

Report to: West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Date: 9 December 2021

Subject: **Bus Enhanced Partnership**

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Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the content included in our draft West Yorkshire Bus Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme and request approval to begin consultation with bus operators and statutory consultees.
- 1.2 To approve the publication of the Notice of Intent to 'make' an EP Plan and Scheme for West Yorkshire.
- 1.3 To gain delegated approval for the Managing Director, in conjunction with the Mayor, to approve the West Yorkshire Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) bid to the Department of Transport.

2. Information

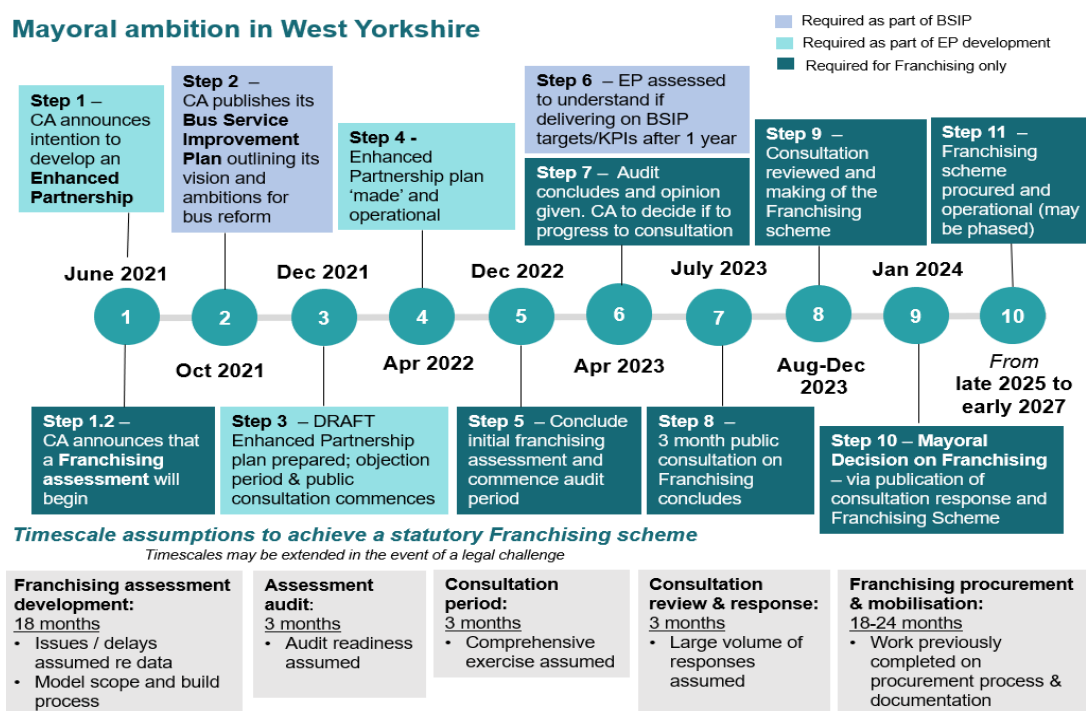
Background

- 2.1 The National Bus Strategy, [Bus Back Better](#), published in March 2021 signalled a strong commitment from Government to bus. It acknowledges the failures of deregulation and looks to strengthen the role of Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) through the devolution of funding. It also sets out that for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to access funding from April 2022 there is a

requirement to be in an Enhanced Partnership (EP) or actively pursuing bus franchising by the end of March 2022.

- 2.2 In May 2021 West Yorkshire elected its first mayor. Of several mayoral manifesto pledges was the ambition to 'bring buses back into public control'. In response the Combined Authority has set out a "roadmap" to achieving this pledge and the process and draft timescale for delivery is set out in Figure 1 along with the time needed to meet the requirements of the legislative process.
- 2.3 In addition to the "roadmap" the Combined Authority [served notice](#) in June 2021 of its intention to prepare an Assessment of a Proposed Franchising Scheme. Alongside this Notice the Combined Authority also [served notice](#) of its intention to establish an EP with operators to improve local bus services and invited all operators running services in West Yorkshire to participate in the formulation of the EP Plan and its associated Scheme(s).

Figure 1: Proposed Timescale for Enhanced Partnership and an Assessment for a Bus Franchising scheme



- 2.4 While bus franchising is a longer-term proposition to enact bus reform in the region the EP will, at least until a decision on franchising has been made, deliver benefits to passengers in the short term.
- 2.5 The EP will set clear targets and standards to ensure it furthers the overall bus strategy aims to increase patronage and through that secure the wider goals of inclusivity and carbon reduction. As the Assessment of a Proposed Franchising Scheme will be developed alongside the EP then if the EP does not achieve its aims, then this would provide evidence to support a decision to

progress with a franchising scheme. It is expected that the EP will be included as part of the Assessment of a Proposed Franchising Scheme.

