

# LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

To: The Chair and Members of the Transport Committee

Meeting: 31 January 2019

Authority/Authorities Affected: All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: No

## REPORT OF MERSEYTRAVEL

### QUARTERLY BUS UPDATE

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members of the Transport Committee on key bus issues relating to the third quarter of 2018/19.
- 1.2 Specifically, the report will provide Members with the third quarterly Bus Alliance update of 2018/19, the latest progress on improving the procurement, management and quality of supported services through a series of reforms, and progress on developing the commitment of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Devolution Deal in respect of improving bus services, along with updates on a number of other key matters.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is recommended that Members of the Transport Committee note the contents of the report.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

##### 3.1 Improving Bus Punctuality

- 3.1.1 Merseytravel is leading on developing a range of interventions that will transform the bus offer across the Liverpool City Region and greatly improve the appeal of bus against private transport. This work aligns with both the aspirations of the Bus Alliance and the Transforming Cities Fund.
- 3.1.2 The Combined Authority of the Liverpool City Region (LCRCA) has agreed, as part of its approach to commissioning projects through the Transforming Cities Fund, that improving bus journeys should be one of its three thematic priorities for the region.
- 3.1.3 Through Bus Alliance Workshops and analysing route data, five bus corridors have been initially prioritised to be targeted for improvements.

These are A57 (Prescot Road), A562 (Smithdown Road), B5178 (Wavertree Road Corridor), the A59 (Walton Road / Scotland Road) and A567 (Stanley Road) Corridors. These corridors were chosen as they have the greatest numbers of services and passengers travelling along them and link future areas of development in the Liverpool City Region

- 3.1.4 A Steering group comprising of representatives from Merseytravel, Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Liverpool City Council, Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council and operators of the Bus Alliance operators, will oversee feasibility work including the development of the overall approach, with specific working groups developing the detailed transformational improvement plans for each corridor. The Steering Group met for the first time in December 2018 with a programme of meetings planned for the New Year. Progress will be reported to both the LCR Bus Alliance, the Key Route Network (KRN) Group and the Transport Advisory Group (TAG) on a regular basis.

## **3.2 LCR Bus Alliance**

- 3.2.1 The first draft of the 2019/20 LCR Bus Alliance Business and Investment Plan has been completed and outlines proposed investment and milestones which aim to improve punctuality and reliability across the network, improve the customer journey experience, ensure a simple, easy to understand bus network, reduce the environmental impact of bus travel and increase its social value and to increase patronage and bus as the mode of choice. This draft is to be considered by the Bus Alliance Programme Board in early January before being approved before the end of the financial year.
- 3.2.2 The milestones and Key Performance indicators of the LCR Bus Alliance are laid out in the Performance Management framework 2018/2019, along with the 2018/19 investment plan and 2017 – 2020 Outcome measures.
- 3.2.3 In quarter three of 2018/19, completed milestones of the LCR Bus Alliance have included:-
- (a) The successful Intelligent Traffic Signalling (ITS) trial (where existing traffic signals are used to prioritise the movement of buses) that took place on Route 10 earlier in the year, has now been evaluated and the condition of the traffic signal infrastructure on route 86 has been reviewed prior to the roll out of this technology at 31 junctions along this route by the end of quarter four.
  - (b) The bus stop clearway and bus boarders design at the Muirhead Avenue East /Marldon Road junction has been completed and the stop is now being monitored to determine if the changes made have solved the indiscriminate parking problem.
  - (c) The Bus Services Protocol has been agreed and is now being implemented. As part of the Bus Alliance, bus operators (Stagecoach & Arriva) have agreed to consult on significant changes to commercial services in advance of making any changes. In line with this agreement, Merseytravel will also consult on any significant changes proposed to the supported network.

To date, consultation has taken place on 408/409 Arriva Service, 204 and X3 Stagecoach services, 121, 214/215 supported services and we are currently in the process of consulting on 106 service. Engagement with both stakeholders and the public has taken place to encourage feedback to inform the process and the inaugural tranche of the process has worked well overall with some adjustments to the process to be included when it is next used.

- (d) New Stagecoach vehicles have been introduced to the network during Quarter 3. This comprises a £3.4 million spend on seventeen new buses that are predominantly operating along the 10A route and a further £70,000 on the refurbishment of fourteen others operating along 20/21 route.

Arriva is scheduled to spend £2 million on the introduction of new vehicles in Quarter 1 of 2019/20. In the meantime, 30 existing Arriva vehicles have been refurbished at a cost of £180,000.

