

SCRUTINY BOARD (INFRASTRUCTURE, INVESTMENT & INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

WEDNESDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor P Truswell in the Chair

Councillors J Bentley, N Buckley, K Dye,
B Gettings, L Martin, K Ritchie, M Shahzad,
N Sharpe, J Taylor and P Wadsworth

30 APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS

There were no appeals.

31 Late Items

There were no formal late items.

32 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There was no exempt information.

33 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations raised at the meeting.

34 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor J Goddard. Councillor K Ritchie attended as a substitute on behalf of Councillor J Goddard, for the duration of the meeting.

35 Minutes - 27 October 2021

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held Wednesday, 27th October 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

36 Advancing Bus Provision

Further to the minutes of the meeting held 14th October 2021, the report of the Head of Democratic Services introduced a report that set out the progress made in responding to the actions arising from the Scrutiny Inquiry into Advancing Bus Service Provision.

Appended to the submitted report included a copy of the recommendation tracking flowchart and classifications (Appendix 1), as well as a formal update (Appendix 2) and the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) (Appendix 3).

The following were in attendance for this item:

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 19th January, 2022

LCC

- Councillor H Hayden, Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate
- Gary Bartlett, Chief Officer Highways and Transportation

WYCA

- Councillor K Groves, Lead Member for Public Transport
- Dave Pearson, Director Transport and Property Services

PROVIDERS

- Andrew McGuinness, Regional Manager Confederation of Passenger Transport UK
- Paul Matthews, MD of First West Yorkshire
- Alex Hornby, CEO TransDev
- Dwayne Wells, Head of Commercial Arriva Bus

The Director, Transport and Property Services (WYCA) introduced the report, and provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the following:

- An overview of the National Bus Strategy and BSIP.
- West Yorkshire Position on Bus Reform.
- West Yorkshire Route to Bus Reform – Mayoral ambition in West Yorkshire including timescale assumptions to achieve a statutory Franchising scheme.
- Visions and objectives of the BSIP, as well as headline initiatives of what the BSIP will seek to deliver.
- A draft version of the Plan on a page.
- Impact of the Pandemic.
- Next steps in terms of the BSIP funding bid, the establishment of an Enhanced Partnership, the completion of Leeds Public Transport Improvement Plan Schemes and commencement of BSIP Quick win programme.

The Chief Officer Highways and Transportation (LCC) addressed the Board and highlighted the partnership work undertaken with WYCA to understand the implications of the BSIP. An overview was provided on the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme. It was confirmed that as the multi-year programme of projects comes towards its end, efficient management has resulted in the possibility of a number of additional minor schemes being progressed in the new year.

Representatives of the bus operators supported the initiatives of the BSIP. The following issues were highlighted:

- General concern for long-term future investment in bus services and potential future funding models.
- Staffing position impacting on service delivery and incentives that have been introduced to tackle driver shortages in Leeds.
- Reduced passenger volumes and changing patterns of usage on buses.
- An increase in traffic volumes and the impact this has on punctuality and reliability on services.

The Lead Member for Public Transport (WYCA) emphasised the importance of ensuring the right model is used for West Yorkshire and reiterated challenges around funding.

Scrutiny Board members commended the work undertaken by frontline workers during the pandemic and requested their praise be noted.

Members' discussion included:

- Clarity on the delivery of the remaining 90 ultra-low emission, Clean Air Zone compliant buses. Members were informed of the profit implications for providers resulting from the pandemic, and the commitment to not buy diesel vehicles as of 2022. Whilst the timing of delivery is uncertain, it was confirmed the additional 90 vehicles are expected by 2023.
- The achievability of predicted future bus patronage numbers and the mechanisms in place to encourage users back onto public transport. Members commented on their concerns regarding a reduction of services across the city, and longer journey times impacting on leisure travel. Members heard that whilst the 2025 patronage target is challenging, providers have introduced a range of options for flexible and cost-effective tickets, and it was confirmed this has seen an increase in users.
- Clarity on services being fully accessible for wheelchair users and users with prams. It was confirmed that although buses comply with national standards, there is further work to be done around design solutions to increase flexibility. The Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate provided an update on 'on demand transport' operating in East Leeds, and confirmed a variety of users, including wheelchair users can benefit from this service – it is yet to be confirmed whether on demand travel will be rolled out city wide and further clarity is required around current uptake.
- Real time displays not being accurate. Members heard this was partly to do with buses being stuck in traffic, and bus operators are in the process of reviewing their back-office system to ensure information is displayed accurately on displays.
- How customer experiences are monitored and how providers are responding to feedback received, specifically comments relating to dissatisfaction. Members heard that there is a range of surveys used to monitor customer feedback and feedback is recorded on a database and reviewed by bus providers. It was confirmed that the overall satisfaction is high, although negative feedback received is important. The Chair requested that information is received on how providers address negative feedback.
- Understanding complex travel needs and the ability of technologies to report issues and ensuring there is a joined-up approach with various support organisations.
- Success of current schemes such as Headrow Gateway and confirmation on bus improvements as a result of such schemes. Further clarity was sought regarding the position on schemes such as

Alwoodley Park and Ride. It was emphasised that all districts must deliver priority bus corridors

- The sustainability of altering fares, and how this is measured to ensure a more affordable transport system. Members heard of the range of indicators measured and the work ongoing to speed up busses and keeping the cost of fares down.
- Liaison with other Local Authorities to identify what has worked for them and their models.
- The Lead Member for Public Transport set out work streams at WYCA already undertaken to improve services, and in response to a question regarding the travel of direction subject to the bid to the Government being unsuccessful, it was confirmed alternative funding arrangements will be considered.
- The possibility to explore options such as connecting local communities by integrating bus and rail.
- The trialling of reduced bus fare offers as part of a series of Superbus pilots.
- Clarity on the 'significant' progress made by 2030 to reach zero carbon by 2036. Members heard the current Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) bid is at its next stage in the process and seeks to deliver 121 zero emission busses by 2024 and the BSIP doesn't fully set out the process in reaching that target.

The Scrutiny Board agreed the status of each recommendation as follows:

Recommendation 1 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

Recommendation 2 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

Recommendation 3 – 2 (Achieved)

Recommendation 4 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

Recommendation 5 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

Recommendation 6 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

Recommendation 7 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

Recommendation 8 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

Recommendation 9 – 4 (Continue monitoring)

The Chair thanked everybody for their attendance.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the contents of the submitted report, together with the progress made against the tracking recommendations and the WYCA BSIP.
- b) To agree the status of each recommendation as set out above.
- c) To agree to receive an annual monitoring report as part of the Board's preferred approach for future engagement on this item.

Councillor J Taylor left the meeting at approximately 12.25 pm, Councillor P Wadsworth at 12.30 pm, and N Buckley at 12:45 pm, during discussion of this item.

37 Work Schedule

The report of the Head of Democratic Services submitted a report which detailed the Scrutiny Boards work schedule for the 2021/22 municipal year. The schedule was appended to the submitted report, together with the Executive Board minutes from the meeting held Wednesday, 20th October, 2021.

RESOLVED – To note the contents of the report and the work programme for the 2021/22 municipal year.

38 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Wednesday, 19th January 2022 (there will be a pre-meeting for all Board members at 10.15 am)

(The meeting concluded at 13:00)