

## **TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**12 September 2019**

**Present:** Councillors L Robinson, Chair, G Friel, Deputy Chair, P Cleary, J Dodd, S Foulkes, A Jones, N Killen, A Lavelle, M O'Mara OBE, K McGlashan, P McKinley, L Mooney, N Nicholas, G Philbin, C Rowe, J Stockton, H Thompson, M Uddin, J Williams and F Wynn

### **26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harry Howard, Paul Hayes, Paul Pritchard and John Wiseman.

### **27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jerry Williams declared a personal interest in Item 6 – Liverpool City Region Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan by virtue of being a runner.

### **28. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the last meeting of the Transport Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019, be approved as a correct record.

### **29. PRESENTATION - WEST MIDLANDS TRAINS (LONDON NW)**

The Committee received a presentation report from Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde in relation to West Midlands Trains.

Members raised the following: -

Councillor Helen Thompson enquired about West Midlands Trains approach to planning for special events, special stops and special occasions to assist with capacity in comparison to other operators.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde informed the Committee that an event planning group already existed within West Midlands Trains and is managed by one of the Directors who is currently looking at planned events and advanced preparation and he would be happy to communicate back to the group any specific concerns.

Councillor Nina Killen enquired about cleaning concerns with the new trains and if tanking arrangements and disability access had been considered with the Japanese partners.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde spoke about the new timetable and introducing more places to empty and refill tanks along the routes including mobile emptying machines at Liverpool Lime Street. He also stated that all fleets will be changed and are being improved in terms of disability access.

Councillor Nathalie Nicholas enquired about the date for the delivery of the new trains along the Liverpool routes and if any consideration had been given to working with the LCR Combined Authority to offer free travel for University students.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde informed the Committee that the possible date would be May 2020, but it is a challenge to make that delivery date given the number of smaller stations to be served. He also stated that West Midlands Trains have a community scheme for students attending open days etc, and would be happy to work with the Combined Authority and look at sharing in the scheme.

Councillor John Stockton enquired about the HS2 line and the potential Government delays and the benefits and impact on West Midlands Trains and having had a presentation from the Sight Impaired Council about issues facing commuters, he wanted to know what West Midlands Trains were doing about accessibility.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde informed the Committee that he knew as much as everyone else and had no inside knowledge about HS2, but would be pressing for the platform sacrifices made at Euston to be restored in light of the delays to HS2. He also stated that additional measures are being put in place for sight impaired customers along the routes e.g. Wolverhampton Station with training for all staff being rolled out across the organisation.

Councillor Linda Mooney asked if West Midlands Trains would consider long journeys and compromising less stops and higher prices for quicker journeys in comparison to more stops, lower prices and longer journey times.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde informed the Board that rolling timetables are not flexible and the operator has to serve the smaller stations along the routes. He stated that the May 2020 timetable planning will be looked into, but will be limited to the infrastructure and timetabling and the franchise agreements does require stopping at those smaller stations.

Councillor Mancyia Uddin enquired about whether West Midlands Trains would investigate the services along the Chats Moss and Earlestown lines along the west coast routes to Birmingham which would benefit residents.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde informed the Committee that the way franchises work it was very limited in terms of the geography and at the moment West

Midlands Trains could not serve any stations along the Chats Moss line in this franchise, but that there may be other ways to deliver along the west coast.

Councillor Gordon Friel spoke about the pricing structure and the cheaper fares for longer journey times but enquired about the longer journey times and advance bookings in comparison to the walk on/walk off pricing structure and wanted to know about the passenger demands and needs in terms of the business model.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde stated that all of the pricing was not perfect, but had a team that looked at advance and walk-up fares and the competition by trying to balance it.

Councillor Anthony Lavelle enquired about the free travel for students at University and if any consideration had been given to parents who couldn't afford to travel with their children.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde spoke about his organisation trying to encourage sections of society to use the trains but were limited as they were a private sector entity with financial sustainable policies. He stated that they were looking at options that would provide knowledge for the higher education offer and work being done with stakeholders and communities to look at future options.

Councillor Allan Jones enquired about the Chats Moss line and previous route arrangements along the Newton Le Willows to London routes and suggested if the route to London could be looked at again to be re-introduced.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde spoke about the agreement with Government and the routes currently operated. However, the route identified was only serviced by the inner city trains.

