



Transport Delivery Committee

Date:	9th October 2017
Report Title:	Bus Business Report
Accountable Director:	Steve McAleavy (Interim)
Accountable employee(s):	Edmund Salt
Report Considered by:	Cllr Kath Hartley

Purpose of Report

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

Section A **Services Performance Summary**

- Punctuality and reliability July 2017
- Patronage July 2017

Section B **Bus Alliance Update**

- Bus Alliance development and governance
- Patronage task and finish group
- Network Development Plans
- Bus Services Act 2017
- Advanced Statutory Quality Partnerships

Section C **Tendered Bus Services Contracts – October 2017**

Section D **Operational Matters and Passengers Impacts**

- Network Resilience
- South Birmingham review
- Dudley consultation
- Bus stop rationalisation
- National Express West Midlands (NXWM) low fare zones

Section A Bus Services Performance Summary

- 2.1 Bus reliability for August is at 94.5 per cent against a target of 97 per cent. Punctuality is above target, standing at 82.4 per cent against a target of 81.7 per cent.
- 2.2 The latest bus patronage data for July 2017, stands at 257.6 million. This continues a gradual decline in bus patronage across the region and mirrors a national trend.

Section B Bus Alliance Update

- 3.1 Revisions to the West Midlands Bus Alliance objectives and deliverables were approved by TDC on 4th September 2017. There was a public facing signing event held at the Coach and Bus Expo in Birmingham on 5th October 2017, where the Mayor and all Alliance partners, formally signed up to the revised objectives and commitments. To support the delivery of the revised objectives and deliverables, a review of the governance is currently being undertaken. This will review the membership of the Board and put in place responsible leads for each of the objectives and associated deliverables.
- 3.2 The Bus Alliance Board has agreed that a 'Patronage Task and Finish Group' is created, to identify what initiatives could be put into place to grow patronage, locations where these would have the most impact and to initiate schemes with the sole aim of growing fare-paying passenger numbers. The first meeting of this group was held on 12th September 2017. The group will report back to the Bus Alliance Board with a clear understanding of the local factors and interventions that most impact on patronage, how these can be influenced, and if/how these can be effectively replicated across the network.
- 3.3 The West Midlands Bus Alliance is committed to delivering Network Development Plans (NDPs) for the region; in order to ensure that the bus network continues to meet local needs and is able to adapt to future growth opportunities and challenges. Area-based NDPs will be developed across the region by 2020. For each area, a NDP will be informed and supported by a comprehensive evidence and data-led review. Each NDP will contain a Delivery Plan, setting out the local bus improvements (i.e. vehicle standards, bus infrastructure service quality, frequency/timings, air quality, development planning, network resilience and congestion mitigation) to be delivered at specified timeframes.
- 3.4 The Bus Services Bill received Royal Assent on 27th April 2017, thus becoming the Bus Services Act 2017. The Act provides TfWM with a wider set of tools to address deficiencies in the local bus market and to work with commercial operators to provide better local bus services for passengers. It provides a variety of partnership options; strengthening Statutory Quality Partnership Schemes (which become known as Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes) and the introduction of new Enhanced Partnerships, as well as a route to franchising. The Act will also make it easier for passengers to access information about routes, fares and timetables, and that ticketing schemes meet passengers' needs.
- 3.5 A Solihull AQPS was made on 18th August 2017 and will come into operation on Sunday 26th November 2017. This will be the first new AQPS to be implemented in the country under the new Bus Services Act. Work is currently underway to review and implement an updated Birmingham City Centre AQPS and a new Wolverhampton AQPS.

Section C Tendered Bus Services Contracts – October 2017

- 4.1 Bus Service Contracts to commence 22 October 2017 include the award of:
- a. 25 contracts that went out to tender to all operators that expressed an interest in TfWM's bus tenderer's list;
 - b. 2 contracts on an extendable basis for a further period of 105 weeks from the 22 October 2017;
 - c. 19 contracts on a de-minimis basis to commence on 22 October 2017; and
 - d. 2 emergency contracts.
- 4.2 This commits TfWM to a total cost of £4.6m over a 3 year period of which £0.9m will be incurred in 2017/18, which is funded from within the overall agreed Subsidised Bus budget. All services are required to meet ITA Access Standards.

