



**WEST MIDLANDS**  
COMBINED AUTHORITY

## Transport Delivery Committee

<b>Date</b>	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
<b>Report title</b>	Updating the West Midlands Bus Alliance Aims and Objectives
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<b>Report to be considered by</b>	West Midlands Combined Authority Programme Board and West Midlands Combined Authority Board

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

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

1. Endorse the approval by the West Midlands Combined Authority Board of the revised West Midlands Bus Alliance objectives and deliverables.
2. Endorse that there will continue to be half yearly reports on the progress of the West Midlands Bus Alliance to the Transport Delivery Committee and an annual report to the West Midlands Combined Authority Board.
3. Endorse that TfWM continues to work with Bus Alliance partners to agree the revised objectives with a view to a public launch in autumn 2017.

### 1.0 Purpose

1.1 This report provides an update to the Transport Delivery Committee on proposed revisions to the West Midlands Bus Alliance aims and objectives. This follows input from partners and the West Midlands Bus Alliance Board.

## **2.0 Background**

2.1 In March 2015 the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) agreed the following policy objectives to help create a 5% growth in bus usage over the next five years:

- Improvement in peak time journey speeds.
- More intuitively understandable core turn-up-and-go routes.
- Fare rises of no more than the RPI +1% per annum.
- Zero or ultra-low emissions with every other bus at least Euro VI.
- Customer satisfaction levels remain over 85%.
- Discounted young person's travel for everyone under 19 years old.
- Integrated ticketless travel in line with intelligent mobility policy.
- Network Development Plans to support the economic objectives of the next decade.
- Increased investment in highways infrastructure to aid journey times and reliability.
- The financial benefits of increased patronage contribute towards infrastructure and buses.
- Improvement on board through improved seating, next stop announcements and wifi.

2.2 The West Midlands Bus Alliance was established on 17th September 2015 as the delivery mechanism for these objectives. The Bus Alliance further strengthens the relationship between the region's Transport Authorities and private sector bus operators. It is very much a voluntary partnership arrangement, albeit with strong governance and shared responsibility for the delivery of objectives.

2.3 The objectives of the Bus Alliance align closely with those of the Strategic Transport Plan and as such an effective Alliance is essential to ensure successful delivery of these wider objectives.

2.4 Nationally, the Department for Transport has taken a keen interest on how the West Midlands Bus Alliance has evolved and operated. This is with a view to it potentially being used as a model for other areas for delivering bus partnerships, using the powers in the Bus Services Act 2017. Already there are similar Bus Alliance schemes in the Merseyside and West Yorkshire Combined Authority areas.

2.5 The Board is supported by a number of sub-groups who have responsibility for delivering initiatives on a day-to-day basis that contribute towards the successful achievement of the objectives.

## **3.0 Progress**

3.1 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been developed for each of the objectives and are outlined in paragraph 2.1. These are being tracked to measure the effectiveness of the Bus Alliance and assess where greater attention is required.

3.2 A six-monthly KPI report is presented to the Bus Alliance Board at their May and November meetings. The latest results, dated May 2017, are attached in Appendix 1.

## 4.0 **Developing the Bus Alliance**

- 4.1 The Bus Alliance was established with the agreement of the partners to work together to deliver the objectives outlined in section 2.1. These objectives were met by the delivery of set deliverables which contributed towards the delivery of the overarching objective or outcome. Whilst the work to date has been successful the partners have never formally signed up to these objectives and associated deliverables.
- 4.2 With the increasing focus on the Bus Alliance and competing pressures within all partnership organisations a consensus has been reached by the Bus Alliance Board that having a formally agreed and signed set of objectives and deliverables will cement the delivery of the Bus Alliance objectives and deliverables within each organisation. This will ensure all partner organisations are fully committed and accountable for the delivering the stated objectives.
- 4.3 TfWM have led on evaluating the current objectives and worked with Bus Alliance partners and the Board to revise them as follows:
- Improve bus emissions standards
  - Make bus travel more attractive for young people
  - Make bus journeys better value
  - Tackle congestion and make bus journeys quicker
  - Make it easier to buy a ticket
  - Make it easier to catch the bus
  - Shape the bus network to deliver economic growth
  - Make it more pleasant to travel by bus
- 4.4 Under these eight key objectives the Bus Alliance partners will sign up to the delivery of around 50 more detailed delivery objectives. All are directly linked to delivering the eight objectives and are shown in Appendix 2.
- 4.5 The success of the Bus Alliance will be evaluated against the revised objectives and achieving the associated deliverables, to ensure improved outcomes for bus travel that will be reported to the Bus Alliance Board via the KPI reports.
- 4.6 To support the delivery of the revised objectives and deliverables a review of the Bus Alliance Governance is currently being undertaken. This will put in place responsible leads for each of the objectives and the associated deliverables. It is proposed these will also be supported by the existing supporting sub-groups including; Area Partnerships, Bus Operators Panel, Bus Operators Group, and the West Midlands Traffic Management Group.
- 4.7 The review is also looking at the current membership of the Board to ensure it provides the right level of challenge and strategic influence. This work is being done with the current chair of the Board.