Councillor Liam Robinson enquired about the reopening of Ditton Station in Halton that related to the recent developments in the area, but was limited to the number of trains that would call there and whether London Northwest would be interested in stopping at the re-opened station.

Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde reported that the station was not on the radar of the organisation at the moment, but had a team that looked at developments and prospects and would communicate that information.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee notes the contents of the presentation and thanked Mr Chaudhry-van der Velde for his attendance and for answering the questions.

### **30. MERSEYTRAVEL QUARTER ONE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered a report from Sarah Johnston, Head of Finance relating to Quarter 1 of the Merseytravel Financial Performance Report.

Members raised the following questions –

- What was the ‘third party’ payments referenced in Appendix A of the report?
- What were the risks identified in paragraph 3.13 of the report referring to in relation to the reserves?
- Is the Combined Authority preparing for all the ‘what if’ scenarios and risk relating to Brexit?
- In relation to the equality and diversity implications, why are no risks identified within the report?
- It is a more user friendly report
- In Appendix A, Bus Services, an overspend is identified on total premises, what does this relate to?
- Reference to the reserve position, should the report also reflect that the Combined Authority are also looking at income generation?
- In relation to the medium term financial plan for the Combined Authority, is it being made more difficult with some of the spending reviews and Brexit discussions?

Sarah Johnston informed the Committee that ‘third party’ payments was a terminology used over a number of years that reflected payments made to ‘third party’ organisations e.g. concessionary payments from Merseytravel made to third party operators e.g. Arriva and Stagecoach. She also stated that any increase in requirements put on Merseytravel would need to be funded through the reserves to the extent that other funding to support this activity was not available. Within the budget setting there is a risk analysis process which was set in February 2019 and it was factored in and will also be part of the budget process plans for 2020/21. Sarah Johnston also reported to the Committee that although there are risks identified for Quarter 1, there are no risks identified for equalities and diversity in Quarter 1, but this would be factored into the budget setting process. She stated that as part of the budget setting how income could be generated is also looked at and it is not just a ‘budget cutting’ mentality. Sarah Johnston clarified that the funding mechanism for a Transport Authority differs to that regime that exist for Local Authorities as Merseytravel, as the Transport Authority receives its funding predominantly through the Combined Authority not through direct government grants and local taxation.

Councillor Steve Foulkes spoke about the budget outline being good in comparison to recent years but it is proving difficult including the Special Rail Grants (SRG) and the Combined Authority cannot keep absorbing the SRG, it should be shared with the Combined Authority, the Local Authorities and operators. He also thanked Sarah Johnston and her team for responding to

members feedback regarding the contents of the report and responding to the issues raised.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson commented that regarding the SRG, it has been raised previously.

Councillor John Stockton enquired about the earlier reference made to the 'third party' overspend and if it could be explained.

Sarah Johnston informed the Committee that it was classified as a 'third party' payout and it was the equivalent to contracted amounts paid to Merseyrail which would be shown as an overspend to the extent that these exceeded the SRG grant that was shown in the Rail services budget. As the funding to cover the shortfall is coming from reserves which are shown below net cost of services, there will always be an overspend at that level.

Councillor Gordon Friel spoke about the problems with Local Authorities and enquired if there would be any additional funding from the levy in future?

Sarah Johnston stated that the levy is set by the Combined Authority and any increase to the levy would be set by the Combined Authority.

The Chair, Councillor Liam Robinson commented that austerity has not ended and most Local Authorities are in difficult financial positions. The report is transparent and honest, but the financial nightmare exists not just as a Combined Authority, but also to the 6 neighbouring Local Authorities.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee: -

- a) notes the contents of the report; and
- b) requests further information be communicated to the Committee relating to page 19, Appendix A of the report regarding the overspend identified on total premises within the Bus Service budget lines.

### **31. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

The Committee considered a report from John Smith that highlighted the key issues identified for consideration in any future funding programmes.

Members enquired about the following: -

- Why has the East Lancashire Road (Haydock to Liverpool route) been identified as one of the cycling and walking routes when it is a very busy road with traffic due to increase over the next few years which will contribute to the increase in pollution and would have an adverse effect on cyclists and walkers.