- 2.6 While the National Bus Strategy set out the different ways LTAs could access future bus funding it also set out a requirement to submit a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to Government by 31 October 2021.
- 2.7 The [BSIP](#) was submitted to Government following approval by the Combined Authority on 22 October and sets out the Combined Authority's ambition for bus, regardless of the delivery model. It identifies a wide range of interventions that will enable the ambition to be achieved, with those that can be delivered over the short-term potentially being delivered by the EP, and those longer-term actions being delivered as part of the wider bus reform process.
- 2.8 The EP will be the mechanism for the delivery of the early stages of the BSIP. It provides details on the Combined Authority's, West Yorkshire local authorities, and operator's shared plan to improve bus services and provision in West Yorkshire and must build on the ideas and interventions set out in the BSIP in much more granular detail.
- 2.9 It is a statutory partnership between the Combined Authority as the LTA, West Yorkshire local authorities and all operators running bus services in the region and needs to be approved by all these parties to come into operation. Each of the Local Authorities of West Yorkshire will be signatories to the EP.
- 2.10 The EP will be overseen by the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance. The governance arrangements that are currently established for the Bus Alliance will be strengthened and adapted for the EP. The Bus Alliance Executive Board will be chaired by the Chair of Transport Committee or Lead Member Public Transport to ensure the electorate is fully represented in the governance of the bus service through the EP.
- 2.11 A statutory EP must be made up of two distinct elements:
 - **EP Plan:** the strategic document setting out the vision and objectives for the EP reflecting the ambitions and contents of the BSIP and providing more detail on proposed interventions where appropriate. It would also set out the governance arrangements for the partnership.
 - **EP Scheme(s):** linking the commitments around specific interventions that will deliver the EP Plan and identify facilities and/or measures¹ within a defined geography. At least one EP Scheme must be in place at all times in addition to the EP Plan. Successive iterations of the scheme would be planned, across West Yorkshire.
- 2.12 The initial West Yorkshire EP (comprising of an EP Plan and one EP Scheme) needs to be in place by April 2022. This is to ensure West Yorkshire can access the discretionary bus funding that will be available from April 2022,

¹ Facilities are new or existing physical assets and measures are everything else deemed suitable for inclusion in an EP Scheme.

without the EP the region will not be able access this funding. The EP also needs to be in place to ensure the passenger benefits that can be achieved through bus reform are delivered prior to a decision being made on bus franchising. Prior to it coming into force a number of statutory processes need to have been completed. These are:

- **Operator Objection Period (OOP):** statutory 28-day period where bus operators can make a formal objection in writing if they disagree with the content of the EP. Subject to Combined Authority approval this will begin in December 2021.
- **Formal Consultation Exercise:** consultation with statutory consultees. Subject to Combined Authority approval this will begin in January 2022.

- 2.13 Prior to beginning the statutory consultation on the EP a Notice of Intention to 'make' an EP Plan and Scheme needs to have been published. The Notice is contained at Appendix 1 and the Combined Authority are asked to approve its publication.
- 2.14 Subject to the statutory consultation being completed and no substantial objections being received the final EP will be brought for approval to Transport Committee on 4 March 2022 and the Combined Authority on 17 March 2022.
- 2.15 Details on the content of the EP Plan and Scheme are set out below and the Combined Authority are asked to approve their use in consultation with stakeholders.

West Yorkshire EP Plan

- 2.16 As set out in 2.8 above the EP Plan should reflect the ambitions and content of the BSIP, the content of which was considered and approved by the Combined Authority at its [23 October 2021 meeting](#).
- 2.17 Given the close alignment with the BSIP a large proportion of the content of the EP Plan will be familiar to Members with further information available via the published [BSIP](#). As an example of where close alignment has occurred the vision and objectives of the BSIP have been retained for the EP.
- 2.18 Where the EP Plan departs from the BSIP is in relation to the timescales that it covers. While the BSIP is the long-term strategic approach to improving bus services and the network in the region, the initial EP Plan takes a shorter-term view, focussing on what improvements can be made in the period up to 2027. This reflects the indicated timescales for deciding on and implementing a bus franchising scheme (if bus franchising is determined to be the preferred option for delivering bus reform in West Yorkshire).
- 2.19 Due to the close alignment with the BSIP the EP Plan must be clear on how it will help to deliver the themes and workstreams of the BSIP. Table 1 demonstrates how the key themes of the BSIP will be delivered through the EP. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the types of outputs and outcomes

that the EP will help progress to deliver the interventions identified in the BSIP workstreams.

