

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development and WYCA

Report to Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Date: 17 February 2016

Subject: Inquiry into Bus Service Provision

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Scrutiny Board at its meeting on the 17th of June 2015 resolved to undertake an inquiry to consider bus service provision.
2. The Board expressed a desire to have a clear understanding of current service delivery and how this supports our objectives as a Council to connect residents and visitors to employment, training, culture and leisure and support the economic prosperity of the city. The Bus Scrutiny meeting on 27 January 2016 provided background information on:
 - De-regulation and the West Yorkshire bus context
 - Key Achievements
 - Role of the Highway Authority & WYCA in the Bus System
 - Bus Services and the economy
 - Bus Strategy and Single Transport Plan
 - Partnership and Quality Contract Legislation
3. This report for the meeting on 17 February 2016 sets out further details on the development of the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy.
4. Further meetings are planned to cover stakeholder involvement and operator representations.

Recommendations

5. Members are requested to note and comment on this report.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides Members with overview of the key points from the draft Bus Plan document and the associated forthcoming public and stakeholder consultation.

2 Overview

- 2.1 The Bus Scrutiny meeting on 27 January 2016 provided background information on:
- De-regulation and the West Yorkshire bus context
 - Key Achievements
 - Role of the Highway Authority & WYCA in the Bus System
 - Bus Services and the economy
 - Bus Strategy and Single Transport Plan
 - Partnership and Quality Contract Legislation
- 2.2 The report set out that there is an on-going debate about the effectiveness of bus de-regulation, with some strongly held opposing views. Since the January meeting, the Department for Transport has issued the “Local Bus Market Study” KPMG report. The report concludes that *“Each local bus market is unique and each requires a tailored approach to help it deliver local objectives”*. A copy of the Executive Summary of the report is included as background in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 WYCA is the Local Transport Authority for West Yorkshire and through detailed consultation with districts is developing a refreshed West Yorkshire Single Transport Plan, to update the existing Local Transport Plan, bringing a range of current strategic transport plans and programmes into one single plan and provide a clear statement of the Combined Authority’s vision for transport.
- 2.4 A key element of the Single Transport Plan is the Bus Strategy for West Yorkshire. This will be a 10 to 15 year strategy to set out what we want to achieve from the Bus System. WYCA are currently working the five West Yorkshire District Councils, as well as with a range of stakeholders, to develop the principles and vision. A full Public and Stakeholder Consultation is planned to commence in May (shortly after the local election purdah period) and run for 12 weeks.
- 2.5 The draft Bus Plan document is being presented to WYCA Transport Committee on 26 February 2016. Therefore, this report to LCC Scrutiny is in advance of Transport Committee reviewing, commenting or approving the draft Bus Plan document or considered the proposed approach to consultation on Bus Plan.

3 Main issues

Overview

- 3.1 WYCA Transport Committee has previously agreed that the Single Transport Plan should incorporate a complementary workstream developing an updated West Yorkshire Bus Strategy, which is to be developed through full public and stakeholder consultation
- 3.2 An initial, stakeholder led consultation took place during October and November 2015. This Phase 1 consultation included a workshop on 25 September 2015 with Transport Committee to consider the proposed way forward for developing the Bus Strategy. Phase 1 consultation has now concluded and points raised through the consultation have informed the development of the full Bus Plan document.
- 3.3 Bus Plan is based around the ‘the outcomes/outputs we want to achieve’. This strategy document therefore looks to set the outcomes rather than predetermine the preferred regulatory or commercial approach to delivering the strategy. This Bus Plan has a 10-15 year planning horizon, and it is envisaged that as part of the option assessment, the forthcoming Business Case will consider the detailed programme, as well as affordability of individual measures and options (e.g. Partnership or Franchise options), to enable the strategy to be realised in accordance with the HM Treasury Green Book methodology.
- 3.4 Bus Plan is developed based on existing evidence and sets out:
- The need for the Bus Plan;
 - The strategic and policy context that frames the importance of the bus in supporting economic, environmental and social goals across West Yorkshire, describing the fundamental economic challenges facing West Yorkshire today and outlining the economic growth plans for the area;
 - The role of the bus system in meeting the transport requirements of this economic growth, and in supporting broader environmental and social goals. Bus Plan therefore looks at the evidence that underpins the importance of buses in helping deliver these goals. It draws upon a range of research to highlight the key role that buses play in delivering economic, social, environmental, health and well-being policies;
 - Trends in bus and other modes of travel in West Yorkshire highlighting the crucial importance of achieving growth in bus usage in order to achieve a financially sustainable bus network;
 - The issues that would need to be addressed in order to achieve such growth. This is examined from the perspective of those who use buses at the moment and identify which opportunities need to be seized upon in order to retain current users, and what needs to be done to attract new customers; and

- A vision for buses in West Yorkshire and the key principles that will underpin the Bus Plan and from there a framework for delivery of the strategy.