- The use of the phrase 'cycling and walking' is not an inclusive statement and excludes 'runners' and 'horse-riders' who also use those paths. The statement does not include the 40% of other people along the routes.
- Footpaths and cycling paths are being used by heavy duty utility vehicles in the Bebington area (in the vicinity of the Wrexham route), to maintain drainage and electrical services along the train routes and are damaging the pathways.
- Maintenance of the footpaths and horse-paths are a concern as there is no maintenance programme.
- The Government has indicated their interest and ambitions in the programme, but have the Government given any commitment in terms of investment into the programme yet?
- The equality and diversity implications don't highlight anything in the report, but there are concerns about speed limits of cyclists along the paths and visually impaired people crossing the paths and not being protected.
- There are no methods to identify bicycles or those committing offences along the routes, how will the offenders be brought to justice?
- Has any consideration been given to improving the safety issues for cyclists and how much thought has gone into the plans for the infrastructure preparation to keep the cyclists and walkers safe?
- Thank the officer team for the initiative, as it is quite crucial to address the climate change, getting people out and about, reducing carbon emissions and improving healthy lifestyles for residents.
- The plan needs to be a bit clearer with identifying the connectivity between the existing routes and the new cycling network.
- In the plan there are references to the poor quality of existing cycle lanes due for upgrades and refurbishment, so it tells us where the money will be spent, but we need to look at the London example where they are taking from the car traffic flow and giving it to cycle lanes.
- Concerns around the funding to Liverpool from Government of £16.7m in comparison to Manchester of £160m for cycling.
- The network is not really comprehensive, as it creates segregated cycling, but the traffic needs to be slowed down.
- Should not be trying to improve the traffic flow, which is out of sync with what the programme suggests, but should be slowing the traffic down.
- Need to look at the other European Cities and slow the traffic down, which causes people to shift from cars to public transport, walking and cycling etc.
- There are no processes in place to measure the carbon emissions and carbon reductions relating to the impact.
- The carbon emission links information to be circulated to members.

John Smith responded to members as follows: -

- There is a huge bio-diversity element involved in building the infrastructure which can mitigate the wider carbon emission issues.
- The cycling and walking routes would not be put directly next to the roadways along the East Lancashire Road, but would be an entirely segregated off-road route.

- Inclusivity concerns would be taken on board, but it is a DfT title and within the text of the document the terminologies can be referred to and be more inclusive.
- Maintenance concerns along the routes would also be looked at including how it would be done in the future.
- There is an opportunity locally through the Transforming Cities Fund to fund projects and ambitions with the cycling and walking networks.
- The Combined Authority are also working with Sustrans and Living Streets to lobby Government for further resources to support the programme.
- It is a LCR Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan at the moment that has been submitted to the Committee, so there are no implications at the moment.
- Once the programme is prepared in detail then the concerns and issues raised would be considered and training will be provided to the those engineers (Better by Design Course) implementing the infrastructure which will prepare them for what needs to be done and taken into account.
- Cyclists and walkers safety is a number one consideration and from feedback from the survey done last year, people wanted a network that was safe and looked safe and it is the guiding principle moving forward.
- Two key tool kits are currently being used relating to the cycle routes, “Propensity Cycle Toolkit” and the “Active Modes Appraisal Toolkit”, once plugged in with all the corridors and network information it produces the carbon reduction information and provides congestion benefits etc.
- The information in the plan is not explicit as a public facing document, but the information is available upon request if needed.
- The delivery of the walking and cycling routes often involved removing footway to fit cycle lanes in to the detriment of walkers. In order to deliver the routes set out in the document, road space may need to be re-allocated away from cars to bike riders and walkers.

The Chair, Councillor Liam Robinson commented that as a regular user of a bicycle, it is a brilliant document, with strong evidence demonstrated by the tools available to the users.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee notes the contents of the report and John Smith and the team be thanked for the work.

## **32. PROVISION OF INFORMATION**

The Committee considered a report relating to the Provision of Customer Information.

Councillor Gordon Friel moved the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Liam Robinson: -

“That at the beginning of paragraph 2.1 in the report, the following recommendation be inserted:

- a) Senior officers to ensure that the provision is made in Merseytravel Hubs for information, such as timetables, to be printed on demand if requested by a customer and that this policy is understood by the staff at each of the Hubs.”