## 5.0 **Next Steps**

- 5.1 When formal agreement is reached on these proposed revisions it is planned to have public facing signing event to mark the two year anniversary of the Bus alliance and this refresh. At this event bus operators and other partners will formally sign up to the revised Bus Alliance objectives and commitments.

5.2 It is proposed that the half yearly progress reports to the Bus Alliance Board and the annual reports to the Transport Delivery and West Midlands Combined Authority Board would continue based on the revised Bus Alliance objectives and commitments.

## **6.0 Financial implications**

6.1 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 the Bus Alliance objectives where TfWM input/support is required will need be formally considered and evaluated so any one-off and on-going financial implications can be quantified before any decision is made.

## **7.0 Legal implications**

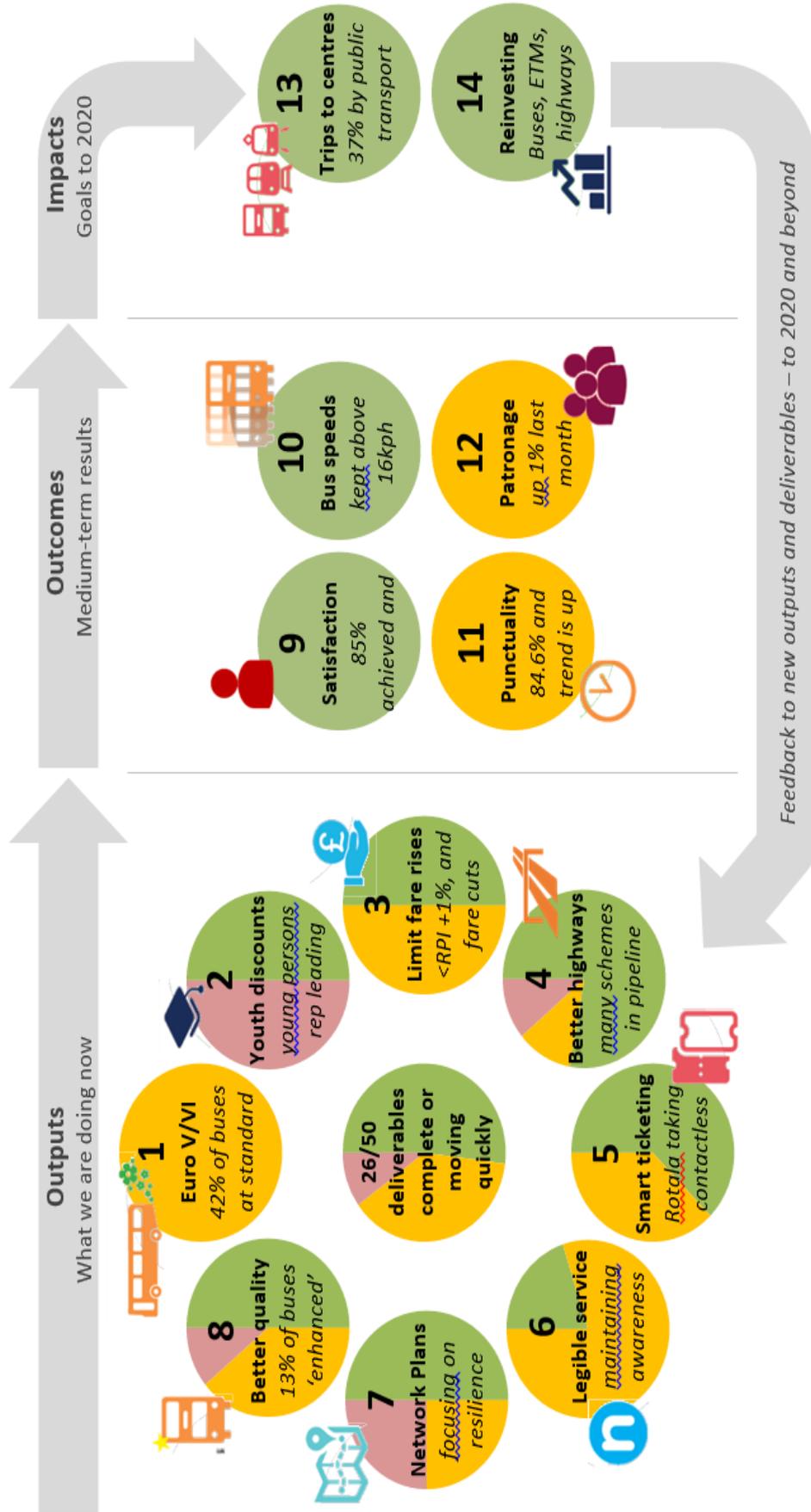
7.1 There are no immediate legal implications flowing from the contents of this report.

