



Transport Delivery Committee

Date	8 January 2018
Report title	Lead Member Putting Passengers First Update
Accountable Director	Laura Shoaf, Managing Director, TfWM Email laura.shoaf@tfwm.org.uk
Accountable Employee	Sarah Jones, Head of Customer Services Email sarah.jones@tfwm.org.uk Tel 0121 214 7014
Report has been considered by	Councillor Kath Hartley – Lead Member Putting Passengers First

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- To note the contents of this report.

1. Purpose

1.1 To report progress on the Lead Member and Lead Member Group for the Putting Passengers First (PPF) portfolio since the start of the 2017-18 municipal year.

2.0 Background

2.1 In summer 2017, Cllr Kath Hartley was reappointed as the Transport Delivery Committee's (TDC) Lead Member for PPF. The following Members were also confirmed as part of the wider Member Group for PPF:

- Cllr Pervez Akhtar - Coventry
- Cllr Mohammed Hanif – Dudley
- Cllr David Stanley - Dudley

2.2 As Lead Member, Cllr Hartley has arranged monthly Lead Member Group briefings with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) Officers. These have been

organised to ensure the PPF Member Group is fully updated on all delivery areas as set out in the PPF Terms of Reference attached at Appendix A of this report. Group Meetings have been effective in ensuring there is a high level of awareness amongst responsible Members of key matters impacting the passenger, as well as providing an opportunity for Members to work with Officers to both scrutinise and shape delivery arrangements and identify further improvement opportunities. This has included:

- progress with specific projects and initiatives
- funding opportunities
- any risks to current projects and planned mitigation activities
- support with launches of new activities and press releases
- review of draft reports to TDC

3.0 Key Initiatives

3.1 Section 3 of this report highlights initiatives that the PPF Member Group is involved in during 2017-18.

3.2 **Events** – 2017-18 has seen a number of high profile planned events which have affected the bus network significantly. The PPF Member Group has overseen the response by TfWM and bus operators to ensure that information for customers has been robust and that the impact on the network and people's travel arrangements has been minimised. This has included but is not limited to; The West Midlands Velo, The Birmingham 10k and Great Run, Birmingham Pride and International Cricket Matches at Edgbaston.

3.3 **Network Resilience** – 2017-18 has seen an unprecedented level of activity affecting the highways with the potential to cause delay and impact the passenger experience. PPF Member Group has taken a keen interest in this activity from the perspective of the passenger impacts, alternative travel arrangements and particularly the communications for customers. The PPF Group has a specific requirement to support the delivery of bus and highway improvements and is particularly focussed on improving journey times given the correlation between perceived and actual journey times and passenger satisfaction. Work that has impacted passengers has included but has not been limited to;

- HS2 Enabling and construction works
- Oldbury Viaduct refurbishment
- A38 (M) Viaduct refurbishment
- Holloway Head Junction Improvement Scheme
- Midland Metro Expansion – Broad Street / Bilston Road
- WWII bomb discovered under Spaghetti Junction
- Extreme Weather event December 2017