Bus Plan: Overview

Background to the Bus Plan

- 3.5 This Bus Plan is designed to help West Yorkshire achieve more from its buses. It has been prepared by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) in conjunction with district partners and sets out the vision for the West Yorkshire bus network, the key principles that underpin the plan, and how it will help support the growth of the bus market.
- 3.6 The Bus Plan has been developed in the context of the Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan, the West Yorkshire Single Transport Plan (of which this is a daughter document), the West Yorkshire plus Transport Fund, the West Yorkshire Low Emission Strategy, preparatory work for High Speed Rail (HS2 & Northern Powerhouse Rail) and the plans being developed by Transport for the North to support the Northern Powerhouse.
- 3.7 It has been shaped by local and national evidence and informed by stakeholder views on the vision and principles. It will be further shaped through the forthcoming consultation.

Rationale for the Bus Plan

- 3.8 Fundamentally, buses are important. More people in West Yorkshire travel by bus than any other form of public transport. Buses take people to work; to school, college and university; to hospital; to shops; and to a range of other social and leisure activities across West Yorkshire. While doing this they provide significant economic, social and environmental benefit to the wider community.
- 3.9 In addition, there is an extensive body of evidence on how buses contribute to economic development and regeneration, how they support town and city centre economies and rural communities, and how they help to achieve environmental and quality of life goals.

Opportunity for growth

- 3.10 Overall, the opportunity to grow the bus system is significant. Analysis presented in Bus Plan demonstrates that bus patronage growth of less than 25% over the next decade could endanger the delivery of the planned level of forecast economic growth. The target is to maximise patronage growth, with the ambition of delivering 25% patronage growth across West Yorkshire.

Vision & Objectives

- 3.11 The draft vision for the Bus Plan is:

Our vision is of a financially sustainable and growing bus system that can deliver West Yorkshire's economic, environmental and quality of life ambitions set out in the Single Economic Plan and West Yorkshire Transport Plan.

3.12 From this vision the following draft objectives for the Bus Plan have been defined:

- To support economic growth in West Yorkshire by improving connectivity to areas of economic opportunity;
- To support more equal access to opportunity by improving access to health services, education and employment, leisure and retail destinations;
- To deliver a step change in customer expectations/perception of the bus system with digitally enhanced provision of the service that customers demand and which is considered to represent good value for money; and,
- To support environmental aims by delivering a significantly reduced emissions footprint.

Plans for delivery

3.13 The scale of this target will shape delivery plans and highlights the need for a significant suite of interventions, and it is appropriate at this stage to define the types of investment and initiative that will support the delivery.

3.14 To deliver the vision and objectives, putting the customer first is at the heart of the strategy. A suite of complementary measures are needed that align with the strategic challenges faced by WYCA and its partners, and deliver customer aspirations for buses, to enable sustainable growth of services and patronage.

3.15 Bus Plan is anticipated to set the following outputs/outcomes as being essential to the delivering Bus Plan objectives and the ambitious growth target. These outputs/outcomes have been developed based on analysis of the local problems and issues with the bus system:

- Creation of a single, integrated and strategically planned bus network, presented as a single brand entity;
- A simple, unified and affordable ticket and product range (which reflects geography and travel patterns, rather than operators) for all customers across West Yorkshire. The ticketing and product range needs to provide for bus travel which is affordable and offers value for money. The emphasis will be on growing the market for bus as a whole;
- A single communications, information and branding identity covering all aspects of the bus system, regardless of who operates the vehicles. This includes where and how to access information before a journey;
- Investment in customer focused interventions to provide a safe, comfortable customer experience and modern, accessible, clean vehicles that reduce harmful emissions. The Bus Plan will focus investment on a suite of customer-led interventions that generate customer trust and respond to individual customer's needs and requirements; and

- A modern, clean bus system operated with vehicles that do not pollute the local environment.

Bus Plan: Public and Stakeholder Consultation

- 3.16 The purpose of the forthcoming public and stakeholder consultation is to gain feedback and comments on the Bus Plan document. The objectives of the consultation are:
- To present proposals to the widest range of people and representative groups affected by them;
 - To provide them with an opportunity to give their views; and
 - To give full consideration to their views in finalising the Plan.
- 3.17 It is proposed that subject to WYCA Transport Committee approval, the consultation will commence in early May (i.e. shortly after the Local Election purdah period has been ended) and would run for 12 weeks.
- 3.18 A range of consultation methods including interactive and digital based initiatives, focus groups, workshops and public drop-in sessions will be used. An additional phone-based survey, with a statistically representative sample of the West Yorkshire population is also planned.
- 3.19 A short consultation document will be the principal mechanism for providing information about the Bus Strategy and its principles to West Yorkshire residents and businesses and to key stakeholders. Consultation materials will provide enough information for respondents to make informed decisions. The consultation document will be accompanied by a questionnaire; an online and a paper version of the questionnaire will be prepared. It is anticipated that the survey will provide an opportunity for respondents to provide feedback on Bus Plan. Copies of consultation materials will be available on line as well as printed material available from WYCA, local libraries and at consultation events.
- 3.20 A wider list of Stakeholders has been collated. All Stakeholders identified for the Phase 1 consultation will be contacted and 1:1 briefings and workshops will be offered to a larger number of organisations / groups. It is anticipated that MetroMessenger will be used to create bespoke messages. It is anticipated that we will organise some sector specific workshops e.g. for the health sector or business community. Additionally, efforts will be made to consult with equality groups.
- 3.21 A series of public exhibitions / drop-in sessions will take place across West Yorkshire, with 10-15 venues identified per district. These will take place throughout the consultation period. Locations will include bus stations, shopping centres, town centres. We hope to engage with bus users and non-bus users at these sessions. Existing meetings are being identified where Bus Plan could be included as an agenda item, including District events and forums. Further 1:1 meetings will be held with key Stakeholders, particularly bus operators.

