

Report to: Transport Committee

Date: 1 July 2022

Subject: **BSIP Enhanced Partnership Scheme**

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

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Transport Committee with an update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and the next steps for the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance and the Enhanced Partnership.

2. Information

BSIP funding award & the Enhanced Partnership

Background

- 2.1 The Combined Authority submitted its BSIP to the Department for Transport (DfT) in October 2021. The development of the BSIP – which sets out our ambitious vision and plan for improving local bus services – was a requirement of the ‘Bus Back Better: The National Bus Strategy for England’ (2021).
- 2.2 The National Bus Strategy also required local authorities to develop an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with local operators or a Franchising scheme to be eligible for future government funding support for local bus services including from a dedicated funding pot to support delivery of BSIPs. The Enhanced Partnership, which is managed by the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance, was established in April 2022.

- 2.3 The West Yorkshire BSIP set out a plan of interventions across five key delivery areas, which work towards:
- **An enhanced, fully inclusive and more cohesive bus network** – which takes people where they need to go, when they need to go.
 - **Clear and simple fares** – to make paying for bus travel more affordable, easier, convenient and flexible.
 - **Improved, more inclusive customer service and support** – so passengers have the tools to travel with confidence and help they need if their journey does not go to plan.
 - **Priority for buses on our road** – so journeys by bus are quicker, with less time spent stuck in traffic, and are a viable alternative to the private car.
 - **More green and better vehicles** – to improve the onboard experience and make bus the sustainable choice for travel in West Yorkshire.

Indicative BSIP funding award

- 2.4 At the 27 May Transport Committee, members were advised that the Combined Authority had successfully been awarded an indicative settlement of £69,974,070 revenue funding over three financial years (2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25) to support delivery.
- 2.5 As per DfT guidance, the Combined Authority proposed to prioritise this funding to subsidise fares (driving down the cost of single journey and day tickets / the ‘daily cap’) and invest in new routes and enhanced services, radically improving the local bus network and delivering significant improvements for local passengers.
- 2.6 Other prioritised investments included improvements to network travel information, shared training for all customer facing staff, initiatives to support safer travel, and marketing and communications to promote and maximise the benefits / passenger uptake of these BSIP interventions.
- 2.7 Subsequently Government officials held a ‘Challenge’ session with the Combined Authority to discuss the proposed BSIP revenue spend proforma submitted to them on 3 May 2022. Government officials identified that the core priorities for BSIP funding are fare simplification/ reduction and bus service enhancement. They challenged some aspects of the CA’s proposals to invest in customer service improvements and resource capacity. Following this feedback, the programme was reviewed and identified £5m which could be directed into the “core” activities of fares and networks.

Next steps for the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance / Enhanced Partnership

- 2.8 In order to secure confirmation of the revenue funding and in accordance with DfT requirements on 30 June 2022 the Combined Authority submitted a final funding summary table as well as a draft Enhanced Partnership Scheme, explaining how the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance will work together to implement the relevant interventions.

- 2.9 From July, the DfT is expected to review the Enhanced Partnership documentation, provide feedback and agree it meets their expectations before final confirmation of the funding settlement.
- 2.10 The Combined Authority will be asked to approve the next milestones in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme creation process (commencement of the bus operator objection period and subsequent statutory consultation period), subject to DfT feedback, at its meeting on 22 July.
- 2.11 The Combined Authority expects to receive the funding and begin delivery of the associated initiatives from the Autumn onwards.

Engaging the public – ‘The Mayors Big Bus Chat’

- 2.12 At the 27 May Transport Committee, the Combined Authority updated on its intentions to conduct a public engagement exercise to understand current, post-pandemic attitudes to bus travel and how far the existing iteration of the BSIP goes to meeting their ambitions for the system.
- 2.13 The engagement will therefore focus primarily on the BSIP themes of the bus network, fares and ticketing, customer service and information, air quality and decarbonisation, bus priority and general attitudes to bus travel.
- 2.14 The engagement is due to launch on 11 July for approximately six weeks. Feedback will be gathered predominantly through an online survey using the ‘YourVoice’ engagement platform but with supporting activities such as in-person events at bus stations and other non-transport related venues as well as #TellTracy events led by the Mayor to engage with community groups also held throughout the summer.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 A key aim of the West Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan is to support the decarbonisation of the local bus network, including delivery of a carbon-zero bus fleet by 2036, as well as encourage more travel by bus and other sustainable modes in order to tackle the climate emergency.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Key aims of the West Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan are create a more inclusive, accessible bus service and to better connect communities, particularly those area of high deprivation, in order to support the region’s inclusive growth ambitions.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 Supporting Equality and Diversity through ensuring the bus service is attractive, inclusive and accessible for all is a key aim of the West Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan.

5.2 The planned public engagement will also prioritise engaging with seldom heard groups and, where possible, obtaining data on protected characteristics from participants, in order to strengthen the insights it provides to support Equality and Diversity.

5.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and will be reviewed regularly throughout the programme's delivery.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report, but subject to agreement from the DfT, the Combined Authority will receive £69,974,070 in total in revenue funding over the next three years from 2022/2023 to support delivery of its Bus Service Improvement Plan.

7. Legal Implications

7.1. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report. 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. 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 West Yorkshire local authorities and local bus operators have been consulted on the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership documents. Their feedback has been taken into account and has shaped proposals where appropriate.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Transport Committee notes the update on the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

10.2 That the Transport Committee endorses a recommendation to the Combined Authority making of an Enhanced Partnership Scheme to enable delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan

11. Background Documents

None

12. Appendices

None