A vote was taken and the amendment was agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee agree the amended recommendations as follows:

- (a) Senior officers to ensure that the provision is made in Merseytravel Hubs for information, such as timetables, to be printed on demand if requested by a customer and that this policy is understood by the staff at each of the Hubs;
- (b) Endorse a revised approach to the provision of information for public transport users across Merseyside, with a focus on the principle of “go digital” and supported in bus stations by a strategy to improve real time information provision. This will be supported by a marketing and engagement campaign;
- (c) Note the intention to immediately remove bus timetable leaflets from the majority of other non–Merseytravel outlets across Merseyside. Exceptions to this would apply where a Merseytravel outlet is not present in an urban centre (See Appendix 3) ;
- (d) Note that at locations that do retain bus timetable leaflets there will be a limited choice of timetables available for a period of 6 months whilst we further engage with stakeholders and the public regarding the removal of all paper bus timetable leaflets and promote the digital alternatives available;
- (e) Endorse the development of “tube-style” network maps, following a successful trial through the Bus Alliance, to support a clearer understanding of the bus network. The target for this would be online and at stop / in station; and
- (f) Note that the recommendations will be reviewed after 6 months and, if required, further alternative information provision will be developed to mitigate the impact of the removal of all bus related paper products at the end of that period.

### **33. AIR QUALITY TASK FORCE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Huw Jenkins, Lead Officer, Transport Policy relating to the Air Quality Action Plan who described the following: -



- Background relating to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Air Quality review and the recommendations that were endorsed by the Combined Authority.
- The Air Quality Task Force being established as a result of the recommendations, with an Action Plan to take forward.
- The first meeting being held in March 2019 which involved all of the Local Authorities, officers and external bodies including technical and strategic officers with lead members.
- The Task Force has been looking at the mandated work in Liverpool, as part of the task DEFRA has given to Liverpool City Council regarding the poor air quality across the City.
- The Task Force has also looked at the wider area of the City Region and supporting Liverpool City Council and that the objectives.
- An Action Plan is being drafted and will be submitted to the next meeting of the Transport Committee in November 2019.

The Chair, Councillor Liam Robinson commented that he has been pleased with the process to date and the involvement of all 6 Local Authorities which has been good and credible. He commented that a document is being pulled together at the moment and will be circulated to all the Local Authorities, the Combined Authority and the Transport Committee as well for input.

Members enquired about the following: -

- Has consideration been given to sea-going vessels which produce the worst sort of emissions and given the City is a port with a Cruise Liner terminal and ferries, would this be included?
- All sorts of air quality is now being identified with diseases etc including Alzheimers which is the latest to be associated with air quality in the medical areas.
- Prior to the Industrial Revolution, parts per million for carbon was 280 parts per million, today it is 415 parts per million, as a consequence of the planet heating up, with ice melting at both ends of planet, we are all going to be affected by it, so no matter how small it is we need to contribute to climate change.
- Consideration should be given to the constant measuring of success through the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is mainly the cause of the climate change.
- There needs to be some way to find a safe space and not just keep going for growth and measure it another way.
- How much non-exhaust emissions are produced in the region.  
It is a much needed update and it should not be taken lightly in terms of the impact for air quality on the communities and the NHS and hospitals.

Huw Jenkins responded to the Committee as follows: -

- The issue relating to sea-going vessels was raised during the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review last year.
- The shipping emissions are part of the cities background emissions, it is not bad enough to trigger the air quality management areas.

- The region's emissions are triggered mainly by road traffic and haulage vehicles and heavy goods vehicles.
- At a National level DEFRA is mainly concerned with Nitrogen Dioxide with Liverpool City Council being tasked to reduce this in the City.
- Data is collected by the Local Authorities and can be broken down.

**RESOLVED** that the Transport Committee notes the verbal update.

#### **34. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Committee received seven questions from members of the public as follows: -

**Mr Jim Harkin**

##### **Question 1**

Please advise the annual Non Exhaust Emissions (NEE) tonnage figure per route mile from buses used when calculating how clean the transport corridor air is along the bus route, and its compliance with WHO air quality minima.

##### **Question 2**

If not used why not? NB The report was published in July 2019 and can be found at <https://www.applrguk.co.uk/media/files/LR-Applrg-Non-Exhaust-Emissions-from-Road-Traffic-Air-Quality-Expert-Group-Jul-2019pdf>

**The Chair informed Mr Harkin that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.**

**Mr Andrew Wennell**

##### **Question 1**

Most of the local train stations for Merseyrail have lifts, stairs & some also have escalators. Now this occurs to me almost every time I use the Wirral line at Liverpool Lime Street. So my question is, why did they take out one of the escalators & replace it with steps within the original housing where the old escalator was, so we have an escalator to go up from the platform but no escalator to go down to the platform.

