



## Transport Delivery Committee

<b>Date</b>	5 November 2018
<b>Report Title</b>	Bus Business Update
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<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Councillor Hartley - Lead Member for Putting Passengers First

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- To note the contents of this report.
- To note the review being undertaken by TfWM on how it considers and processes Bus Service Registrations.
- To approve the Vision for Bus in the West Midlands.

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To report matters relating to the performance, operation and delivery of bus services in the West Midlands. This report includes:

Section A **Bus Services Performance Summary**

- Punctuality and reliability August 2018
- Patronage August 2018

Section B **Tendered Bus Services Contracts – October 2018**

Section C **Bus Operational Matters and Passenger Impacts**

- Vision for Bus
- Bus Service Registrations
- Bus Operator Recharging Holiday
- Partnership Routes – 42/43 and 31/32
- Wolverhampton City Centre AQPS
- Network Resilience
- South Birmingham National Express Service Changes
- Dudley & Sandwell National Express Service Changes
- Signature Consultation
- Bus Stop Rationalisation

## **2.0 Section A Bus Services Performance Summary**

- 2.1 Growing traffic and congestion continue to impact on bus service reliability and punctuality. Since the end of the recession, bus speeds have fallen 1 per cent on average every year, with record breaking traffic volumes seen in each of the last two years. Slower buses mean increased journey times, reduced reliability and fewer bus passengers, with reduced access to jobs, leisure and other retail opportunities. Bus operators do make service changes and timetables changes to try and combat raising congestion and decreasing levels of bus service reliability and punctuality. The data collection and measurement process for bus reliability and punctuality is currently being reviewed, so at this stage recent performance figures are not available.
- 2.2 The latest bus patronage data for the year ending August 2018 stands at 257.2 million. This is a 0.1 per cent decrease on the previous 12 months figure (August 2017: 257.5 million). There has been a month-on-month increase in bus patronage for the past five months as fare-paying patronage has increased; with low fare zones and new vehicles delivered on the network. However, concessionary travel continues to decline across the region with a 6.6 per cent year on year decline in 2017/18. Overall, the decline in local bus passenger journeys is less than the national trend, where for the year ending June 2018, the number of local bus passengers has decreased by 1.7 per cent in England (outside of London).

## **3.0 Section B Tendered Bus Services Contracts – October 2018**

- 3.1 Bus Service Contracts to commence on 28 October 2018 include the award of:
- a. 15 contracts to commerce on 28 October 2018;
  - b. 3 existing contracts on an extendable basis for a further period of 1 week from 21 October 2018;
  - c. 1 existing contract on an extendable basis for a further period of 52 weeks from 28 October 2018; and
  - d. 29 contracts on a de-minimus basis from 28 October 2018; 4 for 17 weeks; 25 for 52 weeks and 1 for 104 weeks;
  - e. 2 contracts on a de-minimus basis from 2 September; 1 for a further 60 weeks and 1 for 112 weeks.
- 3.2 A total of 7 operators submitted bids, at an average of 2.47 bids per tender. This was an increase in bids per tender compared to the April 2018 round (1.6 bids per tender contract), and at a similar level to the previous October 2017 round (2.7 bids per tender contract). This has contributed to some increases in contract costs and has resulted in forecast cost pressures on the tendered bus budget in the current and future years. All services are required to meet TfWM Access Standards.
- 3.3 TfWM will review the contracts that are due to expire in April 2019 with the objective of maintaining a local bus network that adheres to the TfWM accessibility standards whilst seeking opportunities to minimise cost. This will be carried out by ensuring a data led review of existing contract performance, creative service and tender design and seeking to encourage new entrants into the West Midlands tendered bus market and negotiating competitive contract extensions.

