



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Birmingham City Council Sustainability & Transport Scrutiny Committee

Date	11 th October 2018
Report title	Bus Stop Rationalisation – Next steps
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Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Sustainability & Transport Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- i. To note the decisions passed by Transport for West Midlands' Transport Delivery Committee, as its meeting on 14th May 2018, with regards to the trial of bus stop rationalisation as follows;
 - a. To note the positive elements that the trial of the principle of bus stop rationalisation has had on bus performance including patronage, journey times, reliability and variability.
 - b. That the current bus stops which are closed as part of the trial remain closed pending more detailed consideration and reporting, with responsibility for a final decision relating to each stop delegated to the Director of Integrated Services in consultation with Putting Passengers First (PPF) Lead Members Group.
 - c. The Principle of Bus Stop Rationalisation be considered on other routes in the region inclusive of a review of the methodology used for the initial pilot. The Director of Integrated services will have delegated responsibility to make any future decisions on such pilots in consultation with the PPF Lead Members Group and TDC lead Members.

- d. TfWM seek a greater level of direct or indirect support from operators including financial remuneration, towards permanently implementing the existing trial and further role out.
- ii. Note the actions taken by TfWM since the 14th May to implement the actions approved by the Transport Delivery Committee and the Putting Passengers First Lead Members Group.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Birmingham City Councils' Sustainability and Transport scrutiny Committee with the results of the bus stop rationalisation trial undertaken on 4 corridors in the Birmingham area and report the recommended next steps agreed by TfWM's Transport Delivery Committee.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Congestion continues to pose significant challenges to the West Midlands. Traffic remains at record levels whilst delivering the region's ambitious growth agenda in creating jobs, housing and accommodating HS2 and extensions to the Metro has further increased road space pressures and reduced network resilience, particularly for buses. This issue has become most pronounced in Birmingham where buses on average now take 20% longer to reach their destination during peak hours than 3 years ago.
- 2.2 In dealing with the congestion challenge, TfWM is leading a multi-agency approach to coordinate, communicate and mitigate network disruption, ensuring the region can continue to grow whilst more capacity is built into the integrated transport system in the longer term. Ensuring the bus network continues to keep moving through disruption lies at the heart of this strategy, maintaining stability for existing passengers whilst encouraging non-users to consider bus as the principle mode of choice for local journeys.
- 2.3 Through the West Midlands Bus alliance officers have been developing a comprehensive programme of measures aimed at treating both the causes and symptoms of delay on the bus network, including new bus lanes, priority for buses at traffic signals and other traffic management measures. Nearly £10m of capital investment is being delivered in 2018 alone. As part of this comprehensive approach, the potential for rationalising under-used stops on key corridors was identified as a measure which could be trialled to improve journey times and reliability.
- 2.4 In September 2017 a report was presented to the Transport Delivery Committee (TDC) which detailed work being under taken by Transport for West Midlands

(TfWM) on 'Busting Delay on the Bus Network' with the aim of improving journey times, reliability and punctuality for bus users.

- 2.5 As part of this package of work TDC approved a recommendation to undertake a trial to rationalise bus stops within the South Birmingham Network Review Area and pursuant to the emerging objectives of the wider Strategic Area action Plan. This report and pilot was subsequently examined by Birmingham City Councils sustainability and Transport Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 19th October 2017.
- 2.6 The bus stop rationalisation trial commenced on the 1st October with a view to being in place for 6 months, to the end of March 2018, after which a report on the findings was presented to TDC for final view on the success or otherwise of the scheme. Since the acceptance of the recommendations by TDC officers have been working with the PPF Lead Member group to implement the final approved action for each of the stops within the trial.
- 2.7 The final report was considered by TDC at its meeting on 14th May 2018. The following recommendations were accepted by TDC;
 - To note the positive elements that the trial of the principle of bus stop rationalisation has had on bus performance including patronage, journey times, reliability and variability.
 - That the current bus stops which are closed as part of the trial remain closed pending more detailed consideration and reporting, with responsibility for a final decision relating to each stop delegated to the Director of Integrated Services in consultation with Putting Passengers First (PPF) Lead Members Group.
 - The Principle of Bus Stop Rationalisation be considered on other routes in the region inclusive of a review of the methodology used for the initial pilot. The Director of Integrated services will have delegated responsibility to make any future decisions on such pilots in consultation with the PPF Lead Members Group and TDC lead Members.
 - TfWM seek a greater level of direct or indirect support from operators including financial remuneration, towards permanently implementing the existing trial and further role out.