##### **Question 2**

So why are they talking about withdrawing the X5 between Liverpool One and the Widnes route.

Now where do we start both 79C & 500 take over 1 hr to get between the same places as they have longer and slower routes. When it first started a few years ago it was to be a quicker alternative with a lot more comfort than the other buses it even had a coach on this route for a time. So my question is if this route is so good why are you thinking about withdrawing it from service.

**The Chair informed Mr Wennell that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.**

In the absence of Ms Carroll, the following question was read by the Chair, Councillor Liam Robinson

**Question 1**

I am the Member of UK Youth Parliament for Liverpool. I live and go to school in the Liverpool City Region. Recognising that young people aged 16-17 are obliged in Mersey travel to pay full adult fares to travel to school/ college before 9:30am (when the day saver then becomes available for £2.60) and that the term time tickets whilst good value are much too expensive for many families to afford to pay at once, is there a way to either extend the time frame on the day saver or allow these children to pay the fee representative of their age group as they are not adults? Also bearing in mind the possibility of sponsorship such as JD's help with the Manchester "Our Pass". The constituents that I represent believe that these possibilities need to be considered as the removal of the travel barrier would open up many opportunities for them, especially in education, not to mention employment and leisure.

**The Chair informed the Committee that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.**

**Ms Pamela Hanson**

**Question 1**

I would like an explanation of why when passengers buy an Arriva four weekly M-ticket on their phones that this is not valid on Stagecoach, when the day and the weekly ones are?

**Question 2**

Why is it taking so long for the Silver Jubilee Bridge to be re-opened? It was meant to open December 2018, then Summer of 2019 and now apparently it is going to be Summer 2020.

**The Chair informed Ms Hanson that a formal response would be provided within 10 working days.**

**35. PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS**

The Chair advised the Committee that the following statement had been received from Parish Councillor David Hawley.

Parish Councillor David Hawley was in attendance and was provided with the opportunity to read his statement to the Committee as follows: -

The residents of New Bold, Bold and Burtonwood have had the 141 Bus Service reduced to run every 2 hours since May 2019. This service will be replaced fully by another bus the 39, which will mean the commute from Bold to St Helens Town centre will increase from 15 minutes to approximately 45 minutes due to the increased stops and change of route. This new route is not only not regular enough but is too long a journey. This change is impacting on the non drivers, children, elderly and less mobile residents in our community.

It also impacts on visitors - relatives and friends of residents or non-drivers who may want to visit the surrounding area such as Bold Forest and Colliers Moss Country Park. Some of our vulnerable residents are now missing out on visits from their friends and relations due to the fact that they can not easily get to our estate.

It is having an impact on the environment too with more cars having to be used – to either pick up children from school, go shopping or commute to work. In a world where we are choosing to be "green" we are finding there is no choice but to use either our own cars or taxi's - which can be very expensive if you have to rely on these every day!

The new bus timetable is completely out of sync with the school day. Some of our children are taking the school bus at the end of the day to surrounding areas, such as Burtonwood. They then have the choice to either walk 2 miles up Gorsey Lane, where there is no public pathway, or across Wheatacre Wood (which in the winter months is dark and remote and really not advisable for anyone to walk alone). Or finally just wait for up to 2 hours until the bus is due. Is this really what we want for our children? No, we'd like them to be able to get home from school in a reasonable time in a safe environment. Elderly people with bus passes are also struggling. Hattons travel have being operating the service over the last 12 months and the bus is not turning up. Drivers have said this the first service to be pulled if they are sort of drivers problems or breakdowns is 141.

This give an untrue passenger figures numbers using the bus, People have to look for alternative ways to get to their destinations as this service has become unreliable.

Every other area in St Helens has multiple regular buses every hour, with the ability to reach town, catch a connecting bus or get transport to the railways.

The residents of New Bold and Bold are not being looked after with public transport and we feel it is very unfair. We should be entitled to the same service as everyone else in the borough and have a regular bus for our community. We have a petition ongoing with over 500 signatures so far and this is growing by the day.

The Chair advised Parish Councillor Hawley that a formal written response would be provided to him within 10 working days following the meeting.

**36. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR**

There was no urgent business.

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Chair of the Transport Committee

(The meeting closed at 4.15 pm)