## 4.0 Section C Bus Operational Matters and Passenger Impacts

### Vision for Bus

- 4.1 The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (STP) – Movement for Growth, sets out a vision and the high level objectives of the public transport network. Within the STP bus as a mode is seen as key to ensuring these strategic objectives are met but places limited emphasis on defining a longer term strategy for bus in the west Midlands.
- 4.2 The Bus Services Act 2017 provides Transport Authorities with a number of legislative routes to delivering and improving the bus network, but that is not fully captured by the STP, which was produced prior to the Act.
- 4.3 Bus as a mode faces a number of challenges with increasing journey times due to congestion, competition from disrupters in the market and declining passenger use (in-line with other city regions) to 255 million trips per annum, although we have seen recent increases to patronage.
- 4.4 Despite the challenges, bus continues to carry significantly more passengers than all the other forms of public transport including rail (56m) and Metro (6.7m) and is critical to the growth of the region. The Key Route Network alone carries 200,000 more people by bus each day than travelling by private car. Without bus the West Midlands would not function and we would not be able to deliver the Strategic Economic Plan and wider aspirations of the West Midlands Combined Authority around economic development, housing and inclusive growth.
- 4.5 TfWM have been working to define a strategic Vision for Bus in the West Midlands to ensure that bus continues to be able to deliver the current and future objectives of the WMCA. This Vision has been defined through meetings with the leaders of all the constituent authorities, Strategic Transport Officers and Putting Passengers First Lead Members. To ensure that this vision is politically aligned across the region it is proposed to be presented for approval to the WMCA Board on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018.
- 4.6 Once the vision is defined and agreed, consideration will then be given to the risks and opportunities for delivering the Vision for Bus in the West Midlands, using the new powers and opportunities in the Bus Service Act 2017.
- 4.7 The Vision for Bus in the West Midlands is; *“A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission transport system providing inclusive travel for all across the West Midlands. With excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options. Customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefitting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy, reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys”*
1. UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality;
  2. Fully integrated bus network including local demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting rail, coach and Metro interchange as one network;

3. Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options including full capping providing a network which provides value for money and is affordable for customers;
4. Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change;
5. Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long held barriers and perceptions;
6. Accountable network performance management – tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems;
7. World-leading customer information utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms;
8. All young people under 25 supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups; and
9. Evolve a network to support the 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destination and attractions.

### **Bus Service Registrations**

4.8 The Public Service Vehicles (Registration of Local Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 came into force on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2018. The Regulations provide that:

- An operator must provide a copy of their proposed application, including the registered particulars, to local authorities at least 28 calendar days before they submit an application to the traffic commissioner to register, vary or cancel a local bus service, where the service has a stopping place in that authority's area. They do this by sending the local authority a copy of the application and particulars to be registered.
- Local authorities have new powers to request certain information from bus operators about services that are being varied or withdrawn to help them make an informed decision about whether they need to subsidise a replacement service.

This is so that the local authority have time to decide if it requires the information from operators, and operators have sufficient time to respond to such a request before any application is submitted to the traffic commissioner.

4.9 Before the new Regulations came into force in April, operators had to wait for a period of 56 days to elapse between submitting an application for the registration of a new service, or a variation or cancellation of an existing service to the traffic commissioner, before those changes could be implemented. Under the new Regulations, this period has been reduced to 42 days.

4.10 However, the 28 day notice period has been added, which means operators must register their intention of a new service, or a variation or cancellation of an existing service at least 70 days before those changes could be implemented. Allowing a 28 day period for a local authority to consider the draft application before it is submitted to the traffic commissioner.

4.11 This change to how a bus service is registered has impacted how TfWM consider and process bus service registrations. Although it has increased the notification of a proposed bus service application; it has shortened the time available to process bus service information once the traffic commissioner has confirmed acceptance of the application.

- 4.12 TfWM are currently reviewing their process for bus service registrations in light of the new regulations and other changes to public travel information. TfWM continue to publish bus service changes confirmed by the traffic commissioner on the Network West Midlands website (Upcoming bus changes) every Wednesday. TfWM now longer email a link to this information.

### **Bus Operator Recharging Holiday**

- 4.13 TfWM are providing a 12-month holiday period to bus operators within the region for bus station departure charges and roadside information recharging, in return for investment that supports the objectives of the West Midlands Bus Alliance and the WMCA.
- 4.14 The primary purpose of the overall investment that the proposal brings to the West Midlands Bus Alliance, is to accelerate investment in air quality improvements, in particular to bus emission standards. The improvements in air quality associated with the payment holiday, will enable the region and its Bus Alliance to deliver vehicle improvements above the current target levels by 2020, which would not otherwise have been achievable.
- 4.15 The 12-month period commenced from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018, with operators that had committed to additional measures in return for the holiday period for bus station departure charges and roadside information recharging. The payment holiday is not a change in policy and will assist the West Midlands Bus Alliance to exceed its deliverables and set new targets.

### **Partnership Routes 42/43 and 31/32**

- 4.16 Diamond Bus and National Express have worked together with Transport for West Midlands to provide a new joint timetable on the 42/43 and 31/32 services and will be carrying the new West Midlands Transport Bus livery on both operators vehicles.
- 4.17 The new partnership sees new timetables with a change in frequency at different times of the day for each operator; however as part of the new agreement both Diamond Bus and National Express are accepting selected tickets on the 42/43 and 31/32 services, so you can simply catch the first bus that comes along.
- 4.18 This new partnership is a first, as Diamond Bus and National Express share the routes. The operators previously competed for passengers on these routes, which meant passengers needed the right ticket for the right bus operator. The benefits under the new agreement for the passengers are simpler ticketing arrangements and one unified service, making it easier to travel on the routes.