3.0 Outcomes

- 3.1 To put the review into context it should be considered that whilst TfWM are responsible for the provision and maintenance of bus stops in the region the decision to use them is a fully commercial one for the operators. Whilst the TDC has made a decision on whether the stops are open or closed for use it remains a decision for the operators as to whether they serve them. There are a number of

examples where limited stop services have been introduced on a corridor to improve journey speeds with intermittent stops served by other local services.

3.2 The following routes formed part of the trial;

Service Number	Corridor	Number of Stops	
		Inbound	Outbound
8a/8c	Inner Circle	10 (8a)	12 (8c)
50	Alcester Road	8	7
45/47	Pershore Road	6	4
63	Bristol Road	6	6

3.3 It had initially been proposed to including service 6 (Birmingham – Hall Green – Shirley – Solihull) in the trial. However this was withdrawn due to accessibility concerns following the detailed study of the route and highlighted by the subsequent Equalities Impact Assessment.

3.4 A full list of the stops is included in Appendix A.

3.5 During the trial the following metrics have been recorded;

- Customer & Stakeholder feedback – TfWM
- Patronage – NXWM
- Journey Time – NXWM
- Reliability – NXWM
- Variability – NXWM

3.6 Each of these metrics is considered in more detail below.

Customer and Stakeholder feedback

3.7 As part of the trial TfWM committed to working with National Express West Midlands (NXWM) to ensure that we remained engaged with all our stakeholders to ensure that they understood the reasons for the trial and actively sought feedback on their views.

3.8 Two weeks prior to the implementing the trial vinyl posters were displayed at each of the affected bus stops informing users of the trial and giving details of the next nearest stops. Details of a dedicated phone number and other methods of communication were provided giving direct access to a team of fully briefed officers at TfWM. The posters also gave details of an on-line form where we actively sought views and opinions on the trial.

3.9 Prior to the trial TfWM undertook an Equalities Impact Assessment to ensure we better understood the potential impact of the trial on all members of the

community. TfWM disseminated information via access groups and through talking pages.

3.10 Details of the trial were provided through various media channels including social media, local and national printed press and local radio.

3.11 In addition to TfWM and NXWM officers attending the Birmingham City Council Economy, Skills and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee we also attended various local ward forums and provided briefings and updates to local MPs and for other senior stakeholders.

3.12 Throughout the trial period regular updates have been provided to the Putting Passengers First (PPF) Lead members group within TfWM including reporting on key findings and any emerging issues.

3.13 During the trial period TfWM received 272 separate points of communication. This included phone calls, emails, letters and responses to the feedback form. This is an average of 4.5 cases per stop, in some cases we have received more than one piece of communication from an individual which is inclusive within the 272 responses.

3.14 The table below summarises this communication by corridor;

Route	Comments	Total Number of stops	Average comments per stop
8a / 8c (Inner Circle)	16	22	0.72
50 (Alcester Road)	56	15	3.73
45/47 (Persore Road)	49	10	4.90
63 (Bristol Road)	58	12	4.83
General (not corridor specific)	93	-	-
TOTAL	272	59	4.6

3.15 The trial was advertised as being an active consultation process during which comments were monitored and where a fundamental issue was reported then an investigation was undertaken and any mitigation measures were implemented. This action included the reinstatement of the stop or consideration of alternative stops to be included within the trial. During the period of the trial the following stops were reinstated;

- Pershore Road / South Drive opposite the Tally Ho Police training Centre (service 45/47) inbound stop only
- Alcester Road / Moor Green Lane (service 50) both directions
- Pershore Road / Breedon Road (service 45/47) both directions
- Highgate Middleway / Leopold Street (service 50) reinstated but swapped with Highgate Middleway/ Conybere Street which is now suspended (inbound).
- Northfield Shopping Centre

Customer Comments

3.16 The majority of comments received as part of the trial were negative. This is understandable given the trial was only sign-posted at the stops which were affected. Therefore the feedback did not include the vast majority of passengers which will have gained from the improvements in journey times and improvements in punctuality. As part of the trial we have received a number of positive comments from people agreeing with the principle of the trial and from having seen the benefits to their journeys.

3.17 The comments we have received as part of the trial have been grouped in to a number of theme areas each of which is discussed in turn below;

Choice of stops closed

3.18 Feedback questioned how we had made the decision to close those stops identified in the trial and that in some cases this had inconvenienced individuals or created unforeseen issues such as requiring a further walk on a gradient, having to cross busy roads or stops in the vicinity of certain key destinations.