Section D Bus Operational Matters and Passenger Impacts

5.1 Network Resilience – Oldbury Viaduct update

Highway's England main repair works on the M5 between junctions 1 and 2 (section known as Oldbury Viaduct) and the associated traffic management measures have been ongoing since July 2017. A co-ordinated approach to communications between stakeholders has taken place to make the public aware of the works and advise them to plan ahead, allow extra time for travel and where possible use public transport to carry out local journeys. With schools re-opening in early September, it is anticipated that it will cause delays on the motorway and the surrounding local road network, especially at peak times. The early impact of the traffic management is currently been collated and analysed.

5.2 Network Resilience – Broad Street

Due to Midland Metro Alliance works on Centenary Square from October to December 2017, buses will only be able to operate outbound through Centenary Square. Inbound services are expected to turn right into Bridge Street, left into Holliday Street and then left on Suffolk Street Queensway. This means that buses will not be able turn right from Broad Street and consequently the routing into town of the 126 and the 10H will need revising temporarily.

5.3 Network Resilience – Holloway Circus

From September 2017 through to March 2018, Birmingham City Council's scheme to improve Holloway Circus will be proceeding. This will result in off peak lane closures, with a full lane closure from Holloway Head onto Holloway Circus and round onto Suffolk Street Queensway during November 2017. NXWM are currently looking at the impact on service provision, however this work is likely to see a severely detrimental impact for bus services that use Bristol Road, Holloway Head, Bath Row, Smallbrook Queensway or Suffolk Street Queensway.

5.4 South Birmingham Review

NXWM's consultation for South Birmingham has now closed, and received over 3,400 responses. National Express are reviewing the feedback received, with no major changes to be implemented in October 2017. Any changes arising from the consultation are likely to be introduced in early 2018, with updates provided following the review of the consultation feedback. NXWM has met with TfWM and Birmingham City Council to discuss complementary mitigation measures across the network, to help speed up services, and has received assurances regarding signal validation.

5.5 Dudley Consultation

National Express are reviewing their Dudley area bus network. The review will involve public consultation to understand the views of current passengers and potential new users. The public consultation was launched in September 2017, with key stakeholder briefings being co-ordinated with Dudley councillors and Dudley Council officers.

5.6 In addition to this, TfWM are working closely with National Express and Dudley Council to co-ordinate National Express' consultation with the emerging development of the Dudley Network Development Plan (NDP). The Dudley NDP is being developed by the Bus Alliance as part of its deliverables. It is an aspiration that the outcome of the consultation will help inform the development of a Dudley NDP and also facilitate any co-ordinated network changes which could include the wider subsidised network and non-National Express commercial services.

5.7 Bus Stop rationalisation

A trial for bus stop rationalisation has been implemented from 1st October 2017, for a period of 6 months. The route corridors that will be included are along the lines of the route 8A / 8C, 45 / 47, 50 and 63. TfWM are currently working with National Express West Midlands to finalise a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy to inform passengers and wider stakeholders of the trial. This will include engagement with local access groups and councillors through our existing channels, social media and at-stop information including the location of the nearest alternative stops

5.8 National Express West Midlands low fare zones

NXWM has extended its successful low-fare zones again, this time to suburban Birmingham. National Express' first low-fare zone was launched in Sandwell and Dudley in February 2017. Since then, the bus operator has seen 4,000 extra bus journeys each day across that patch. 67% of customers surveyed by TfWM said they were making more journeys as a result of the cheaper tickets, with half being new trips not made before. As of 3 September 2017, the local daysaver from east Birmingham now covers the whole of Birmingham outside the outer circle. It also makes travel on the outer circle itself cheaper because it includes Birmingham's famous number 11 route, Europe's longest urban bus service. Off-peak local daysavers for this area are now £3 for adults, and £1.50 for kids.

Financial Implications

6. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this update report. Any costs incurred or support provided by TfWM from undertaking activity referred to in this report will need to be met from within agreed overall funding and resources.

Legal Implications

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

Equality Implications

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