### **Wolverhampton City Centre Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS)**

- 4.19 The Wolverhampton City Centre AQPS was made on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018, following the period of formal consultation with bus operators, and approval by Transport Delivery Committee on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and City of Wolverhampton Council.
- 4.20 The Wolverhampton City Centre AQPS will become operational from the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The AQPS will cover 71 bus stops/stands and shelters (including

the stands in the West Midlands Combined Authority owned Wolverhampton Bus Station) that are within the city centre Ring Road.

- 4.21 All bus operators who wish to operate any local bus service in the scheme area once it has started will have to sign a declaration to both the Traffic Commissioner and West Midlands Combined Authority, before the scheme start date that they will fully comply with the AQPS standards.

### **Network Resilience – Broad Street / Paradise Circus**

- 4.22 On 21<sup>st</sup> September the section of Broad Street between Bridge Street and Paradise was closed to facilitate the further construction of the Midland Metro extension to Centenary Square. This required the re-routing of a number of bus services to operate via Sheepcote Street or Bath Row to avoid the closure. This has been done in conjunction with the closure of Paradise Circus and the off-slip from Suffolk Street Queensway which has required further service changes.

- 4.23 To maintain journey times, reliability and punctuality on the network a number of bus priority schemes have been committed for delivery by Autumn 2018:
- Sheepcote Street bus gate
  - Paradise Queensway / Great Charles Street Queensway / Margaret Street bus lanes
  - Islington Row Middleway / George Road / Bath Row bus gate
  - Bath Row / Holloway Head bus lane
  - Harborne Lane bus lane
  - Additional bus stops on Tennant Street / Sheepcote Street / Cambridge Street.

As these scheme are delivered, they will be monitored and reviewed to address any issues that may arise to ensure continued effectiveness and benefit for bus.

- 4.24 All of the bus route changes were supported by a comprehensive communication strategy undertaken by Midlands Metro Alliance, TfWM and National Express. This included printed and social media, on-street passenger assistance and on-bus information. The closure and current routes are likely to be in place until Summer 2019.

### **Network Resilience – HS2**

- 4.25 TfWM is working closely with National Express West Midlands (NXWM) regarding route changes during the HS2 enabling work being undertaken to the east of Birmingham city centre. The work will affect Lawley Middleway at Curzon Circus and Garrison Circus and will require the number 14 and 97 bus services to be diverted away from these locations because certain exits from the junctions and movements across the junctions will be temporarily removed. Bus route diversions will be publicised once the full details have been agreed with NXWM. It is expected that there will be disruption in this area for a period of 12 months with the bus route diversions being in place during the construction of the junction improvements. Disruption is likely from early in 2019.

- 4.26 Work on the ring road will be followed by the permanent closure of Park Street to allow for the construction of Curzon Station. Birmingham City Council (BCC) are

currently looking at options for the removal of general traffic from Moor Street to make it bus and taxi only limiting the number of vehicles using the road.

- 4.27 As per the assurance given to TfWM, BCC and NXWM by HS2, discussions continue with HS2 with regards to the closure of Saltley Viaduct and the resulting transport plan to mitigate any impact on bus services.

### **Network Resilience – Wolverhampton Metro Extension Pipers Row**

- 4.28 Pipers Row closed to all traffic on 18 March 2018 and re-opened on Sunday 2 September 2018. This was to allow for the laying of tram tracks and related utility diversions along Pipers Row between Bilston Street through to Railway Drive.
- 4.29 All buses were on diversion during this time operating alternative routes which included mitigating measures through former pedestrianised Streets, accessing the bus station from the ring road and some operating from alternative locations in the City centre.
- 4.30 From 2 September 2018, Pipers Row re-opened to general traffic and buses which included buses being able to exit the bus station into Pipers Row. There remains some temporary measures which will remain until 23 November 2018 which includes temporary traffic signals, pedestrian crossings and street lighting. Works along railway Drive will continue until 23 November 2018 (buses not affected) when this part of the scheme is due to be completed with an estimated return date 2020 or on completion of the new rail station.

