

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 7 January 2022

Subject: **Bus Policy Update**

Director: Dave Pearson, Director of Transport Services

Author: Noel Collings, Interim Bus Policy Manager

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" 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 Transport Committee with an update on the work of the Bus Policy Team, including next steps on the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Bus Enhanced Partnership.

2. Information

Bus reform

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.
- 2.2 The Strategy requires all Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to have submitted a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to Government by 31 October 2021 and to be in a Bus Enhanced Partnership (EP) or actively pursuing bus franchising by the end of March 2022. These requirements are linked to future

funding for bus and without them West Yorkshire will not be able to access these funding streams.

- 2.3 In addition, the Mayor of West Yorkshire is actively pursuing a manifesto pledge to 'bring buses back into local control', ensuring buses deliver a service that meets the needs of West Yorkshire residents and businesses.
- 2.4 To demonstrate how the pledge could be met, the Combined Authority has produced a 'roadmap'. It has also served two notices of intent, one of its intention to prepare an [Assessment of a Proposed Franchising Scheme](#) and the other of its intention to [establish a Bus Enhanced Partnership](#) with operators to improve local bus services.
- 2.5 The following sections set out progress in developing and implementing the various component parts that will deliver bus reform in the region.

Bus Service Improvement Plan

- 2.6 The West Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) on 29 October 2021.
- 2.7 The Combined Authority is still awaiting feedback on the BSIP from DfT and our funding allocation to support its implementation.
- 2.8 It is expected that we will receive only revenue funding from the national BSIP funding pot. The Combined Authority has received capital funding via the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) which will, in part, support implementation of the West Yorkshire BSIP.
- 2.9 Furthermore, it is expected the Combined Authority's BSIP funding allocation will significantly short of the £168 million revenue sought in our bid. As such, officers are developing funding scenarios based on likely outcomes (e.g. £10 million, £15 million, £20 million, £30 million and £50 million) to understand what we could spend the money on to best meet our strategic priorities – a safe and inclusive bus service, better connected communities, and decarbonisation and integrated sustainable travel.
- 2.10 A Strategic Assessment (SA) of our BSIP bid is currently being prepared to go through the Combined Authority's internal assurance process in order to ensure we are prepared to receive and spend any funding ahead of the new financial year.
- 2.11 More broadly, a BSIP Implementation Plan is being developed to support delivery on its ambitions and deliver benefits to passengers, regardless of the additional funding received.

Bus Enhanced Partnership

- 2.12 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.

- 2.13 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.
- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 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, 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.
- 2.16 The EP Plan reflects the ambitions and content of the BSIP and a large proportion of the content is taken from this document. Where it departs from the BSIP is in 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).
- 2.17 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.
- 2.18 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 focused on bus infrastructure has been produced to meet the initial timescales, with other EP Schemes being developed throughout 2022 and 2023.
- 2.19 The Bus Infrastructure EP Scheme will begin with the A61(South) in Leeds with other bus infrastructure projects in the other West Yorkshire districts added rapidly post March 2022. It will include obligations relating to vehicle standards, bus lane design and operation, and provision / maintenance of facilities such as bus shelters.

- 2.20 Prior to the EP coming into force a number of statutory processes need to have been completed. The first Operator Objection Period is currently ongoing and is due to be completed by 17 January 2022. Subject to no substantial objections being received from bus operators consultation with statutory consultees e.g. Traffic Commissioner, Competition and Marketing Authority, will take place during January / February 2022. The Combined Authority approved the content of the EP for use in statutory consultation at its [9 December 2021](#) meeting.
- 2.21 Subject to consultation the final EP will be brought to the Transport Committee on 4 March with Combined Authority approval sought at its 17 March 2022 meeting.

Bus Franchising

- 2.22 As referenced above the Combined Authority has served notice of its intention to prepare an Assessment of a Proposed Franchising Scheme (the Assessment).
- 2.23 Consultants have been appointed to undertake pre-Assessment activity prior to the main Assessment beginning in the summer. Activity being undertaken as part of this commission include providing advice on the make-up of the internal team delivering franchising, developing external advisor briefs and influencing / maintaining relationships with key stakeholders.
- 2.24 In addition, indicative approval is being sought from the Finance, Resources and Corporate Committee (FRCC) at its 6 January 2022 meeting for £6 million from Gainshare to cover the cost of the Assessment. Approval is also being sought from the FRCC to spend an initial £1 million Gainshare allocation to allow work on the Assessment to begin.

Zero Emission Buses

Zero Emission Bus Region Area bid

- 2.25 The Combined Authority submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to DfT for their Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) fund in June 2021.
- 2.26 Off the back of the EOI DfT invited the Combined Authority, along with 16 other areas, to submit a Full Business Case (FBC) for funding.
- 2.27 Our ZEBRA bid will if successful replace 119 existing diesel buses with electric equivalents in each of the five West Yorkshire districts. It involves the major bus operators of Arriva, First Bus and Transdev and some of the services tendered by the Combined Authority.
- 2.28 The total ask of DfT through the ZEBRA programme is £22.4 million.

- 2.29 Total investment if funding is provided would exceed £50 million and take the proportion of the bus fleet in the region that are zero emission from 1% to nearly 10%.
- 2.30 The final FBC needs to be submitted to DfT by 31 January 2022 and the Combined Authority approved at their 9 December 2021 meeting the delegation of a decision to submit to the Managing Director in consultation with the Mayor.

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement

- 2.31 With a mayoral ambition for buses in the region to be greener, combined with ambitions relating to the climate emergency, the ZEBRA bid is only the beginning of a wider programme for all buses to be zero emission by 2036 at the latest.
- 2.32 As such an allocation of £33.5 million is included in the CRSTS which could result in nearly 20% of the bus fleet being zero emission when combined with our ZEBRA programme.

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. Bus reform in West Yorkshire is a key area of focus for the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan over the next three years as it will put 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 / franchising 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 / franchising will consider the needs of all prospective bus users and will identify actions to promote inclusion.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report, however the implementation of a number of work areas highlighted in this report will raise financial implications. Where this is the case separate reports will be brought to the relevant Committee.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. The implementation of the EP / franchising will comply with the relevant legislation e.g. Bus Services Act (2017).

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report, however the implementation of a number of work areas highlighted in this report will necessitate the recruitment of additional human resource. Where this is the case separate reports will be brought to the relevant Committee.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 That the Transport Committee notes the content of the report.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

None.