## **8.0 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – The May 2017 infra-graphic summary sheet showing progress against objectives
- Appendix 2 – The proposed alliance deliverables

# Appendix 1

West Midlands  
**BUS ALLIANCE**  
 Summary of Key Performance Indicators – May 2017



## **Appendix 2**

The headings in bold are the eight proposed objectives (as outlined in 4.3) and the numbered items under each are the relevant partner commitments to deliver these.

### **Improve bus emissions standards**

1. By May 2020, bus operators will have invested in at least 350 environmentally-friendly new vehicles.
2. By May 2020, all buses operating across the region will be at least Euro V or VI standard.
3. By 31 December 2019, all buses operating in clean air zones will be at least Euro VI standard , or sooner as required.
4. By May 2020, we will pilot zero emission buses (such as electric or hydrogen) on at least two corridors.

### **Make bus travel more attractive for young people**

5. TfWM will continue to run the Child Concessionary Fares Scheme which ensures discounted travel for the under-16s.
6. We will introduce discounted travel to those over 16 and under 19, including apprentices (giving unlimited bus travel from around £1 a day, including evenings, weekends and holidays).

### **Make bus journeys better value**

7. We will limit fare rises to no more than the Retail Price Inflation (RPI) rate which reflects the impact on operating costs.
8. All operators will be required to enter into a three-month consultation period with TfWM on fare rises.
9. We will introduce fare capping, using both contactless and Swift cards on all services from 2019.
10. We will continue to work to reduce fares wherever practical and introduce new offers and promotions to grow patronage.
11. We will restrict annual departure charge increases from bus stations to no more than the RPI rate in any single year.
12. We will revamp and enhance the Workwise scheme which offers discounted travel to jobseekers.

### **Tackle congestion and make bus journeys quicker**

*By tackling existing bottlenecks and hotspots:*

13. We will continue to implement highways 'quick wins' to tackle bottlenecks and congestion.
14. From October 2017, all partners will work together with the police to keep the highways clear by improving enforcement and mitigating utility works.
15. We will develop a network resilience strategy to reduce the impact of major developments as part of the Network Development Plans.
16. We will increase co-operation, through continued co-location of bus operator staff, in urban traffic control centres.
17. We will openly share data on punctuality and bus speeds to improve highways and speed up journeys.

*By investing in highways upgrades:*

18. From October 2017, we will employ a city centre manager to mitigate the effects of central Birmingham developments such as HS2 and Midland Metro.
19. We will develop a highways implementation strategy including bidding for upgrade funding from local and national sources.