3.19 The initial study prior to the trial considered a number of key metrics;

- TfWM adopted bus stop access standards;
- Relative levels of use;
- Accommodating future development;
- Connectivity to local services and facilities
- Interchange with other modes.

3.20 The studies concluded that Birmingham had the highest ratio of bus stop density in Europe with over provision in a number of areas. In a number of cases bus stops are as little as 130m apart. The study went on to define that a number of stops could be removed along the corridors without affecting the adopted 400m access standard nor connectivity to key local services / facilities and/or interchange with other modes.

- 3.21 The purpose of the trial was to undertake a dynamic consultation which actively reviewed all correspondence and to better understand any concerns raised as a part of the trial. This was undertaken and in some cases resulted in the reopening of swapping of other stops within the trial.
- 3.22 If we are to continue to consider such rationalisation of stops on other corridors a review of the methodology used to determine which stops to be included is recommended. This should include local accessibility giving greater consideration to the changed walking route including the need to cross principle roads or junctions, with or without pedestrians crossing, passenger walking routes around key strategic centres and any significant change in gradient.

Stop Usage

- 3.23 A number of respondents asked a question pertaining to the advantage of closing stops which reportedly had the fewest number of users. The argument being that if limited numbers were using the stop and / or only periodically used then there was limited advantage from the stop being included in the trial.
- 3.24 The work undertaken prior to the review identified and included relatively low used stops. However whilst these stops have low usage they are used regularly meaning that a high proportion of buses have to stop increasing journey times for the vast majority of passengers and benefitting very few.

Increased Journey Time

- 3.25 For a relatively small number of passengers the rationalisation trial will have extended their overall journey time. Unfortunately this will be the case as a small number of people will be required to walk slightly further, but within TfWM access standards, with the closure of some stops. However the results have shown that with the increase in journey time and service reliability the vast majority of passengers will have benefitted from the trial.

Operational Measures

- 3.26 The trial was successful at improving both journey times and overall variability. A summary of impact on patronage and punctuality, provided by NXWM for the period of the trial, is provided in Appendix B.
- 3.27 The reported patronage data is reported as year on year patronage set against the network trend this takes account of seasonal variation. An average route would be 0. As identified routes in South Birmingham have been most significantly hit by congestion which has led to greater than average reductions in patronage.
- 3.28 Punctuality is a measure of the number of buses which arrive on time, as defined by the Traffic Commissioner. In this case this relates to the proportion of buses

arriving (on average) at stops along the route in the window of 1 minute early to 5 minutes late.

Inner Circle

3.29 In the three months (July to September) before the trial patronage on the 8a/8c was on average 5.2% below average. For the last 3 months of the trial, January to March, this has improved to 0.8% below average. This equates to an additional 1,700 weekly passenger trips than had been forecast for that period. In addition punctuality has also improved from 74.2% of buses being on time to over 78%.

Alcester Road

3.30 Service 50 which operates on the Alcester Road corridor has seen an improvement in patronage from being 2.2% below the average trend in the 3 months prior to the trial to 0.4% in the last three months. This equates to an additional 1,100 weekly passenger trips above the forecast trend. In addition punctuality has also improved with an additional 6.2% of buses operating within the punctuality window. During the period of the trial service 50 has seen the greatest improvement in punctuality.

Pershore Road

3.31. Of the 4 corridors included in the trial the 45 and 47 services have seen the lowest level of improvements. In the three months before the trial patronage was 2% below the average trend. For the latest 3 months this had reduced to 1.8% accounting to just 38 passengers per week. Similarly punctuality has seen a smaller improvement rising by 2.9% to 76.1% of services operating on-time.

Bristol Road

3.32 Of all the corridors in the trial Bristol Road has the worst punctuality for buses. At the start of the trial 65.3% of services operated on-time. In the last three months of the trial this had increased by 4.9% to 70.2% of buses. Patronage has also seen an improvement rising from being 0.5% below the trend to a real term increase above the trend of 4.2%. This equates to an additional 1,792 passengers each week.

3.33 In summary; punctuality on all services has improved faster than the improving trend; Patronage has increased against the declining trend; journey times are up to 3 minutes faster for the majority of users; over the 6 month period of the trial nearly 106,000 additional passenger trips have been taken against the declining trend.

