



Transport Delivery Committee

Date	6 th January 2020
Report Title	Putting Passengers First Lead Member Reference Group Annual Report
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Report has been considered by	Putting Passengers First Lead Members

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- To note the contents of this report.

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report on the Lead Member and Lead Member Group for the Putting Passengers First (PPF) portfolio for the past six months from June to December 2019.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In July 2019, Cllr. K. Hartley was reappointed as the Transport Delivery Committee (TDC) Lead Member for PPF. The following TDC members are part of the wider Lead Member Group for PPF.

- Cllr. M. Locke (Birmingham City Council)
- Cllr. M. Fazal (Birmingham City Council)
- Cllr. A. Taylor (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council)

- 2.2 Cllr R. Worrall (Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council) also attends the monthly LMRG PPF meetings.

3.0 Key Initiatives

- 3.1 Section 3 of this report highlights initiatives that the PPF Lead Member Group has been involved in over the past 6 months. A Report was presented and noted by TDC at the May 2019 meeting that covered the first 6 months of activity in 2019.

3.2 Customer Services

- 3.2.1 PPF has been involved in discussions regarding a wide range of customer driven initiatives to improve the service provided to customers by TfWM. These include the commencement of a 6-month Live Chat trial in April 2019, a new telephony system

with improved analytics and functions for customers that went live in August 2019, development and delivery of a new Bus Alliance Customer Charter and support staff team members of Customer Services taking part in the Institute of Customer Services Communications Qualification.

3.2.2 PPF were involved in a review of the TfWM Petitions Process. This involved liaising with the local authorities and other combined authorities, wider TfWM Directorate engagement to understand requirements and a review of customer information. As a result, TfWM have now implemented a new WMCA Petitions Protocol from 1st October 2019. This includes a new threshold of 250 signatures where the Petition will be considered by a Committee (for a transport related petition this will be TDC). For petitions less than 250 signatures this will be considered by a new internal Officer Petition Panel. Introduction of a 30-calendar day resolution for petitions less than 250 signatures and 60 calendar day for anything above this threshold. The new Petitions Protocol is now available on both the WMN and WMCA websites for all citizens to see.

3.3 Bus Matters

3.3.1 Bus Related Petitions

TfWM have taken recommendations on 5 bus related petitions to the PPF Lead Member's during the last six months, which have all been actioned by the Group and subsequent responses issued to customers.

- Bus Services - Knowle/Dorridge/Chadwick End – Review of network
- Bus Stop (Service 3, commercial) - Eagle Street, Coventry. A request to remove or relocate (Request was denied)
- Bus Service 17 (commercial) - Objection to withdrawal of service. Petition sent to the Mayor Andy Street, for which TfWM responded to advise that NXWM will hold off any network review until early 2020, then referred the Petition to National Express West Midlands (NXWM)
- Bus Services (commercial) – Stourbridge – Review of network. Referred the Petition to NXWM.
- Service 34 (subsidised) - Route/Diversion request. Petition has not been taken to PPF as it does not meet the new Petitions threshold. TfWM are currently investigating with Birmingham City Council and will inform PPF of the outcome.

3.3.2 Non-Bus Related Petitions

One non-bus network related petitions has been received in the past six months, requesting a new cycling route in Walsall. Response issued to the Lead Petitioner on what TfWM have done to raise awareness and funds, then referred Petition to Walsall MBC.

3.3.3 Bus Shelter Appeals

TfWM have taken 2 shelter appeals to the Bus Shelter Appeals Decision Group, chaired by the PPF Lead Member Chair, Cllr Hartley and involving other PPF members in the last six months.

- 1) Bus shelter removal request – Harnell Lane East. The shelter was downgraded to stop, and this has reduced anti-social behaviour.

- 2) Bus shelter removal request – Lode Lane, Solihull. The request was denied, but it was agreed to review again in 6 months following the mitigation measures put in place.

3.3.4 Over the past six months, PPF have been involved with implemented and planned service changes for:

- South Solihull Landflight changes on services financially supported by TfWM introduced from 1st September 2019;
- Coventry National Express commercial changes introduced from 22nd September 2019; and
- West Dudley National Express commercial changes proposed to be introduced from 26th January 2020.

3.3.5 Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme for Buses in the West Midlands

TfWM with local bus operators and local highway authorities have been preparing an EP Plan for the region that provides the strategic vision and an EP Scheme for the A34 (north) and A45 corridors to improve bus services in readiness for the 2022 Commonwealth Games. PPF have input to the preparation of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme for buses in the West Midlands, which uses the new powers available in the Bus Services Act 2017. PPF have overseen and considered detailed in the Plan and Scheme, consultation strategy and reporting to Transport Delivery Committee.

3.3.6 Vision for Bus

PPF have continued to input to the shaping and delivery of the strategic Vision for Bus in the West Midlands to ensure that bus continues to be able to deliver the current and future economic and inclusive growth and prosperity of the WMCA.

3.3.7 Transport Delivery Committee Reporting

PPF have continued to provide input and oversight on bus related reports submitted to TDC, including the Bus Alliance Update, Bus Business Update and Enhanced Partnership Update.

3.3.8 Passenger Information

PPF have input to this provision of passenger information and received updates on new bus stop flag design under the re-brand, at-stop timetable information and the Real Time Programme to transform real time information across the network, bringing resources into one central, single back-office system to ensure passengers have accurate and reliable information.

3.4 Bus Stations and Travel Shops

3.4.1 PPF have assisted TfWM during the year with consultation and feedback on the development of refurbishment projects to bus stations and travel shops. This regular challenge has focussed on the customer experience and PPF have enabled involvement and improvement of the following projects; Walsall St Paul's mid-life refurbishment and branding, Coventry Interchange, Coventry Pool Meadow; Dudley Interchange and the New Street Travel Shop.

3.5 Member Tours

3.5.1 PPF members attended a site visit to Nottingham City Transport on 23rd May 2019, organised by the Air Quality Lead Member Group. The site visit involved presentations from Nottingham City Council officers, a visit to the biogas bus depot and a ride on the Nottingham tram.

3.5.2 PPF hosted a TDC lead member tour with TfWM officers and key stakeholders at Walsall St Paul's and Coventry Pool Meadow in October 2019. This reviewed the outcome of the recent refurbishment at St Paul's, challenged and inputted to the improvements at Pool Meadow ahead of the 2021 City of Culture and saw the positive changes to shelters in Coventry from a recent petition.

4.0 Wider Engagement

4.1 PPF has played a key role this year with engagement across many different passenger transport groups including the Metro Passenger Panel and the Bus Satisfaction Task & Finish Group as part of the West Midlands Bus Alliance. PPF members have also attended the quarterly Passenger Champion meetings and contributed to a refresh of quality audits undertaken by these volunteers.

5.0 Forward Plan

5.1 Monthly PPF Lead Member Group meetings are in place for the remainder of the municipal year.

5.2 Further tours planned by PPF members include site visits to see the delivery of the shelter upgrade programme across the West Midlands.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 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.

7.0 Legal Implications

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

8.0 Equality Implications

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

9.0 Inclusive Growth Implications

9.1 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.

10.0 Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 10.1 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.