3.2.4 Progress is ongoing in delivering the following key milestones:-

- (a) Punctuality improvement works along the A59 bus corridor continue as planned, with drawings and design work for all three schemes either under development or with Liverpool City Council for consideration.
- (b) A number of traffic modelling studies are underway. At Wavertree Road, the topographical survey is complete and a revised road marking scheme is currently being designed by Liverpool City Council. While traffic observations undertaken on the Woodchurch Road corridor in the AM and PM peaks, have identified inefficient signalling and initiated conversations regarding the current state of the traffic control system in this area and possible improvements that could be made.
- (c) The review of bus station departure charges continues, with changes based on a more progressive discount/penalty scheme linked to vehicle emission standards currently being consulted on with bus operators. These are due to be implemented in early 2019 and subject to a separate report.
- (d) The 'Vote Bus' marketing campaign was completed in Quarter 3 as part of the wider Better by Bus campaign and included social media activities, Facebook and Instagram brand awareness advertising campaigns, along with targeted digital, on bus and radio campaigns.
- (e) Work is progressing with planning and implementing the Bus Rerouting Strategy as part of the Liverpool City Centre Connectivity Programme. Although planning approval is still to be agreed, the City Centre Bus Hub is due for completion during the first quarter of 2019/20. Proposed plans for Duke Street have been shared with Liverpool City Council and a design for parking spaces, bus stops and changes to the speed reduction measures are now agreed, which support the bus routing requirements relating to the wider Liverpool City Centre Connectivity schemes.

### **3.3 LCR Devolution Deal – alternative delivery model for bus**

- 3.3.1 The development of the Outline Business Case (OBC) is split into four phases with Phase one (advance preparation) having been completed during Q3 2018/19.
- 3.3.2 Phase two (Option and Analytical Framework development) is scheduled to be completed during quarter four of 2018/19.
- 3.3.3 Phase three (Economic and Financial Appraisal) spanning quarters one and two of 2019/20.
- 3.3.4 Phase four (Draft Outline Procurement Documentation) due to be completed by the end of quarter three 2019/20. It is planned that the OBC will be finalised in Quarter 4 of 2019/20 with democratic consideration to follow.
- 3.3.5 Notices of intent have been published and data requests to operators are due to be sent out early in 2019.

### **3.4 Supported bus services contract reform**

- 3.4.1 Merseytravel's Bus and Legal teams have been working together to improve the conditions of contract for supported bus services, in order to incentivise quality and compliment the LCR Bus Strategy and the improvement interventions of the Bus Alliance.
- 3.4.2 The reform has included the development of new conditions (which all operators of supported services migrated to in the first quarter of 2018/19), development of operator league tables, the inclusion of quality in the procurement process and the development of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).
- 3.4.3 With support from the bus team, operators are now submitting returns on these new conditions of contract and improvements in a reduction in the volume of complaints, failures, late operations and service credits have already been seen.
- 3.4.4 The next stage in the project is to confirm the price to quality ratio and enter into the DPS. It is planned to run the new approach in tandem with April 2019 tenders as a live trial.

### **3.5 Other key work areas**

#### **3.5.1 Liverpool City Centre Connectivity**

Merseytravel is working closely with Operators in developing the bus rerouting strategy to support Liverpool City Council in delivering its Connectivity Programme.

The new Bus Hub proposed at the Old Haymarket site is due to be considered for planning approval quarter 4 of 2018/19 and is a key enabler

for the finalisation and implementation of a new bus routing strategy for the city centre

A communications strategy involving Merseytravel, bus operators and Liverpool City Council is in development, and will be finalised once the programme of works in the City Centre becomes clear, including planning approval for the Bus Hub.

### 3.5.2 Christmas Parking Enforcement

A partnership between Merseytravel, Liverpool City Council, Merseyside Police, Stagecoach, Arriva and Halton Transport helped to mitigate the effects of traffic congestion in Liverpool City Centre during the lead up to Christmas.

The scheme was designed to support the city's economy through the reduction of illegal parking in bus stops and along key bus routes, and the monitoring of traffic flow to ensure that bus services remain as punctual as possible and get passengers to where they want to go.

Illegal parking, which can cause significant traffic congestion at busy times, is being addressed through parking enforcement in 'hot spot' areas, where bus operators and highways staff actively report illegal parking that they see causing a problem. Police Community Support Officers and Police Officers stop unauthorised vehicles from dropping off in bus stops and at road junctions and from blocking yellow box junction markings in the city centre.

This way of working to share information and resources was used in 2017 and was judged to be more effective than if each agency had worked alone. This scheme is in place till Christmas Eve with a pilot planned for the New Year to assess the benefits of a similar arrangement throughout the year.