Next Steps

- 3.22 Once the consultation has concluded, the results will be analysed and full consideration will be given to the views expressed and a response will be issued explaining any decisions made. An updated version of the Bus Plan which reflects the conclusions of the consultation will be taken to the WYCA for approval and adoption later in 2016.
- 3.23 During 2016/17, a further piece of work will consider the options for best delivering the Bus Plan outputs/outcomes. This work will be brought together through the production of a Business Case. This Business Case will consider the potential delivery routes including the various Partnership options and also franchising. The Business Case will consider the detailed programme, risks, as well as affordability of individual measures to enable the strategy to be realised in accordance with the HM Treasury Green Book methodology.
- 3.24 It is recognised that the delivery options available to WYCA may be dependent on whether a Devolution deal for the area has been agreed, as this is expected to determine the powers WYCA can through access the forthcoming Buses Bill. As outlined at the January 2016 Bus Scrutiny session, the Buses Bill is expected to provide Local Transport Authorities, elected Mayors and bus operators with a more effective toolkit to enable improvements to be made to bus services in their areas. The Bill will make it easier for Mayoral Combined Authorities to introduce bus franchising and also provide a better framework for enabling Local Transport Authorities and Operators to reach an Enhanced Partnership agreement with bus operators.
- 3.25 It is important that the vision and strategy is approved and adopted, before any decisions are taken regarding how the strategy is delivered. The Business Case assessing how the strategy is best delivered will therefore be brought for consideration and approval once:
- The Bus Plan strategy document has been adopted by WYCA;
 - The specification of the Buses Bill is known; and
 - There is clarity regarding whether there will be a Devolution Deal for this region which includes the ability to access the Buses Bill
- 3.26 At present and subject to the points above being resolved, it is anticipated that the Business Case considering the options, risks and opportunities will be completed by early 2017.

Short Term Measures

- 3.27 In parallel to the development of the Bus Plan, WYCA is keen to see a programme of measures which can be delivered quickly to improve the buses within the context of the Bus Plan vision and principles. The short term measures being considered should:
- Help contribute to delivery of longer term Bus Strategy;

- Be deliverable before 2018;
- Provide tangible benefits to the customer;
- Be deliverable within the current legislative framework;
- Minimise any additional governance requirements; and
- Not constrain any party in terms of longer term Strategy.

3.28 A series of meetings have been held between Bus Operators, coordinated through the Association of Bus Operators in West Yorkshire (ABOWY) and WYCA. Through these meetings ABOWY have proposed a number of short term measures in the following areas:

- Young People
- Information
- Air Quality
- Ticketing
- Punctuality

3.29 WYCA officers are working with ABOWY on delivering the measures set out above in parallel to the development of the Bus Strategy.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 WYCA have taken a phased approach to the development of the Bus strategy with both public and stakeholder consultation taking place as stated in this report.

4.1.2 Highways and Transportation schemes are subject to the following four stage consultation process;

- Stage 1 – Internal Scheme Development Consultation List (Technical).
- Stage 2 – External Scheme Development Consultation List (Key Stakeholders).
- Stage 3 – Public Engagement Consultation List.
- Stage 4 – Review Feedback, Report Back Findings & Recommendations.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 WYCA will be responsible for ensuring compliance with Equality and Diversity requirements of the Bus Strategy.

4.2.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities. Where a potential

impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 This inquiry will support objectives as defined in The Vision for Leeds 2011 – 2030 and the Best Council Plan 2015-20

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 This report has no specific resource and value for money implications

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 This report has no specific legal or access to information implications

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 This report has no risk management implications. Processes for risk and project management form part of the various projects related to the bus strategy being progressed by Leeds City Council and WYCA.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 This report has presented an overview of the Bus Plan document as well as the proposed approach to the forthcoming public and stakeholder consultation.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are requested to note and comment on this report.

7 Background documents¹

Appendix 1 – KPMG Executive Summary

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.