in smart technologies and provision of open data to further transform and enhance the information offer. The emerging 'Future Mobility Strategy' will further help to identify how the

'smart futures' objectives in the Transport Strategy will be achieved.

- 2.17 The draft Bus Information Strategy also recognises the importance of ensuring that the West Yorkshire bus network is available to all. Whilst the consultation indicated strong support for the "Digital First" principle; 11% of respondents did not use the internet which is higher than the national average of 7.5%. There was also strong support for retaining non digital forms of information. In line with the Combined Authority's Inclusive Growth objectives, the Strategy will cater for the widest range of people providing digital and traditional paper information.
- 2.18 To enable it to contribute to strategic bus patronage growth targets, it is crucial that the Strategy provides effective information for people who don't currently use the bus. The strategy incorporates the Bus Network Navigation project which is aimed at making the network more legible to non-users incorporating colour coding of routes on bus stops and signage. Greater integration with commonly used digital information services such as Google is also proposed.
- 2.19 Whilst the proposed Strategy fulfils an obligation regarding bus information specifically, it is important that this activity is considered within the wider context of providing travel information across all modes and operators / partners. This approach will enable better journey planning decision making and will help to tackle congestion across the Combined Authority area.
- 2.20 The 'West Yorkshire Bus Alliance' is a voluntary quality partnership between the Combined Authority, West Yorkshire's local highway authorities and the county's bus operators. The Bus Alliance aims to put customers at the heart of improving services, keeping buses moving and developing a sustainable bus network. The outputs of this bus information strategy will assist the Alliance to deliver its objectives, ensuring that the bus information provided is fit for purpose. Specifically, the Bus Alliance commits to collaborate to deliver live journey planning, real time and disruption information.

### **Key objectives for the Bus Information Strategy**

- 2.21 A draft Strategy is attached as **Appendix 1** which sets out the following key objectives in Section 5:

**Digital First** – focus delivery to mobile devices

**Always Live** – up to date information on the move

**Customer driven** – the customer selects the information they need

**Network-wide** – fixed information at stops and interchanges

**Inclusive** – everyone has access according to need and requirement.

**Cost-effective** – for the local taxpayer

- 2.22 The table below is taken from the strategy and outlines how we plan to deliver travel information following feedback from customers. The table also indicates who is funding the various outputs:

Channel	Current provision	Where next	Funded by?
<b>Digital/'Always live' Information Outputs</b>			
WY Metro website	Website available 24/7 offering stop level real-time information, timetables, journey planning software as well as travel advice and offers. Webchat enquiry service available.	<p><b>We will</b> retire the current journey planner. Working in partnership with Transport for the North and regional Local Transport Authorities, we will link to third party journey planner providers (for example, Google) to implement a cost-effective solution that incorporates fares and disruption information.</p> <p><b>We will</b> continue to make timetable and real-time information available via the website.</p>	<p>wymetro.com website: West Yorkshire Combined Authority</p> <p>Journey planners: Third party commercial partners</p>
Social media	Service information, customer assistance, travel advice and offers via Twitter and Facebook provided between 07:00 – 20:00	<p><b>We will</b> continue to use and promote social media to disseminate live information and respond promptly to people's travel enquiries.</p> <p><b>We will</b> explore new channels such as Snapchat and Instagram, which have been identified by young people, to signpost service information.</p>	West Yorkshire Combined Authority, West Yorkshire Ticketing Company & bus operators
Real-time information via smartphone and web	Real-time data processed by the Combined Authority is available to smart device and PC  users via the wymetro.com website and real-time data is made 'open' to be used via third party smartphone apps.	<p><b>We will</b> explore ways to improve the processing, accuracy and delivery of real-time information and promote the availability of the service.</p> <p><b>We will</b> enhance the provision of real-data being made available as open data to enable innovation of third party applications and journey planning tools.</p>	West Yorkshire Combined Authority & bus operators
Real-time Information via text	Real-time information is available to customers via text message upon request.	<b>We will</b> phase out the use of text messaging for real-time information as customers stop using it.	The customer

Channel	Current provision	Where next	Funded by?
		<p>Data is showing that customers are texting the service 1.3 million fewer times per year than they did ten years ago. Customers are accessing live bus information via more cost-effective sources such as online, apps or via QR/NFC codes.</p> <p><b>We will</b> promote the more cost-effective 'always-live' information via web and smartphone apps to reduce the cost for customers and to ensure that customers receive the best, most accurate, information.</p>	
Metro Messenger	e-newsletter providing travel and service change information and Combined Authority updates.	<b>We will</b> continue to provide travel and service change information and Combined Authority updates and continue growing the database of c.4,000 people who have currently signed up to receive it.	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Open Data	We currently make route, timetable and real-time information available via open data through the National Data Set.	<b>We will</b> work with local authority partners, operators and developers to maximise the opportunities presented by open data. Making data available openly will enable third-party developers to innovate in the ongoing development of journey planning tools and customer information and the development of a 'Mobility as a Service' app.	West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Rail, Bus operators and Transport for the North
<b>On the Network</b>			
Roadside displays (timetables at bus stops)	Timetable information is available at all 14,000 bus stops and shelters across the network.	<b>We will</b> redesign the layout of the bus stop timetables in line with wider improvements being introduced to make using the bus network easier.	West Yorkshire Combined Authority and bus operators