- 3.4 **Customer Engagement** – Throughout 2017, the PPF Member Group has continued to meet face to face with customers through the continuation of the Your Public Transport Matters events programme. The PPF Lead Member Group has agreed to consolidate TfWM’s approach to face to face customer engagement in 2018 by promoting WMCA’s wider calendar of engagement initiatives. So far this has involved modal meet the manager sessions organised by the operators and TfWM’s own Bus Station Meet the manager events.
- 3.5 **Passenger Champions** - The Group has met with TfWM’s Bus Passenger Champions through quarterly meetings which will continue during 2018 ensuring that TDC Members from the appropriate local areas are also invited. In addition to the regional quarterly meetings, the fourth meeting of the calendar is now being delivered as an annual forum for all Bus Passengers and has been introduced to allow champions from across the region to share best practise and insight at these themed, conference style events. The PPF Member Group has continued to secure good operator attendance at the Champion meetings.
- 3.6 **Customer Contact Arrangements** – The PPF Member Group has been briefed on the customer contact arrangements and service levels for people wishing to contact TfWM and the wider WMCA. The Group has overseen changes to the operating hours and will continue to provide input into the development of an Integrated Contact Centre for the WMCA which is a key priority for 2018.
- 3.7 **Petitions and Bus Shelter Appeals** - The PPF Member Group has continued to consider and adjudicate on Petitions received from members of the public, reporting outcomes to TDC for endorsement throughout 2017-18. The Lead Member for PPF continues to lead on Appeals relating to the siting of bus shelters on behalf of TDC, instigating a decision meeting as and when required.
- 3.8 **Air Quality** - During 2017, tackling Air Quality issues across the region has been a priority. The bus is seen as a solution to the issues currently being faced. The PPF Member Group has overseen the submission of a £5m bid to the Clean Bus Technology Fund administered by DEFRA to retro fit vehicles in the West Midlands fleet to a minimum of a Euro VI standard. This is one of two bids in the region with the second coming from Coventry City Council and supported by WMCA to convert the entire National Express West Midlands (NXWM) fleet in the city.
- 3.9 **Solihull AQPS** – The Group has been regularly briefed on the development and launch of an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS) covering the centre of Solihull in November 2017. The AQPS aims to deliver improvements for the passenger by bringing about a step change in passenger facilities, information and safety. The scheme also places a requirement on bus operators to improve vehicle quality, emission standards and stopping arrangements. This was the first scheme of its type in England using new powers under the Bus Services Act 2017. 2018 will see a review of the Birmingham AQPS and implementation of an AQPS in Wolverhampton. In

addition, opportunities to utilise new powers that the Bus Services Act may bring will be explored.

- 3.10 **West Midlands Bus Alliance** - The award winning West Midlands Bus Alliance celebrated 2 years of success in October 2017 with an event hosted by the Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street at the Coach and Bus Expo at the NEC. The event also saw the members of the Bus Alliance sign up to 50 new deliverables to be delivered over the next 2 years. The new deliverables will see passengers benefitting from new vehicles and infrastructure, improved information and network clarity, better journey times and reliability and punctuality. In order to deliver the aspirational objectives of the Bus Alliance for the next 2 years, the Governance and support structure of the Bus Alliance has been reviewed. This has streamlined the Board to ensure it is strategic in its approach and has established an officer shadow board to ensure the objectives are delivered in a timely fashion. The PPF Member Group will continue to receive regular updates on the progress of the 50 Alliance Deliverables and will continue to be available to support specific initiatives as may be required.
- 3.11 **Bus Satisfaction Task & Finish Group** – A specific workstream supporting the Alliance is the Bus Satisfaction Task & Finish Group. The work of the Bus Satisfaction Task & Finish group is jointly chaired by the Lead Member for PPF and Lead NXWM representative. This group has been instrumental in bringing about significant changes. For instance, the spring results from the National Passenger Survey have shown a 3% increase in Customer Satisfaction with the bus network up to 88% since autumn 2016. To reflect the revised governance structure of the Alliance, the Task & Finish Group will be updated and refocussed in 2018.
- 3.12 **Improving Journey Times** – The PPF Member Group has tracked a number of initiatives to tackle congestion and bring about passenger journey time improvements in the region. Over £0.5m has been secured for highways and signal improvements in South Birmingham. A further bid of £1m has been submitted to DEFRA for supporting measures for Birmingham City Council's (BCC) Clean Air Zone. TfWM has supported BCC in bringing bus lanes in the city up to an enforceable standard and implement bus lane enforcement on two corridors. Finally and most significantly, a bid of over £3.2m has been secured from the Department for Transport to deliver a bus lane on Harborne Lane and improve the interchange at the QE hospital which will benefit services in both Birmingham and parts of the Black Country.
- 3.13 The PPF Member Group has also overseen and continues to monitor the impact of the Bus Stop Rationalisation Pilot. The Group is focussed on ensuring the impact on affected passengers is mitigated and that the scheme is bringing forward the desired outcomes. The PPF Lead Member has travelled the routes affected and continues to liaise with local Birmingham Councillors regarding the changes. Customer contact levels associated with the trial continue to be reviewed in detail by the Group and the results of the pilot will be reported to TDC in March 2018.

