



**WEST MIDLANDS**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

## Transport Delivery Committee

<b>Date</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> January 2018
<b>Report title</b>	Wolverhampton Advanced Quality Bus Partnership – approval to start formal scheme consultation
<b>Lead Member</b>	Councillor Kath Hartley
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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

#### The Transport Delivery Board is recommended to:

Approve the start of formal consultation on the Wolverhampton City Centre Advanced Quality Bus Partnership.

- 1.1 To seek approval from the Transport Delivery Committee to start formal consultation for the implementation of the Wolverhampton City Centre Advanced Quality Bus Partnership and to outline the process involved.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 As part of the powers within the Transport Act 2000 that were further refined by the Local Transport Act 2008 and Bus Services Act 2017 transport authorities such as the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) have the ability to create Advanced Quality Bus Partnerships (AQPS). The transport authority can then impose minimum standards on the bus operator(s) for service delivery.
- 2.2 Since the introduction of the Transport Act 2000 and Local Transport Act 2008 the West Midlands has introduced a raft of voluntary partnership schemes which includes VPAs and VMAs across the region totalling 7 and have partnership working arrangements in place across each district between the Combined Authority, bus operators and the local authorities, as well as key stakeholders.
- 2.3 These area partnerships have been supplemented by a number of operator specific partnerships most notably with National West Express West Midlands and Arriva. Over the last two years the multi operator partnership working has been further strengthened by the introduction of the West Midlands Bus Alliance.
- 2.4 To further strengthen the Bus Alliance delivery TfWM are keen to expand the Birmingham City Centre and Solihull Town Centre AQPS models and implement further AQPS schemes in the key centres across the West Midlands in partnership with the local authorities.
- 2.5 In July 2012 the transport authority jointly created an AQPS for Birmingham city centre in partnership with Birmingham City Council. This has proved to be an effective way of managing the use of bus stops within the City Centre and has, through setting minimum standards for buses, helped to drive up the quality and most notably imposed minimum emission standards for buses entering the scheme area.
- 2.6 With the recent improvements to the public realm in Solihull town centre both TfWM and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) were keen to establish a set of principles through a new AQPS to manage the 'on street' operation of buses in Solihull town centre and further drive up the air quality through emission standards, as well as protecting the significant levels of bus investment put into the centre by TfWM and Solihull MBC. This scheme went live on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2017.
- 2.7 With significant investment currently going into Wolverhampton City Centre with a rejuvenation of the retail offer, improvements in public realm and the start of the construction of the Midland Metro extension to the city centre rail station there is a need to use the powers of an AQPS in a similar way to the other two schemes to further drive up the air quality through minimum emission standards, as well as protecting the significant levels of bus investment put into the centre by City of Wolverhampton Council and TfWM in recent years.

## **3.0 The Proposed Scheme**

- 3.1 The proposed scheme will cover 70 bus stops/stands and shelters (including the Stands that are in the West Midlands Combined Authority owned Wolverhampton Bus Station) that are contained within the City Centre Ring Road
- 3.2 The phasing of the minimum emission standards for Wolverhampton City Centre are in line with the West Midlands Bus Alliance current commitments of a minimum of all buses having a minimum of Euro V emission standard by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. There will be a Euro VI minimum milestone twelve months later. The latter is in line with the standards that have been imposed on the recently created scheme in Solihull Town Centre.
- 3.3 All main bus stops in the City Centre will have a slot booking system which is similar to the type of operation undertaken across TfWMs bus stations (including the one in Wolverhampton). This process looks to maximise safety at stops, prevent double parking of buses and make a more effective environment for customers. In addition to the slot booking system and bus engine emission standards the scheme will help with the following :
- Protect improved bus facilities in Wolverhampton City Centre.
  - Introduce enforceable bus stops and stands within the AQPS.
  - Require City of Wolverhampton Council to enforce bus stands and other TROs
  - Require operators to provide RTI data feed to improve passenger information.
  - Improve driving standards and driver training.