Table 1. Approach to delivery of BSIP themes through the EP

BSIP Theme	EP Approach
A safe and inclusive bus system	Seeks to implement measures / facilities to support the safety of all passengers throughout their journey, particularly women and girls, and also deliver interventions to support a wide range of different travel behaviours and user needs, including the provision of greater flexibility and choice and ensuring accessibility.
Better connected communities	Seeks to grow and enhance the regional bus network, including by improving frequency and service hours, so that communities across the region, particularly those that economically deprived and in non-major urban areas, are better connected by bus services and, where appropriate, other models such as demand responsive transport (DRT).
Decarbonisation and integrated sustainable travel	<p>Seeks to retain and work towards existing commitments for a zero carbon bus system by 2036, with significant progress by 2030, and for all vehicles to be EURO VI clean air zone compliant by 2036.</p> <p>Seeks to explore opportunities for improved integration with other modes of public transport and forms of travel, such as walking and cycling, so people can travel sustainably from door-to-door.</p>

- 2.20 The EP plan sets out the requirement to deliver a number of overarching EP schemes, which will embed key principles across West Yorkshire. These EP schemes include delivery of clear principles for the core bus network and a customer charter for all passengers. The mechanism for delivering the outputs and outcomes identified in the EP Plan is via the different EP Schemes that are implemented alongside the EP Plan. Information on the approach to the development and delivery of EP Schemes, including the first EP Scheme is set out in the section below.

West Yorkshire EP Scheme

- 2.21 The EP Plan alone does not constitute an EP. For the EP to come into force the EP Plan must be accompanied by at least one EP Scheme at all times.
- 2.22 Due to the timescales laid down from Government for the EP to be 'made' it has not been possible to produce the full suite of EP Schemes that would be required to meet the ambitions and content of the BSIP. As such a modular approach to the delivery of EP Schemes is being taken, whereby an initial EP

Scheme has been produced to meet the initial timescales, with other EP Schemes being developed throughout 2022 and 2023. Appendix 4 sets out the indicative delivery plan for the variations to the EP scheme and the new EP schemes that are proposed to be developed.

2.23 To fully deliver the ambition of the BSIP a suite of EP Schemes will need to be produced. They are focussed on:

- Bus infrastructure (first EP Scheme to come forward) - each new bus priority project will be added to the EP scheme as a variation
- Bus core network -to contractualise delivery of the high frequency network including the provisions of the network navigation colour coded system across West Yorkshire
- Fares and ticketing -this will sit alongside the Statutory Ticketing Scheme (which obligates operators to accept multi operator tickets) and the Concessionary Fare Schemes (which remain a Combined Authority responsibility outside the EP).
- Customer services and information -contractualising an agreement on information provision across the Combined Authority and operators
- Bus connecting network- to establish standards for lower frequency commercial and CA funded services to rural and less populated communities
- Air quality and decarbonisation - agreement on delivery of Euro VI and zero emission buses
- Communications and marketing – including a unified branding for the bus network
- Agreement around the Urban Traffic Management Control delivery and operation

2.24 All of the EP schemes set out in the list above will be West Yorkshire wide. Using the Network Navigation colour coded system for the core bus network as a worked example, obligations regarding displaying the route names and colours on infrastructure and buses will sit in the Core Network and Bus Infrastructure schemes with obligations regarding incorporating the colour coding map on buses and customer facing material services in the Customer Services and Information and Communications and Marketing schemes. This approach has been launched in Leeds and will be rolled out over West Yorkshire from 2022.

2.25 In terms of the Air Quality and Decarbonisation EP Scheme the Combined Authority is due to submit its final West Yorkshire Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) bid to the Department of Transport on 31 January 2022. The ZEBRA Programme aims to increase the number of zero emission buses operating on the bus network to 10% of the total fleet and is working with the three main operators (Arriva, First Bus and Transdev) to realise this objective. These zero emission buses will form a key obligation under the Air Quality and Decarbonisation EP Scheme, therefore, to ensure their inclusion in the first iteration of this EP Scheme (to be brought forward in 2022), the Combined Authority are asked to delegate the approval of the final ZEBRA bid

documents for submission to the Department of Transport to the Managing Director in conjunction with the Mayor.

