

Transport Committee

4 April 2019

Present: Councillor L Robinson, Chair
Councillor G Friel, Deputy Chair

Councillors R Abbey, D Baum, A Carr, J Dodd,
S Foulkes, P Hayes, H Howard, J Jackson, D Johnson,
A Lavelle, P McKinley, N Nicholas, M O'Mara OBE,
G Pearl, K Roberts, J Stockton, C Rowe, H Thompson,
J Williams and F Wynn.

103. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dennis Baum.

104. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

105. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Transport Committee held on 7th March 2019, be approved as a correct record subject to the word “strategy” being changed to “priority” on Page 3, Minute No. 97, 6th paragraph, 1st sentence.

106. **Quarterly Bus Update**

The Committee considered a report from Matt Goggins relating to Quarter 4 of the Bus Alliance update of 2018/19. He highlighted the following: -

- Improving Bus Punctuality;
 - Five bus corridors have been initially identified to be targeted for improvements – A57 (Prescot Road), A562 (Smithdown Road), B5178 (Wavertree Road Corridor), the A59 (Walton Road/Scotland Road) and A567 (Stanley Road) corridors.
 - A Steering Group with representatives from the Combined Authority, Knowsley MBC, Liverpool City Council, Sefton MBC and St Helens MBC and the Bus Alliance Operators will oversee feasibility work;

- The Green Routes Programme will be reported to both the LCR Bus Alliance and Key Route Network Groups on a regular basis and will focus on commuter corridors in order to have the greatest impact on passenger numbers.
- Liverpool City Region Bus Alliance;
 - The Business and Investment Plan has been agreed by the Board and focus on three priority areas –
 - Improving Network Punctuality, Reliability and Resilience;
 - Improving the Customer Journey; and
 - Customer Development and Growth.
 - Bus Patronage for Q3 of 2018/19 has shown a 9% increase in fare paying passenger journeys compared with the same period in the last financial year.
 - Customer Satisfaction is slightly down from 92% to 91% of bus passengers satisfied with their journeys, but this figure is still joint highest of any customer satisfaction of any UK Metropolitan area.
 - City Centre Bus Re-routing Strategy has now been aligned with the Liverpool City Centre Bus Strategy.
 - Bus Hub achieved its planning permission and will now move to the next stage to finalise plans for bus routes.
 - Pioneering the installation of the Traffic Signal Bus Priority Scheme that is different from the traditional triggers.
- Liverpool City Region Devolution Deal; and
 - Strategic Outline Business Case continues to be developed with an aim for it be completed by 2020.
- Other key work areas.
 - City Centre Enforcement
 - Stops and Shelters Inspection Programme
 - ETM Migration to Ticketer

Members of the Committee raised the following key issues during the discussions –

- There have been changes to the bus network and budgets, but what stands out is the city regions increase in patronage;
- There have been huge improvements in relation to the bus patronage, congratulations to the officer team.

- Are there any comparisons to the other Combined Authorities regarding the bus patronage?
- How are the discussions with the smaller operators progressing in relation to joining the bus alliance?
- Good news about the Wirral replacement bus service and a warm welcome to Selwyn's, however local residents are still campaigning for evening services.
- What's the financial implications of the Woodchurch Road corridor?
- Is there any data available for the City Centre Enforcement issues?
- With the migration to Ticketer would Arriva and Stagecoach be compliant.

Matt Goggins responded to the enquiries and informed the Committee that: -

- There was a target of a 10% journey speed increases for end-to-end travel that would enable Merseytravel to be more efficient.
- As part of the Bus Alliance Board there has been positive dialogue with two bus operators, about ongoing housekeeping, partnership arrangements and contracts for voting mechanisms, once it is completed, the 2 operators will sign up to the alliance.
- No progress has been made so far with the smaller bus operators, but discussions are continuing relating to the benefits and the partnership working, but it is believed that the perception among the smaller operators is that the bar is too high to join the Alliance Board.
- There have been small increases in two other Combined Authorities relating to bus patronage mainly due to fare pricing, but the other Combined Authorities have reported decreases.
- No costs have been worked out yet relating to the Woodchurch Road corridor, as there is no budget attached.
- The City Centre Enforcement Team were dealing with issues relating to indiscriminate parking and drop offs, deliveries not being done at the agreed time and over-ranking of taxis. Enforcement and actions have been put in place and particular concerns were taken to the Licensing Department.
- Arriva and Stagecoach are compliant with what Merseytravel are trying to do with the Ticketer, but the challenge are the smaller operators.

Members of the Committee then raised the following key issues during the discussions –

- Can the bus corridors in the Wavertree Road Corridor be identified, as it is quite a long road?
- Targeted improvements must be made to punctuality and reliability across the bus network along certain routes in the city region e.g. the 68-bus route that often never turns up or is always running late.
- How often are the quality checks done on the bus stops and shelters?
- Merseytravel puts the entire infrastructure in place to reduce journey times and travelling time for residents and the number of buses on the road as well and it must procure a saving for the operators. Has Merseytravel considered producing a transport model which sees the “savings” being shared to include Merseytravel through cheaper fares or a “collective pot” to put the money accumulated.
- The quality of information at bus stops and shelters are usually out of date, confusing for the elderly and incorrect in terms of schedules. Can information not be simplified for the elderly in terms of showing routes and stops like other cities?
- There is usually a lot of congestion on Prescott Road with the number of 10 and 10A buses along the route with different bus operators running the same schedules all day. Can nothing be done about this?