#### **4.0 Procedure to Implementation of the Scheme**

- 4.1 The local Transport Act 2008 outlines a specific procedure that has to be followed to implement an Advanced Quality Partnership. We are obliged to consult with:
- The bus operators who currently operate within the proposed scheme area:
    - National Express West Midlands (West Midlands Travel Ltd)
    - Diamond Bus
    - Igo buses
    - Arriva
    - Banga Buses
    - Travel Express (Let's Go)
    - Select Buses
    - National Express Coaches Ltd
  - Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Transport Delivery Committee
  - Chairman and Vice Chairman of the West Midlands Combined Authority
  - Elected members in the City of Wolverhampton
  - Board members of the West Midlands Bus Alliance
  - Transport Focus
  - Competitions and Market Authority
  - The Black Country LEP
  - West Midlands Traffic Commissioner
  - West Midlands Chief Constable and West Midlands Police Commissioner
- 4.2 We are not required to undertake a full public consultation on the scheme though anyone can if they wish to make comments. Notification of the start of consultation will be made via our Transport for West Midlands website.

4.3 To follow the legal procedure then the following timescales are proposed:

- Approval to start formal consultation at the **Transport Delivery Committee** meeting on **8<sup>th</sup> January 2018**.
- Formal Consultation will start on **Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018** and be open for 13 week period (the legal minimum requirement)
- Consultation ends on **23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018**
- Approval is sort to make the scheme at the Transport Delivery Committee meeting on **11th June 2018**.
- Scheme is made on or before **1<sup>st</sup> July 2018**.
- We will then give the legal minimum of 13 weeks' notice of the scheme start date.
- All bus operators who wish to operate any bus service in the scheme area once it has started will have sign a declaration to both the WMCA and the West Midlands Traffic Commissioner that they will fully comply with the AQPS requirements.
- Scheme starts on **30<sup>th</sup> September 2018**.

4.4 The consultation process outlined above will trigger discussions with stakeholders and bus operators which will form part of the process, and may as yet result in revisions to the scheme as shared in draft format.

## 5.0 Monitoring and enforcement of the Scheme

5.1 With the decriminalised parking enforcement powers in Wolverhampton the enforcement of stationary parking offences like buses either parked where they should not or for too long on bus stops and stands will continue to be the responsibility of the parking enforcement officers employed by City of Wolverhampton Council. Moving offences will continue to be the responsibility of West Midlands Police.

5.2 TfWM staff will undertake monitoring of service performance and adherence to the scheme requirements. The scheme provides for procedures to follow for operators who do not comply with the scheme and ultimately this could ultimately result in action being taken by the Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands.

5.3 The implementation of any AQPS should aim to strengthen the working relationship between TfWM and the Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands (TC). The TC takes his role of ultimate enforcer of the AQPS very seriously and through the local office for the TC they have taken a keen interest in helping to ensure the bus operators all meet the required standards set out in the AQPS and this will continue with the Wolverhampton scheme.

5.4 To date the Traffic Commissioner has taken disciplinary action against two bus operators who have not complied with the scheme requirements in Birmingham City Centre. In both cases the operators had underlying issues with the standards of their vehicle maintenance which would have attracted the attention of the TC without the AQPS being in place.

5.5 With the AQPS in place this strengthen the ability of the TC to take action against the two operators in question because the scheme requires enhanced service delivery standards. All

operators have to sign an undertaking they will abide by the scheme requirements and this allowed the TC to take specific action. In one case this resulted in the number of vehicles they could operate being reduced and with the other operator they were banned from running any services at all for a number of weeks. In both cases the TC banned both operators from running specific vehicles that did not meet the AQPS requirements.

## **6.0 Legal Comments**

The legal process required to be followed to make the Advanced Quality Bus Partnership Scheme are set out in the body of this report. There are no additional legal comments arising from the contents of this report.

## **7.0 Financial Comments**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report with all on-going related TfWM activities and agreed enhancements funded within existing revenue and capital budgets. However, any future proposed enhancements in relation to delivery of Advanced Quality Bus Partnerships where additional TfWM input/support is required will need to be considered and evaluated so any one-off and on-going financial implications can be quantified before any decision is made.

## **8.0 Appendices**

- A copy of the draft scheme