- 3.14 **Bus Network Reviews** - During 2017-18 NXWM has reviewed their bus network and implemented service changes in East Birmingham and North Solihull. In addition, the operator is currently (December 2017) consulting on service changes in South Birmingham and proposing a further public consultation in Dudley for early in 2018. The PPF Member Group has worked with TfWM and NXWM to understand the details of these changes and the impact on the passenger and will ensure that all changes are suitably communicated to customers. The PPF Lead Member has met with local Councillors, NXWM and TfWM Officers and has travelled on some of the routes to better understand the customer feedback being received.
- 3.15 **Bus Service Changes – Example Service 89** The PPF Member Group oversees changes to bus services and in particular the impact and response to changes from passengers. An example of this work is the changes to service 89 which were implemented in September 2016 and have been monitored on an ongoing basis by the Group since this time. While the changes were made at the request of local stakeholders, the reduction in patronage had the potential to affect the longer term viability of the service. With the support of PPF Members, local stakeholders were engaged to bring about further changes to the service, including new vehicles, to deliver a service suitable for the local community whilst also securing the longer term viability. These service changes were implemented in October 2017 and have resulted in a significant uplift in patronage.
- 3.16 **Bus Station Projects** – The Group has considered and input into a number of improvement schemes relating to TfWM Bus Stations. These range from the safety related installation of bus activated automatic doors at Dudley in November, to minor capital projects for example the planned refurbishment of toilet facilities at West Bromwich and Walsall. The Group has also reviewed the proposals for the mid-life refurbishment of Walsall St Pauls and will continue to support developments to redevelop Dudley Bus Station in the longer term.
- 3.17 **Concessionary Passes** - Changes to the application arrangements for Older Persons Concessionary Travel Passes have been considered and agreed by PPF Member Group in 2017-18. These arrangements have been successful in ensuring increased take up of TfWM's online portal for both first time and renewal applications. Online applications accelerate the issuing of passes to customers and have reduced the cost of delivering this activity. Care has been taken to ensure that online arrangements work together with traditional paper applications to ensure inclusion.
- 3.18 **Ticketing Activities** – The PPF Member Group has overseen a number of changes to ticketing schemes which have been led and developed by the Swift Team and implemented in conjunction with the Ticketing Delivery team. These have included the migration of TfWM's c.11,000 nTrain direct debit customers from paper to Smart tickets, the introduction of half-price tickets for Apprentices and Trainees and an enhanced discount for WorkWise customers where

jobseekers can now get 3 months travel at half price to support the cost of returning to employment. The Group will continue to be consulted on the delivery arrangements for ticketing throughout 2018.

4.0 2018

- 4.1 PPF Member Group meetings are in place for the remainder of the municipal year with further progress to be reported to TDC via Formal Business Reports in the Committee's Forward Plan.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BCC	Birmingham City Council
DEFRA	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
NXWM	National Express West Midlands
PPF	Putting Passengers First
TfWM	Transport for West Midlands
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE

LEAD MEMBER FOR THE PUTTING PASSENGERS FIRST

- To champion the passenger perspective in the delivery of bus, rail and metro services, and information and ticketing (including Swift smartcard) throughout the West Midlands.
- To ensure that progress on projects and initiatives remain in line with agreed WMCA policies, strategies and timescales.
- To liaise with local authorities to assist in the effective delivery of bus and highways improvements related to the delivery of the Transforming Bus Travel strategy.
- To champion front line passenger services provided at bus stations, travel information centres and 16 Summer Lane, in line with the West Midlands Combined Authority's vision to provide world class facilities and services.
- To work with public transport operators, passenger groups and members of the public and as required by the Boards Portfolio Member and local government and regulatory bodies to support improvements in the delivery of bus, rail and tram services.
- To oversee and review of the West Midlands Combined Authority's bus accessibility standards and report outcomes to the Transport Delivery Committee.
- To give guidance and input during the preparation and clearance of reports within the portfolio area that are to be considered at any Transport Delivery Committee meeting.