Overall

3.34 Since the trial was complete we have continued to monitor the key metrics to determine the longer term outcome. For June, the last neutral month on the network, the following punctuality levels were seen on each of the corridors;

- Pershore Road 76.7
- Alcester Road 79.7
- Bristol Road 71.6 (subject to considerable road works for BCR)
- Inner Circle 76.7
- Whole network 83.1

3.35 Since the completion of the trial patronage has continued to improve against the forecast trend.

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 The data within the report shows that there has been an improvement to journey times, reliability and variability on the specified routes in South Birmingham during the period of the trial. Whilst there will have been other factors on the routes affecting these metrics it is safe to say that some of these benefits will have been derived from the bus stop rationalisation trial.

4.2 During the same period, on these corridors, we have also seen a more positive patronage trend with decline seemingly slowed compared to other routes in the region. In real terms this reflects an increase in patronage against the forecast.

4.3 During the period of the trial there have been a number of local issues which through the active nature of the trial / period of consultation we have looked to address, including reopening and altering some of the stops included within the trial.

4.4 Since the recommendations were agreed by TDC at its meeting on the 14th May 2018 TfWM officers have subsequently been working with the Putting Passenger First Lead Member Group to determine the final action for each stop included within the trial; this is defined in Appendix A. In summary;

- Stops removed – 32 (54%)
- Stops retained – 11 (19%)
- Stops requiring further analysis – 9 (15%)
- Reinstated during trial – 7 (12%)

4.5 Work to remove the agreed stops has been complete however some infrastructure, such as bus shelters, remains on the network awaiting removal / relocation. Where this is the case we have provided clear information for passengers that the stops are no longer served.

- 4.6 Retained stops will come back in to use from Sunday 28th October.
- 4.5 Work has continued to identify a number of locations and corridors where bus stop rationalisation could be an option to help in improving journey times and reliability without having a significant impact on passengers. Opportunities to coincide any rationalisation of stops with wider transport improvements will be identified and undertaken with full consultation with stakeholders and passengers.

Appendix A

List of all stops included in the Pilot Bus Stop Rationalisation Trial summarising the number of comments received about each stop and the proposed action following the trial.

Stops listed in red were reinstated or exchanged for another stop during the period of the trial.

No	Location	No. Comments	Route Number	Action
1	CLIFFORD STREET, Lozells School	1	8a	TBC pending further analysis
2	NURSERY ROAD, Burbury Street	1	8a	Remove
3	ICKNIELD STREET, Spring Hill Island/Camden Street	1	8a	TBC pending further analysis
4	LADYWOOD MIDDLEWAY, Ledsam Street	0	8a	Remove
5	LADYWOOD MIDDLEWAY, Morville Street	0	8a	Remove
6	BELGRAVE ROAD, Pershore Road	0	8a	Remove
7	HIGHGATE ROAD, Queen Street/Sparkbrook	0	8a	Remove
8	MUNTZ STREET, Coventry Rd/Small Heath	1	8a	Remove
9	VICTORIA STREET, Bordesley Green	3	8a	Remove
10	BORDESLEY GREEN ROAD, Ronald Road	2	8a	Remove
11	ADDERLEY ROAD, Crawford Street	0	8c	Remove
12	ASH ROAD, Hall Road	0	8c	Remove

13	BORDESLEY GREEN ROAD, Ronald Road	0	8c	Remove
14	BORDESLEY GREEN ROAD, Bordesley Green	0	8c	Remove
15	MUNTZ STREET, Coventry Road/Small Heath	1	8c	Remove
16	GOLDEN HILLOCK ROAD, Wordsworth Road / Waverley Road	0	8c	Remove
17	WALFORD ROAD, Stratford Road	3	8c	TBC pending further analysis
18	BELGRAVE ROAD, Pershore Road	1	8c	Remove
19	LADYWOOD MIDDLEWAY, Ledsam Street	0	8c	Remove
20	ICKNIELD STREET, Spring Hill Island / Camden Street	1	8c	TBC pending further analysis
21	GERRARD STREET, Lozells Street	1	8c	Remove
22	CLIFFORD STREET, Lozells School	0	8c	TBC pending further analysis
23	PERSHORE ROAD, Edward Rd	4	45/47 outbound	TBC pending further analysis
24	PERSHORE ROAD, South Drive Tally Ho	0	45/47 outbound	Remove
25	PERSHORE ROAD, First Avenue	8	45/47 outbound	TBC pending further analysis
26	PERSHORE ROAD, Breedon Road / Frances Road	8	45/47 outbound	Reinstated during trial
27	PERSHORE ROAD, Breedon Road / Frances Road	7	45/47 Inbound	Reinstated during trial
28	PERSHORE RD, Hazelwell Road	4	45/47 Inbound	Remove
29	Pershore Road, South Drive Tally Ho	8	45/47	Reinstated during trial

