

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE

1000 hours on 11th October 2018, Committee Room 6 – Actions

Present:

Councillor Liz Clements (Chair)

Councillors David Barrie, Zaker Choudhry, Kath Hartley, Timothy Huxtable and Hendrina Quinnen

Also Present:

Pete Bond, Director of Integrated Transport Services, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM)

Matthew Lewis, Head of Swift, TfWM

Jon Hayes, Head of Network Delivery, TfWM

Ali Bell, National Express West Midlands

Phil Hewitt, Director, West Midlands Metro, TfWM

Angela Hosford, Head of Sprint, TfWM

Phil Parkin, Bus Users, WM and TfWM Passenger Champion

Albert Thomas, Bus Users, WM and TfWM Passenger Champion

Rose Kiely, Overview & Scrutiny Manager, Scrutiny Office

Gail Sadler, Scrutiny Officer

Councillor Peter Fowler was also in attendance to observe.

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised those present that the meeting would be webcast for live and subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Josh Jones and Chaman Lal.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors Kath Hartley and Timothy Huxtable declared that they were members of the Transport Delivery Committee, West Midlands Combined Authority.

4. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S ACTION NOTES

The action notes of 13th September 2018 were noted.

5. BUS FRANCHISING AND THE INTERFACE WITH THE DEREGULATED BUS MARKET

(See document No.1)

Pete Bond (Director of Integrated Transport Services) and Matthew Lewis (Head of Swift), Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) provided a briefing note which set out the background to the current bus market including:-

- Regional and strategic context of bus.
- West Midlands bus market and legislation.
- West Midlands Bus Alliance.
- Bus Services Act 2017.

A presentation was also received providing the strategic vision for the future bus network in the West Midlands. Summarising the importance of the bus network in an integrated transport system and the challenges facing the bus and opportunities to implement change and transform the network.

The Strategic Vision for Bus will be presented to the West Midlands Combined Authority in November 2018 for approval.

The following issues were raised by members and TfWM Passenger Champions:-

- Travel behaviour patterns, trends and modal shift into the City Centre by train, car and bus.
- Services to access business parks.
- Park and Ride for buses.
- Hydrogen buses.
- Capital funding to shape the vision.
- 25% of the current bus fleet meet Euro 6 standard emissions with a target of 80% by 2020.
- Powers in the Bus Services Act 2017.

In response to the questions, members were told:-

- On the subject of trends and modal shift of travel into the City Centre e.g. commuters by rail travel into the City from beyond the conurbation area. With regards to the bus travel there are issues around congestion getting in and out

of the City Centre on the key route network. To encourage patronage recognised a need to introduce a package of measures to bring about reliability and punctuality of bus travel.

- Specifically in relation to Quinton Business Park, an offer has been made to meet and discuss the situation. More generally, looking at best practice in other areas to see what can be replicated.
- Where bus Park and Ride schemes have previously been put together reliability of the bus service has been an issue. Also, the strategic location of a scheme has to be correct. In other regions, they have been located too close to the City Centre and, therefore, under-used.
- With regard to hydrogen buses, there have been ongoing discussions between representatives from BCC and National Express. TfWM are due to meet with BCC to discuss timescales for roll-out and what services will be included.
- The West Midlands Bus Alliance Board seeks capital funding for development schemes. There is a review of those schemes which can be shared with members.
- Regarding the target of 80% of the bus fleet meeting Euro 6 emission standards by 2020, through the West Midlands Bus Alliance, seeking to progress to 100% by 2020. In order to do this, having to work closely with smaller operators who require different levels of support to reach the target.
- The Bus Services Act 2017 gives powers to Mayoral Combined Authorities to franchise bus services and also includes powers to enable the creation of an Enhanced Partnership. At the request of the regional Leaders, TfWM are currently undertaking a high level review of the powers contained within the Act to assess how it impacts against the vision.

RESOLVED:-

- Councillor Hartley asked for feedback on the progress of the I54 (fast bus) route in Wolverhampton.
- Councillor Hartley gave an overview of the work undertaken by the West Midlands Bus Alliance and suggested that committee members might like to visit the Safer Travel Suite based at Transport for West Midlands, Summer Lane and receive a short presentation on the work that is undertaken.
- Councillor Hartley also suggested that a session on 'Transport for West Midlands' might also be proposed as a Member Development Training Session.
- A report on the latest position regarding hydrogen buses scheme (managed by the City Council) should be brought back to committee at a later date.
- List of strategic schemes and how they contributed to the vision including the Bus Alliance Board's review of the funds secured for improvements to the highway.

SWIFT

Matthew Lewis (Head of Swift), TfWM presented an update on progress with the Swift smartcard which included:-

- The smartcard scheme for the West Midlands is the largest in the UK outside of the Oyster scheme in London.
- There is a pilot on trams for the Swift card to be available straightaway on a mobile phone app via Google Pay.
- Swift will also have the capability to be used to pay for parking at train stations. This is currently available in Sutton Coldfield and will be introduced at Bromsgrove.
- Contactless payment using a bank card is also available on 97% of buses. Tap and go is available on all NX services.
- Where the West Midlands currently stands regarding fares/smart ticketing is benchmarked against other metropolitan areas is available in chart form. A copy of which was given to the Chair.

RESOLVED:-

- That a copy of the presentation slides is circulated to members.

6. UPDATE ON BUS STOP RATIONALISATION PILOT

(See document No.2)

Jon Hayes (Head of Network Delivery) TfWM and Ali Bell, National Express West Midlands reported the results of a bus stop rationalisation trial undertaken on 4 corridors into the City Centre. The routes that formed part of the trial were: 8a/8c; 50; 45/47 and 63. The trial was also used as an active consultation process where comments/issues were monitored and investigated and, if necessary, mitigation measures implemented.