Channel	Current provision	Where next	Funded by?
		<b>We will</b> make service information available at every stop and work with operators to reduce the frequency of posting updates.	
QR Codes/NFC tags	Cards have been installed at all 14,000 stops and shelters across West Yorkshire, providing easy links to stop-specific real-time information on smartphones.	<b>We will</b> continue to provide QR codes and seek to incorporate them within the update design of the bus stop timetable.	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Real Time Information at stops	There are currently screens displaying real-time bus information at 1,050 stops throughout West Yorkshire.	<b>We are</b> introducing a further 1,000 screens in the Leeds district as part of the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme.  <b>We will</b> seek alternative options for providing power to screens.	Leeds City Council / West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Network-wide information	Wayfinding and mapping information made available at key hubs and interchanges	<b>We will</b> provide a network map that will show high-frequency services, the design of which will relate to the emerging key network legibility system.  <b>We will</b> produce corridor-specific route maps showing stops, key landmarks and destinations along high-frequency routes.  <b>We will</b> make maps available across the network, in printed leaflet form and online with print at home capability.	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
<b>Print</b>			
Pocket timetable booklets	Timetable booklets are printed for every West Yorkshire service and each time bus services are changed, the affected booklets are updated and reprinted.	<b>We will</b> replace the existing range of printed bus timetable booklets with lower-cost leaflets. Initial plans to withdraw printed timetable information were	West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Operators

Channel	Current provision	Where next	Funded by?
	Remaining unused and outdated copies are pulped.	<p>reconsidered in response to demand from customers. A revised format will be made available that will provide route and timetable information at a reduced cost to local taxpayers and result in the environmental benefits of less paper waste.</p> <p><b>We will</b> establish a network of outlets across West Yorkshire that will stock timetables to manage availability and to minimise waste.</p> <p>The production and distribution of printed material promoting specific bus services will be the responsibility of bus operators who could either provide these materials directly or commission material from the Combined Authority.</p>	
Ticket and price list leaflets	A suite of printed information is produced to promote concessionary/pre-paid tickets	<b>We will</b> produce information under the direction of the West Yorkshire Ticketing Company.	West Yorkshire Ticketing Company
Network Maps	We currently make maps available online and print a limited quantity at key changes in the year.	<b>We will</b> make maps available across the network, in printed leaflet form and online with print at home capability.	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
<b>Face-to-face Information Services</b>			
Travel Centres	The Combined Authority provides Travel Centres in Bradford, Castleford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Leeds and Pontefract. On behalf of the Combined Authority, Arriva operate Dewsbury and Wakefield Travel	<b>We will</b> transform our Travel Centres to provide a service aligned with the modern high street bank model, providing a range of self-serve and face-to-face options designed to ensure a positive, efficient	West Yorkshire Combined Authority & West Yorkshire Ticketing Company

Channel	Current provision	Where next	Funded by?
	Centres and Transdev operates Keighley. Travel Centres provide face-to-face and printed information and ticketing retailing.	and informative service to all customers.  Customers will have the option of using self-service machines with personal assistance available. Printed information will be available.	
MetroLine	The MetroLine call centre has evolved into a multi-channel contact centre offering customer service/information via webchat, social media and email in addition to calls. The service is operational 07:00 – 20:00 seven days a week.	<b>We will</b> continue to embrace emerging opportunities to interact with customers via the channels they choose and want to use.  <b>We will</b> work with operators through the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance to ensure that customers are provided with a seamless level of service across the industry.  <b>We will</b> continue to monitor the service and usage to ensure provision meets customer expectations as well as delivering value for money for local taxpayers.	West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Rail & Bus operators
<b>Digital, Information Systems</b>			
CoSA – Combined Services and Assets Database	A GIS (geographic information system) storing current bus timetable data and bus stop information. Provides timetable data used by Journey Planner, Traveline and other APIs (application program interface) output to create print and network Information at bus stops and interchanges.	<b>We will</b> seek to reduce data processing and validation costs through automation and data quality initiatives with operators.	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Real-time bus information	Processes bus timetable data and automatic vehicle location data to output predicted arrival times to customers	<b>We will</b> procure a new service contract from 2021/22 seeking to improve processes and information accuracy at a	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Channel	Current provision	Where next	Funded by?
	through at-stop displays and online services, including via yournextbus on the wymetro.com website.	reduced cost to the taxpayer.	
<b>Accessibility</b>			
Accessible Information	Easy read and British Sign Language guides relating to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. We provide bus timetable information in large print and braille on request. Our accessible website provides online large print and Easy Read bus pass application forms. We have fully accessible online webchat for those who require assistance using the website. We have the capability to provide information in 240 different languages through our subscription to the language line service.	<p><b>We will</b> continue to provide accessible information</p> <p><b>We will</b> continue to work in partnership with disability groups to ensure we meet their needs and understand the emerging technologies they are using to get information.</p> <p><b>We will</b> provide open data to feed these new accessible applications.</p> <p><b>We will</b> keep up-to-date with changing accessibility requirements.</p> <p><b>We will</b> increase awareness and usage of accessible information.</p>	West Yorkshire Combined Authority