### 3.5.3 Rolling Stock Mock up Support

Throughout October and November the Bus Network Performance Survey team acted in an ambassadorial role on behalf of the Rolling Stock project team to welcome the members of the public who were visiting the mock-up of the new trains for the Merseyrail network. This was initially situated at Pacific Road Museum, before moving on to Lime Street Station. The team assisted in supporting over 10k visitors over the 4 week period answering questions and demonstrating the train's new features.

### 3.5.4 Stops and Shelters

From February 2019, the Bus Network Performance Survey Team will begin to undertake surveys on stops and shelters across the Key Route Network of roads. This important piece of work will establish a base for Merseytravel and Bus Alliance Partners to assess recent customer satisfaction survey levels as identified in the work of Transport Focus. The surveys have been designed, with training to take place in January 2019.

### 3.5.5 1000 days of data

The 1000 days of data project will allow the retention of historical bus performance data for 3 years rather than the current 3 months. The ability to do this will facilitate better monitoring and reporting of the performance of the bus network over a longer period of time.

The replacement 'ebus' system is currently in testing. During this phase, it has helped improve tracking coverage, and is exceeding the overall performance of the existing system. The new system is due to go live in Quarter 4 and then the old system will be switched off

### 3.5.6 Avon

In October, Avon Buses, a Wirral-based bus operator, went into voluntary liquidation. This occurred without warning and coincided with the opening first full day of the Giants Spectacular event.

With a fleet of circa 30 buses and a workforce of 100 staff, this caused considerable disruption to bus services in the Wirral network. However, the collective efforts of the Bus Alliance partners and Merseytravel mitigated the overall impact of this. Arriva and Stagecoach stepped in, where possible, with short term commercial replacements which in many cases mirrored the former Avon network. Merseytravel let emergency tenders to fill gaps where Avon services had once operated.

This interim measure gave Merseytravel the time to consider longer term provision requirements and in most cases provision is still in place or available through interchange.

Due to budget limitations, some evening and weekend services have not yet been replaced, causing a loss of connectivity for some parts of Wirral

### 3.5.7 Giants Spectacular Event

The Giants Spectacular Event toured Liverpool City Centre and New Brighton in October, attracting an estimated 1.3 million visitors

The associated disruption that came with such a large event, required a considerable amount of planning and preparation. The diversion plans developed, needed to take into consideration the routes, road closures and estimated crowd numbers travelling into see the event each day, but also balance this with the needs of commuters travelling by bus into work and ensure that a simple and straightforward message was communicated to drivers and passengers throughout the duration of the event.

The event was deemed a huge success, with thousands of people moved through Queen Square efficiently and calmly. During the whole four day event days both Merseytravel and Operator staff behaved professionally and a number went above and beyond the call of duty.

## **4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1. Financial**

There are no new financial implications at this stage

### **4.2. Human Resources**

There are no new human resources implications at this stage

### **4.3. Physical Assets**

There are no new implications for physical assets at this stage.

### **4.4. Information Technology**

There are no new implications for information technology at this stage.

## **5. RISKS AND MITIGATION**

- 5.1 The Combined Authority's Programme Management Office ensures that expenditure, milestones, risk and impact of each improvement that is delivered and is outlined in the Performance Management Framework 2018/19, is measured, monitored and reported.
- 5.2 The Alternative Delivery Options Business Case process is led by an advisory team of Addleshaw Goddard (lead), Price Waterhouse Cooper and Steer and managed by a Governance structure lead by the Director of Resources.
- 5.3 To ensure compliance, Merseytravel's Legal and Procurement teams are heavily involved in the Reform of the supported bus services contract and procurement process.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

The equality and diversity implications of individual activities have been and will continue to be fully considered as part of developing the Bus Alliance Investment plans, bus service reviews and considerations as part of the Business Case for alternative bus delivery models in alignment with the Bus Services Act 2017.

## **7. PRIVATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no potential privacy implications as a result of this report

## **8. COMMUNICATION ISSUES**

- 8.1 A communications plan to support City Centre Bus Routing is in development, which will include bus operators and Liverpool City Council.
- 8.2 There are no other new communications issues identified as a result of this. The LCR Bus Alliance has a joint communications strategy and the Bus Team works closely with colleagues in Corporate Communications and Corporate Engagement. Some of the items mentioned above have been subject to separate communications.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 This report has highlighted activities delivered in quarter three of 2018/19 by the LCR Bus Alliance and the commitment of the LCR Devolution Deal in respect of improving bus services. Clear progress can also be seen as we seek to improve the procurement, management and quality of supported bus services through a series of reforms, whilst the team have dealt with a number of issues during the quarter, most notably the impact of Avon buses going into liquidation.

**MICK NOONE**

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### **Appendices:**

None

### **Background Documents:**

None