Matt Goggins responded to the further enquiries and informed the Committee that: -

- Merseytravel are currently looking at the network and data and have identified significant issues across 5 main corridors that is being looked at initially with further work to be done across other areas of the city region in due course.
- The area identified as part of the Wavertree Road corridor is from the City Centre to the end of the Wavertree Road, but details can be circulated to the Committee.
- Bus stops and shelters are quality checked once a month, but not all are checked as there are patterns and themes that the contractor can identify to assist with the process and in the event that anything needs addressing.
- Merseytravel are starting to think through the benefits to the infrastructure put in place as well as the savings, but there has been no progress made with any discussions yet, but totally agree that the benefit to the operator needs to be invested back into the services.

- Will look into the issues relating to the 10 and 10A along the Prescott Road but commercial bus operators can register and run whatever routes it wants as it is a private service and is a product of the system.
- Will provide feedback regarding the timetables and schedules at bus stops and shelters and how the information is displayed.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson agreed with a number of the comments made by the Committee relating to the infrastructure and savings as well as the information being displayed on bus stops and shelters and stated that Merseytravel should also be looking at the devolved powers to see what could be done.

RESOLVED that the Transport Committee: -

- a) notes the contents of the report;
- b) be provided with additional detail relating to the Wavertree Road corridor;
- c) be kept up to date with the issues raised relating to the 10 and 10A bus route along Prescott Road; and
- d) be provided with details of the “bus stop and shelters” inspection programme relating to the frequency of the quality checks.

107. **Public Question Time**

The Committee received two questions from Mr Andrew Wennell as follows: -

Question 1

This is in relation to the bus route 61 & X1 in Greenway Road, Runcorn.

Both these bus services operate on a 30-minute frequency but they turn up in Greenway Road at around the same time.

So rather than on average a 15 minute frequency down this road it's more like one time to get which-ever bus you need.

So is there anything that can be done to improve the frequency down this road?

The Chair thanked Mr Wennell for submitting his question and for attending the meeting and informed him that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.

Question 2

Everyone is talking about using smart ticketing etc. on buses, trains & ferries in Merseyside, but you are unable to use mobile tickets on Mersey rail.

On Mersey Ferries you still have to queue up in the terminal to collect a ticket to travel.

- a) Why can't they have scanners at the top of the pontoon to get though quicker for the ferry?
- b) Walrus cards work for Mersey Rail but not the mobile ticket option, why?

The Chair thanked Mr Wennell for submitting his question and for attending the meeting and informed him that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.

108. **Petitions and Statements**

No petitions or statements were submitted for this meeting.

109. **Any Other Urgent Business Approved by the Chair**

The Chair agreed to discuss the following urgent business: -

a) Funding for 5 Train Stations

Councillor Gordon Friel informed the Committee that funding had been approved by Government for Birkenhead Park, Broad Green, Hillside, St Michael's and Hunts Cross Stations to improve disabled access by installing new lifts to provide step-free access to platforms. The officer team were thanked and congratulated for their involvement.

b) Vote of Thanks

The Chair, Councillor Robinson informed the Committee that it was the last meeting of the Transport Committee for this municipal year and he wanted the Committee to thank and bid farewell to Councillors Ron Abbey and Keith Roberts who had been involved in Merseytravel and the Transport Committee.

The Chair informed the Committee that Councillor Roberts had been involved in the Transport Committee for about 4 years and been the Lead Member for Ferries and Visitor Economy and had been involved in the process from the start for the new Mersey Ferries and on behalf of the Committee expressed his gratitude for all his hard work and contributions to the Committee.

Councillor Keith Roberts thanked the Chair for his kind words and thanked the Committee for their support over the last 4 years and expressed his appreciation to the brilliant officers of the organisation including Gary and Shane over the last 12 months.

The Chair also informed the Committee that Councillor Ron Abbey had been involved in Merseytravel and the Transport Committee for the last 16 years and was a real ambassador for the organisation for many years. He had held the position of Lead Member for Bus bringing both his knowledge and experience as a former bus driver himself. He had contributed a lot toward the bus service operators including the young people offers over the years and had been a real team player and on behalf of the Committee again expressed his gratitude and heartfelt thanks for the last 16 years and his contributions to the travelling public.

Councillor Ron Abbey also thanked the Chair for his kind words and thanked the Committee for their support. He expressed great pride for working with Merseytravel over the years, but re-iterated the importance of the good officers who worked behind the scenes of the organisation from top to bottom. He stated that it was a real opportunity to change the way people travelled across the city region and how as an organisation it managed the cost of travel going forward and making it affordable for everyone.

CHAIR OF THE TRANSPORT COMMITTEE