### The Role of The Combined Authority Enabling Bus Information

- 2.23 Adapting the provision of information to bus passengers to meet changing demand requires the Combined Authority to re-assess its role in delivering information. This change reflects the reality that people are increasingly accessing information on mobile devices through third party digital services like Google. The new strategy identifies the Combined Authority as primarily an enabler than a direct provider of information.
- 2.24 Under the previous strategy the ITA/Metro was the major provider of information services. The new strategy proposes to place the promotion of services and products with the bus operator with the Combined Authority ensuring a network wide availability of information. Further, as digital outlets become the primary means of delivery, the Combined Authority will curate the data necessary for delivery by other parties. The strategy suggests the Combined Authority will need to play a co-ordinating role as the provision of travel advice in times of disruption becoming increasingly important. Section 9 of the Strategy provides further detail concerning the proposed shift of emphasis for the Combined Authority.

## Projects and next steps

- 2.25 This Strategy has been developed to reflect a changing environment. It proposes a list of projects to be delivered in the coming 3-5 years together with a series of immediate next steps to be delivered in 2019/20. Requests for capital funding for such projects would be submitted in a separate capital request report.

	Year one - Transition	Year two –three Transformation	Year four-five Review
Digital	Identify cost-effective alternatives for providing journey planning tools, incorporating disruption and fares information. Identify opportunities presented by emerging technologies and open data.	Implement a new journey planning solution; Develop the 'Mobility as a Service' proposition; Enhance supply of open data to enable the development of innovative third-party journey planning applications; Procure a new Real Time solution seeking opportunities for the innovative delivery of real time information using emerging technologies and open data; Increase provision of real time information on-street and promote the availability of 'always-live' digital information via multiple channels.	Maintain awareness of developments in customer technology and how information may be enhanced through the use of this technology.
On the Network	Develop approach to presenting information across the network to make it easier for new customers to navigate the	Implement new approach to on-street information across West Yorkshire.	Ensure the provision of information across the network is meeting the needs of users; Ensure that information is

	network. To be initially introduced in Leeds.		maintained to a high standard.
Face-to-face	Develop a blueprint for the Transformation of travel centres.	Introduce a new 'Travel Centre model' at bus stations where funding is identified; Establish a business case for transformation of the remaining travel centres.	Introduce the new 'Travel Centre model' at all travel centres across the estate.
Print	Establish new cost-effective approach for the provision of printed information.	Maintain appropriate level of provision of printed information.	Review ongoing demand for printed information with Bus Alliance partners and customers.
Constant review of strategy as technical developments enter the market			

2.26 The annual tracker survey will be used to monitor the performance of the strategy measuring usage and satisfaction across outputs in addition to wider patronage increase KPIs.

### 3 Financial Implications

3.1 The Combined Authority set its 2019/20 budget on 14 February 2019 based upon a reduction of £1million in the Transport Levy. Cost effectiveness is a key objective of the Bus Information Strategy which aims to reduce the net cost to the taxpayer of providing information.

3.2 The strategy set out to ensure information services are cost effective for the local taxpayer. This will be achieved by:

- Replacing timetable booklets with leaflets;
- Linking to third party services to provide on-line journey planning;
- Efficiencies in the provision of roadside displays;
- Bus operators or independent third parties funding the promotion of services with the Combined Authority providing information services.

### 4 Legal Implications

4.1 The Combined Authority has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to accompany this report and the emerging Bus Information Strategy. This is available on request. To ensure that the withdrawal of any individual service (e.g. provision of real time information via SMS text messaging, etc) does not

discriminate against a particular group or groups, further detailed EIAs will be undertaken ahead of any major changes to service provision.

## **5 Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report. A delivery plan will be developed for the projects identified as part of the Strategy and this will be presented to a future Transport Committee meeting for approval.

## **6 External Consultees**

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken with external stakeholders (including West Yorkshire Ticketing Company and bus operators) to help shape the objectives and projects included in this draft Strategy. A wider engagement with stakeholders and interested parties has taken place and their feedback incorporated within the updated strategy. Feedback from the consultation has been summarised in section two of this report, with the full Engagement Analysis report available at **Appendix two**.

## **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 That the Committee endorses the key objectives within the Bus Information Strategy as set out in paragraphs 2.21 to 2.24 of this report.
- 7.2 That the Committee endorses the next steps set out in Section 2.25 of this report.
- 7.3 That the Committee gives adopts the updated Bus Information Strategy 2019 - 2024 included as **Appendix 1** of this report.

## **8 Background Documents**

- 8.1 The Bus Information Strategy 2012;
- 8.2 Equalities Impact Assessment

## **9 Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Draft Bus Information Strategy recommended for approval  
Appendix 2 – Engagement Analysis Report