Members were told:-

- Work had been undertaken before the review to identify a minimal number of bus stops to take out where there was low usage in order to enhance bus journey times.
- Reliability/variability improved and made routes more attractive to bus passengers. Trends have continued to improve since the pilot finished in March.
- Actively monitored feedback and reintroduced 7 bus stops from the review after due consideration during the trial.
- Undertaking a strategic look at bus rationalisation and/or relocation of bus stops on other corridors.
- A delay in getting bus stops back into use was due to legislation.

TfWM representatives agreed with Councillor Huxtable that partnership working was fundamental and welcomed greater involvement with BCC to look at bus stop rationalisation.

Phil Parkin raised a particular issue regarding the X20 limited stop bus service which does not stop at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital (ROH). Ali Bell (National Express WM) confirmed that data regarding bus stop usage at the ROH would be gathered and analysed to ascertain the balance between the bus stopping and usage.

RESOLVED:-

- Councillor Hartley said that the rationalisation pilot had highlighted specific issues with the Pershore Road route and that the Transport Delivery Committee were going to undertake a study and take a site visit to travel the 45/47 bus routes. An invitation to attend the visit would be offered to all Councillors with wards along the route. It was also suggested that an update about the study should be reported to committee.

7. QUARTERLY UPDATE ON THE MIDLAND METRO EXTENSION AND BUS RAPID TRANSIT (SPRINT)

(See document No.3)

Phil Hewitt (Director, West Midlands Metro) gave a presentation covering, primarily, the progress with the Birmingham extensions.

- Paradise Circus had been delayed by 10 months mainly due to the collapse of the construction company Carillion.
- In order to keep the roads open around Paradise Circus work would have taken 20 months. Following consultation with BCC Highways and bus network it was agreed to close the roads for 9 months which would reduce costs and get the project back on target to open on schedule.
- Centenary Square – works had to be rescheduled to due HSBC requirements and a district heating main which runs through the area requiring an increased diversion and adding 2 months to the work. Will be looking at ways to mitigate against the 2 months delay.
- Will be buying another 50 trams. The procurement process is currently running to procure the first 18 trams.

Angela Hosford (Head of Sprint, TfWM) presented a report which gave some background to the proposed Sprint network and headlines from a consultation about the first three Sprint routes to be built in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2022. The consultation closed on Friday 28th September 2018.

- Set design parameters going forward.
- Schemes proposed for the region to West Midlands Combined Authority.
- Funding for transport schemes is through the devolution funding for Sprint.
- The funding for vehicles paper was approved by the Combined Authority in July 2017.
- After the 2022 Commonwealth Games was awarded to Birmingham in December, three priority Sprint schemes were identified to be delivered first.
- Funding through the HS2 Connectivity package.
- All schemes have gone through the Combined Authority Assurance and had approval.

- A report was presented to Cabinet in January 2018 setting out what had been discussed at the Combined Authority.
- Park and Ride do facilitate access to services but there is a need to look at this in a wider context for the region.
- Looking at operator arrangements. Sprint needs to be part of an integrated transport network.
- Headlines from the 6 week consultation period included the following forms of engagement:-
 - Online survey
 - Questionnaire in libraries
 - Phone line/email address
 - Customer Relations Management Service
 - Researchers on buses
 - Advertised in 266 locations around the region.
 - Social media – twitter/facebook
 - 13 consultation events
 - 13 Councillor sessions
- Currently analysing the data and more feedback will be available in due course.

In response to comments about lack of engagement at an event in Langley and the proposed planned Sprint route, Angela Hosford explained that there had been conflicts in terms of timing of events concerning the SPD and representation of Sprint but BCC officers who were in attendance would have been in a position to answer questions about Sprint. As for the proposed route, following a review of the feedback from the consultation an options appraisal report will be presented to Cabinet for a decision.

Further questions were raised with regard to:-

- The route between Smithfield (Digbeth) and the University of Birmingham(UoB).
- Using dis-used rail lines for Sprint e.g. the Harborne walkway.
- Who's doing the work to find the right solution i.e. feasibility work?

Members were told that the Smithfield to UoB route was not being progressed at the moment. Discussions are due to take place with BCC but there is no funding available for the scheme.

The Integrated Transport Systems looks at connectivity points. More information can be provided to the committee in due course.

When looking at Sprint routes growth and demand have to justify investment. When this is not the case, if a corridor for Sprint was not available, it was then handed over to another transport operator.

RESOLVED:-

- A copy of the Sprint report to be circulated to members.
- A further update report on the outcome of the consultation to be presented to the committee.
- A further report on the Integrated Transport System to be presented to committee at a later date.

8. SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSPORT O&S COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Huxtable requested that when the 'Flood Risk and Management Annual Report' is presented to committee at the 14th March 2019 meeting would it be possible for the Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment to feedback on the River Cole Partnership.

The Chair also clarified that the Work Programme had been re-ordered to accommodate inquiry sessions for the 'Plastic Free Birmingham' review at the January/February 2019 committee meetings.

Councillor Hartley referred to a visit which was taking place on Tuesday 16th October 2018 to see the new Sprint Shelters. Councillor Hartley will send details of the visit to the Scrutiny Officers to circulate.

Regarding the 'Plastic Free Birmingham' review, an email will be sent to members inviting them to attend an early evening visit to the Clean Kilo Supermarket, Digbeth.

9. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the date of the 14th March 2018/19 meeting was missing from the agenda sheet.

10. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS (IF ANY)

None.

11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

12. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

Agreed.

RESOLVED:-

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1220 hours.