			Inbound	
30	Pershore, First Avenue	7	45/47 Inbound	TBC pending further analysis
31	Pershore Road, Edward Road	2	45/47 Inbound	TBC pending further analysis
32	PERSHORE STREET, Birmingham Wholesale Market	1	45/47 Inbound	Remove
33	ALCESTER RD SOUTH, Amwell Grove	2	50 Inbound	Remove
34	MILLPOOL HILL, Warstock Road	0	50 Inbound	Retain
35	ALCESTER ROAD SOUTH, Betton Road	3	50 Inbound	Retain
36	ALCESTER ROAD, Moor Green Lane	8	50 Inbound	Reinstated during trial
37	ALCESTER ROAD, Louise Lorne Road	1	50 Inbound	Remove
38	HIGHGATE MIDDLEWAY, Leopold Street	9	50 Inbound	Reinstated during trial
39	MOSELEY ROAD, Moseley Street	4	50 Inbound	Remove
40	BRADFORD STREET, Birchall Street	1	50 Inbound	Retain
41	BRADFORD STREET, Birchall Street	1	50 Outbound	Retain
42	MOSELEY RD, Moseley Street	1	50 Outbound	Remove
43	MOSELEY RD, Athole Street	0	50 Outbound	Remove
44	ALCESTER RD, Louise Lorne Road	0	50 Outbound	Remove
45	ALCESTER RD, Moor Green Lane	8	50 Outbound	Reinstated during trial
46	MILLPOOL HILL, Warstock Road	14	50	Retain

			Outbound	
47	BELLS LANE, Kimpton Close	4	50 Outbound	Remove
48	BRISTOL STREET, Rickman Drive	10	63 Outbound	Reinstate
49	BRISTOL RD, Viceroy Close	1	63 Outbound	Retain
50	BRISTOL RD, Hubert Rd	4	63 Outbound	Remove
51	BRISTOL RD, Langleys Road	5	63 Outbound	Remove
52	BRISTOL RD SOUTH, Northfield Shopping Centre	25	63 Outbound	Reinstated during trial
53	BRISTOL RD SOUTH, Mavis Rd	3	63 Outbound	Retain
54	BRISTOL RD SOUTH, Broughton Crescent	1	63 Inbound	Remove
55	BRISTOL RD SOUTH, Mavis Rd	1	63 Inbound	Remove
56	BRISTOL RD SOUTH, South Rd/Fire Station	5	63 Inbound	Retain
57	BRISTOL RD, Langleys Road	2	63 Inbound	Remove
58	BRISTOL STREET, Rickman Drive	0	63 Inbound	Retain
59	BRISTOL RD, Viceroy Close	1	63 Inbound	Retain
Misc	Misc comments - cases and surveys – these can include meeting invitations, general comments about trial and locations not in the trial etc	93		
TOTAL		242		

Corridor	YoY pax vs network trend (an average route would be 0)					Extra weekly pax	Punctuality		
	Jan to Mar 17	Apr to Jun 17	Jul to Sep 17	Oct to Dec 17	Jan to Mar 18		Oct to Dec 17	Jan to Mar 18	Trend change
Whole network	-	-	-	-	-	-	80.6%	82.0%	1.4%
Pershore Rd	(1.2%)	(1.8%)	(2.0%)	(1.8%)	(1.8%)	38	73.2%	76.1%	2.9%
Alcester Rd	(1.1%)	(2.3%)	(2.2%)	(1.4%)	(0.4%)	1,099	70.2%	76.4%	6.2%
Bristol Rd	(0.1%)	(1.6%)	(0.5%)	2.5%	4.2%	1,792	65.3%	70.2%	4.9%
Inner Circle	(5.1%)	(7.7%)	(5.2%)	(3.9%)	(0.8%)	1,709	74.2%	78.1%	3.9%
Total for pilot routes	(1.5%)	(2.8%)	(2.2%)	(0.8%)	0.5%	4,608			

Total extra pax since introduction **126,386**