### **Make it easier to buy a ticket**

20. Capitalising on the ability to pay for a journey with your phone on most buses, we will ensure this is available on all services by 2020.
21. Operators will invest 1% of fare revenue into digital innovations such as apps and smart ticketing.
22. We will continue to display relevant fare information at bus stops.

## **Make it easier to catch the bus**

*Through simpler network branding:*

23. We will work towards creating a single look and feel for all public transport across the West Midlands.
24. From October 2017, we will introduce a colour-coded network map covering all modes of public transport.
25. From January 2018, we will extend route-specific colours to buses, bus stops and information.

*Through better information:*

26. We will develop and support journey planning apps to make it easier to plan your journey.
27. We will undertake joined-up public transport marketing, with a pooled marketing budget, with immediate effect.
28. From October 2017, we will co-ordinate services between operators to make better use of resources and simplify the network, through route-based partnership agreements.
29. We will engage and consult with the new West Midlands Rail Franchise holder's representative at least once a quarter on issues including timetable changes, directional signage to bus and rail services, multi-modal ticketing, bus stop facilities and safe/secure pedestrian routes linking them to rail facilities.
30. Through regular liaison with the West Midlands Rail Franchisee, up-to-date bus and rail information will be made available at key bus/rail interchanges and we will share proposed timetable changes ahead of service registration with the rail operator.
31. We will engage and consult with the Midland Metro operator at least every quarter on issues including timetable changes, directional signage to bus and Metro services, multi-modal ticketing, bus stop facilities and safe/secure pedestrian routes linking them to Metro stops.
32. Every newly-purchased bus will feature next-stop audio-visual announcements and we will explore all options to meet national legal requirements to introduce this on existing vehicles.
33. We will ensure every bus is tracked and provides Real Time Information (RTI) at suitably- equipped bus stops, on Apps and Internet.
34. TfWM will improve the accuracy of real time displays at bus stops and publicise monthly KPI reports.

## **Shape the bus network to deliver economic growth**

35. We will develop Network Development Plans to guide network changes and support growth on an area by area basis for the whole region.
36. We will undertake extensive consultation with the public and stakeholders on all significant bus service changes in line with Network Development Plans.
37. Any significant bus service changes will be committed and agreed following extensive public consultation, four weeks' prior to the registration date.
38. Space will continue to be made available at 16 Summer Lane to co-locate - think something maybe missing here

## **Make it more pleasant to travel by bus**

*By upgrading bus stops and interchanges:*

39. By April 2018, we will refurbish Walsall bus station and enhance the customer experience.
40. We will upgrade Dudley bus station to include a Midland Metro interchange as part of the construction of the light rail extension to Merry Hill Shopping Centre.
41. We will invest a minimum of £1m to improve bus shelters.

42. By January 2018, we will extend the Dudley customer service pilot project to all other interchanges, ensuring staff from all partners work together seamlessly.

*By making it easier to feed back:*

43. We will introduce a Customer Charter, so customers know what they can expect from us.
44. We will provide a refund if you're not completely satisfied with the service you receive (aka 'the Big Ticket').
45. From March 2018, we will introduce a system to rate your journey via an app.
46. We will introduce a joined-up social media strategy to provide disruption information and advice.
47. From January 2018, we will simplify and align our customer contact channels to give a prompt and joined-up response.

*By engaging staff:*

48. From May 2019, we will roll-out enhanced training and progression programmes (such as the National Express Master Driver programme) to cover all frontline staff.
49. From May 2018, we will roll-out enhanced safety processes and technology such as DriveCam, to cover the vast majority of all frontline staff.
50. From January 2018, we will pay the Living Wage Foundation living wage to all staff.
51. Managers from TfWM and bus operators will 'adopt a bus route' - riding the service, talking to staff and customers and feeding back on ways to improve it.

*By reducing crime and antisocial behaviour:*

52. We will continue to fund and enhance the Safer Travel Partnership, increasing the number of police inspectors and officers patrolling our network, supported by the best CCTV and technology.
53. TfWM will continue to lobby Government through the Mayor to seek greater powers to tackle anti-social behaviour as part of the devolution of powers to the West Midlands.