- 2.26 Appendix 4 sets out the delivery timescale for each EP scheme, further definition of each EP scheme will come forward early in 2022. The initial EP Scheme that will come forward through the EP is a Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme. The purpose of this EP Scheme is to contractualise both existing and future bus priority infrastructure to ensure this infrastructure is implemented and maintained to provide a consistent, quick and high-quality bus service on the routes which it is applied to.
- 2.27 Across West Yorkshire there are a high number of bus priority infrastructure projects that have either been delivered, are in delivery or are to be developed which ultimately will be included and contractualised within this EP Scheme. For example, bus priority infrastructure projects featuring in programmes such as the Leeds Public Transport Improvement Programme (LPTIP), Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) will be included in the Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme overtime covering projects in all five West Yorkshire districts.
- 2.28 The high volume of bus infrastructure projects that the Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme applies to, and the timescales imposed on the production of the initial EP by Government, has necessitated a proportional approach to be applied to the development and delivery of this EP Scheme initially. Considering this, the first bus infrastructure project to be included in this EP Scheme is the A61(South) in Leeds with other bus infrastructure projects in the other West Yorkshire districts added rapidly post March 2022.
- 2.29 In the first instance formal agreement to the provisions outlined will only apply to those obligated parties on the A61 (South) e.g. bus operators, Leeds City Council and the Combined Authority, however the other four West Yorkshire local authorities will be asked to sign-up to the principles of the Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme to facilitate bus infrastructure projects to be added from the other four local authority areas.

A61 South

- 2.30 The A61(South) is identified as a bus priority corridor in LPTIP and for the purposes of the provisions that are included in the Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme applies to the stretch of the A61(S) from Hunslet Road / South Accommodation Road Junction to A639 Wakefield Road / Queen Street Junction.
- 2.31 A variety of provisions are included in the Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme relating to the A61(S). These are to be delivered by Leeds City Council, the bus operators running services on the corridor (Arriva and First Bus) and the Combined Authority. An overview of these provisions is highlighted in Appendix 3.

- 2.32 While the provisions outlined in Table 3 are those which will be included in the Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme from April 2022, they do not represent the extent of the provisions that will eventually apply to the A61(S). It is the intention to add additional provisions post April 2022 through negotiations with the bus operators and Leeds City Council.
- 2.33 To make variations to the Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme i.e. to add additional provisions to the A61(S) aspects covered or to add other bus priority corridor projects, a variation mechanism will be used that only requires the Combined Authority to formally consult with bus operators running services on the corridor(s) affected. For all other EP Scheme the statutory consultation process will be applied when these are first 'made'.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 A well-used and attractive bus service will support the shift in travel from private cars to more sustainable modes needed to reduce carbon emissions from transport. The EP is one of the mechanisms that will deliver bus reform in West Yorkshire, a key area of focus for the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan over the next three years, by putting in place measures that will help transition journeys from the private car to public transport and active travel.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Buses are important in providing and enabling access to employment and training opportunities across West Yorkshire. Interventions outlined in the BSIP which transition into the EP will consider the needs of communities with higher levels of deprivation and those of less affluent travellers.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The BSIP seeks to identify options which make travel by bus an attractive and viable option for all members of the community. Where interventions relating to this transition into the EP they will consider the needs of all prospective bus users and will identify actions to promote inclusion. An equality impact assessment will be made on the finalised EP.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report, however it is worth noting that future EP Schemes may obligate the Combined Authority and/or its EP partners to fund specific facilities and/or measures. Where this is the case for the Combined Authority separate reports will be brought to the relevant Committee for approval.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The process proposed by this report is in line with the provisions of the Bus Services Act and associated guidance.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 The approach to the production of future EP Schemes depending on scope and breadth, could increase the burden on the bus policy team necessitating the need to recruit additional resources to service their production, engagement and consultation. Where this is found to be the case a separate report will be brought to the relevant Committee for approval.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 Informal consultation has taken place via the Bus Alliance and their opinions and feedback have been integrated into the draft West Yorkshire EP Plan and Scheme.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Combined Authority approves the publication of the Notice of Intent to 'make' an EP Plan and Scheme.
- 10.2 That the Combined Authority approves the content of the draft EP Plan and Scheme for use in statutory consultation.
- 10.3 That the Combined Authority delegates the decision to submit the West Yorkshire Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) bid to the Department of Transport to the Managing Director in conjunction with the Mayor.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Notice of Intent to 'make' an EP Plan and Scheme

Appendix 2 – EP outputs and outcomes to deliver BSIP workstream interventions

Appendix 3 – A61(S) local authority, bus operator and Combined Authority provisions

Appendix 4 – Draft indicative variations to the EP scheme and new EP schemes 2022 to 2023 and 2023 to 2027