### **South Birmingham National Express Service Changes**

- 4.31 Following extensive public consultation, involving over 10,000 responses across 3 separate exercises since April 2017, National Express West Midlands has made service changes to bus routes in and around south and south west Birmingham, from Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2018.
- 4.32 These included small changes, such as timetable improvements so that our buses can run more reliably. There was also some larger route changes, to cater for new and emerging travel needs, and also help to overcome increasing traffic congestion around busier areas, and slower traffic speeds. These changes included new express services, more direct routes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and University of Birmingham, where 77,000 more people have direct access, and a simpler route structure focused on delivering service to key core corridors.
- 4.33 Bus services affected are: 1; 2/3; 4/4A; 5/6/6A; 22/23; 24; 27; 29; 31; 35; 37; 45/47; 48; 49; 50A; 61/63; 84; 885; 98; X20; X21; X22; X64.

### **Dudley and Sandwell National Express Service Changes**

- 4.34 Following public consultation, National Express West Midlands made a number of service changes to bus routes in the Dudley and Sandwell area from Sunday 2 September 2018.
- 4.35 This included minor changes, such as timetable improvements, to help services run more reliably. There were also some bigger changes to cater for new

and emerging travel needs, to help overcome increasing traffic congestion and slower traffic speeds around busier areas. New express services and new links have been introduced, with Platinum buses able to serve more areas, including Blackheath, Oldbury and Smethwick. In addition, many route numbers changed to create a new Dudley and Sandwell network, helping to create a new local identity for Sandwell's and Dudley's buses.

- 4.36 Bus services affected are: 4H; 9; 13; 27/27A; 82; 120/120A; 121; 126; 127; 128; 129; 140; 205; 222; 241; 243; 244; 246; 255/255A; 256/256S; 257; 276; 289; X10; X96.

### **Signature Consultation**

- 4.37 TfWM are reviewing bus services in Solihull that we pay bus operators to run. These are services that operators have not opted to run commercially, which TfWM chooses to fund to ensure that our residents are able to make socially necessary journeys. As such we are not able to use these journey to duplicate existing commercial services.
- 4.38 TfWM have reviewed the number of passengers on routes, requests from councillors and customers, planned new developments, reliability of the services and forthcoming proposed changes to commercial routes run by operators to try and come up with the best possible routes. The routes being considered are the S1, S2, S3 / S3W, S11, S15, 82, 87, 88 and 89.
- 4.39 The public consultation with local residents and bus users finished on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018. TfWM are now being reviewing and analysing the responses and looking at the final network of services, to be tendered later this year, ahead of any changes to the network being introduced from 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019.

### **Bus Stop Rationalisation**

- 4.40 In September 2017, a report was presented to the Transport Delivery Committee which detailed work being undertaken by TfWM on 'Busting Delay on the Bus Network' with the aim of improving bus journey times, reliability and punctuality for bus users. As part of this package of work TDC approved a recommendation to undertake a trial to rationalise bus stops within the South Birmingham area.
- 4.41 The bus stop rationalisation trial commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 with a view to being in place for six months, after which a report on findings would be presented to TDC for a final view on the success or otherwise of the trial.
- 4.42 TDC considered a report, from the Head of Network Delivery, Jon Hayes at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018, with regards to the trial of the bus stop rationalisation.
- 4.43 TDC noted the positive elements that the trial of bus stop rationalisation has had on bus performance including patronage, journey times, reliability and variability. It also noted the principle of bus stop rationalisation be considered on other routes in the region inclusive of to a review of the methodology used in the initial pilot.

## **5.0 Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this update report. Costs incurred or support provided by TfWM from undertaking activity referred to in this report will be from within agreed overall budgets and resources informed from previous decisions.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

6.1 This report is for information only and there are no new legal implications arising.

## **7.0 Equality Implications**

7.1. This report is for information only and there are no new equality implications.

## **8.0 Inclusive Growth Implications**

8.1 This report is for information only; however bus is a vital component to inclusive growth as it directly supports access to the labour market, and allows people to access education, employment and services. The flexibility of the bus network also makes bus the perfect means of providing public transport options in areas of growth, changing travel demand and new housing; directly supporting our West Midlands Housing Deal and Local Industrial Strategy. This means that buses are central to supporting regeneration, inclusive growth and social integration. Where there may not be a case for investing in permanent rail and light rail infrastructure, new bus infrastructure can be planned to connect new communities and support housing and jobs growth.

## **9.0 Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

9.1 This report covers the constituent area of the Combined Authority but due to the importance of cross boundary services – into and out of the constituent area – partnership working with non-constituent and shire authorities is crucial in undertaking activities referred to in this report.