



Transport Delivery Committee

Date	11 January 2021
Report Title	Putting Passengers First Lead Members 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 twelve months from January to December 2020.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In July 2019, Cllr. K. Hartley was reappointed as the Transport Delivery Committee (TDC) Lead Member for PPF. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic all membership was carried over into 2020. 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)

In November 2020, following a decision taken at Coventry City Council, Cllr. L. Bigham replaced Cllr. D. Welsh and was invited to also join the Lead Member Group for PPF and has since been attending the monthly meetings.

- 2.2 Cllr. R. Worrall (Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council) is also invited to attend 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 12 months including:
- Customer Services
 - Informal Carers Pass

- Numerous planned and emergency bus service changes
- Bus Access Standards
- Devolution Funding
- Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme
- Electric Bus Town or City bid
- Passenger Information
- Coventry Pool Meadow refurbishment
- Dudley Interchange project
- Sprint, including shelter design
- Metro operations
- Longbridge multi-story park and ride
- Bradley Lane park and ride

3.2.1 Customer Services

PPF has been involved in discussions regarding a wide range of customer driven initiatives to improve the service provided to customers by TfWM including:

3.2.2 The enormous task of moving the customer services team to home working at the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic whilst handling a surge in calls from Direct Debit customers and the development of a self-service hub which resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of calls and improved service to customers at this difficult time.

3.2.3 Informal Carers Pass

After a request put forward by Cllr. M. Locke, TfWM have been in discussions with Birmingham City Council and National Express West Midlands on a proposed trial of a carers travel pass.

3.3 Bus Matters

3.3.1 Bus Related Petitions

The group has discussed one petition in the last twelve months, which as it contained less than 250 signatures was Officer led with a solution able to be provided to the satisfaction of the Petitioners:

- Bus Service 34 – Birmingham-Kings Heath – Review of diversionary route.

3.3.2 Bus Shelter Appeals

There have been no shelter appeals taken to the group during 2020.

3.3.3 Over the past twelve months, PPF have been involved with planned service changes and kept informed of emergency service changes as follows:

- West Dudley National Express commercial changes introduced from 26th January 2020, a number of revisions to the original plans following feedback and representations.
- Service 40 Partnership. The third partnership route to launch from 15th March 2020. The service runs from Wednesbury to West Bromwich via Friar Park. Jointly operated by National Express West Midlands and Diamond Bus
- Response to the Covid-19 pandemic, requiring short notice changes to bus services.

- The Administration of local operator Travel de Courcey, which required TfWM to act very quickly to work with Coventry City Council to protect several school services that were at risk.

3.3.4 Bus Access Standards

TfWM agreed to review Access Standards with more of a focus on multi-modal travel. An outside consultancy has been commissioned.

3.3.5 Bus Devolution Discussions

Members kept updated on the proposal for devolved recovery funding for bus to be managed through the West Midlands Bus Alliance as part of a multi-modal co-ordinated network review.

3.3.6 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 details in the Plan and Scheme, consultation strategy and reporting to Transport Delivery Committee.

3.3.7 Electric Bus Town/City

In June the WMCA made a submission for Coventry and West Bromwich. At the October meeting Members were informed that DfT had announced that Coventry and Oxford have been selected to put forward an outline business case.

3.3.8 Passenger Information

PPF have input to the provision of passenger information and received updates on the full refresh of the whole network at TfWM cost that started in July following the pause in production of any roadside information during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.3.9 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.

3.4 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; Dudley Interchange, Coventry Pool Meadow and Birmingham New Street travel shop.

3.5 Sprint

PPF have received updates on the progress of delivering the Sprint project and provided feedback with regards to the design of the Sprint shelters.

3.6 Metro Operations

The group has received regular updates on the operation of the Metro service, including the introduction of new ticket machines and the initiative to introduce staff to some Metro stops to retail tickets in advance of boarding. The group also received updates on the impact of Covid-19 to the service, staff levels and the introduction of new flexible ticketing.

3.7 Park & Ride

PPF were involved in discussions around the construction and opening of the Longbridge railway station multi-storey car park and the opening of the car park at Bradley Lane metro stop. The group have also been updated on the WMCA Park and Ride strategy. Policies and principles have been approved and there will be three key outputs including where to focus the investment and charging.

3.8 Member Tours

As a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic no member tours have taken place during 2020.

4.0 Wider Engagement

4.1 PPF has played a key role this year with Members engaging across many different passenger transport groups including the Bus Satisfaction Steering Group as part of the West Midlands Bus Alliance, Bus Users UK and the West Midlands Pensioners Convention quarterly meetings with TfWM. PPF members also attend the Passenger Champion meetings. All these meetings have transferred online since March 2020, with virtual attendance remaining good throughout.

5.0 Forward Plan

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

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.