

TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

10TH OCTOBER 2019

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

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allan Jones, Paul Hayes, Anthony Lavelle, Linda Mooney and Paul Pritchard.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

39. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Transport Committee held on 12th September 2019, be approved as a correct record.

40. PRESENTATION - TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS

The Committee received a presentation from the Regional Development Manager, Ms Lucja Majewski Kent in relation to the TransPennine Express (TPE).

Members raised the following: -

Councillor Ken McGlashan enquired about the TPE rolling stock and its current position and what had been put in place to mitigate any further delays.

Mrs Lucja Majewski informed the Committee that TPE have already accepted about 45% of the new fleet which was about 20 new trains, however, with the delays, the new services won't be introduced till December 2019.

Councillor Harry Howard commented about the TPE customer services and not having any integration in the North between the bus and train services. He enquired about the differences with First Group in Cornwall and the services in the north and whether any discussions were taking place with operators in the north to better integrate the services.

Mrs Lucja Majewski stated that she agreed that customer services was paramount and that it had been a challenge to integrate the services, but TPE would be open to having those discussions with the bus operators in the City Region to improve and better integrate the services.

Councillor John Stockton commented about the success of the travel schemes and affordability for young people in the City Region and enquired if TPE were introducing any new deals and what had been done to encourage the rail industry to do the same.

Mrs Lucja Majewski informed the Committee that TPE had recently worked with Merseytravel on discounted apprenticeship tickets and was also looking at other age groups including the under 25s. She also spoke about a recent pilot scheme for job seekers in Hull, to have free train travel to attend job interviews and if they were successful in getting the job, the free train travel would continue for the first month and she would be happy to have discussions to try and pilot a similar scheme in the City Region.

Councillor Nathalie Nicholas enquired about rail performance in the north and any steps that may have been taken by TPE and other industry partners e.g. Network Rail to avoid any repeat of the chaos from last autumn.

Mrs Lucja Majewski informed the Committee that a new timetable was introduced in December 2018 which had more contingencies into the service and for the autumn in 2019 Network Rail have already started to treat the tracks. She also spoke about not introducing an autumn timetable this year as a result of the timetable introduced in December 2018 and not expecting any disruptions for 2019.

Councillor Jerry Williams enquired about whether TPE would be interested in looking at the Liverpool to Bradford route and possibly assisting the region with an express service to Manchester in the Huyton area.

Mrs Lucja Majewski informed the Committee that the train services requirements for the franchise are already set out and there were no plans to expand it, but she would be happy to take the information away and see if there was any scope with the TPE train planners.

Councillor John Wiseman enquired about the travel-safe initiatives that were ongoing within the passenger transport executive for 2019/2020 and beyond.

Mrs Lucja Majewski stated that she didn't have a response for the question, but would take it away and provide a response at a later time.

Councillor Gordon Friel enquired about the autumn timetable and if there was anything in place to provide assurance that there would not be a repeat of last year's problems.

Mrs Lucja Majewski stated that 15th December 2019 is the scheduled timetable day. In terms of performance there is a lot more due diligence taken and there is focus regarding the services and delivery.

Councillor Ged Philbin enquired about staffing locally for both on and off the trains and the apprenticeship programme of TPE.

Mrs Lucja Majewski spoke about recently employing about 100 drivers with local offices for on board hosts and conductors. The apprenticeship programme is going well with 12

apprentices recently being recruited. The programme at TPE recruits apprentices every 2 years.

Councillor Pat Cleary commented about the TPE bicycle shelters not being fit for purpose in 2019 and a more protective shelter should be considered to encourage bike users on the network similar to that currently installed along the Merseyrail routes. He also enquired about the provisions for bicycles on the new trains.

Mrs Lucja Majewski informed the Committee that she would look at the bike shelters with her colleague and would be happy to look at improving the shelters and checking the shelters currently used by Merseyrail. She stated that there were 4 spaces for bicycles on the new trains with an updated reservation service which allowed for bookings to be made 10 minutes before train journeys via 'Whats App'.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson enquired about smart ticketing and how it was progressing on the TPE network.

Mrs Lucja Majewski stated that it was going well and tickets can be booked online with about 60% of season ticket holders having smartcards. There is a team working with Transport for the North to make things work better.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson enquired about the progress being made with TPE rail division and why the First bus division was refusing to take up smart ticketing in the North.

Mrs Lucja Majewski stated that she had no explanation but would take it back to the organisation

The Chair, Councillor Robinson thanked Mrs Lucja Majewski for the presentation and requested that if there were any concerns about services or delays in the future it would be helpful if the Combined Authority could be informed as early as possible.

RESOLVED that the Transport Committee noted the contents of the presentation.

41. QUARTERLY BUS UPDATE

The Committee considered a report from the Bus Strategy Programme Manager, Laura Needham who highlighted the following: -

- 9% growth in fare paying patronage year on year, which 'bucks' the national trend in bus patronage;
- For the first time adult patronage has increased and is now driving overall growth with over 150m bus journeys being made in the Liverpool City Region;
- Green Bus Routes programme has begun with consultants being appointed to lead on the interventions and options along the corridors;
- 100% of buses in the Liverpool City Region are now taking contactless payments with the first week of take up being around 8.2% with an increase in September 2019 up to 11.10%;

- The Customer Growth and Development Work-stream continues in October 2019 with the campaign “We cannot wait to tackle climate change” theme which mirrors public concern;
- Second phase of consultation for the Sefton Network review has commenced in early June 2019 and the changes have been implemented since September 2019;
- ‘Cumfybus’Ltd have applied and been accepted to join the Liverpool City Region Bus Alliance and are already participating in the business planning process for next year;
- The Liverpool City Region continues to explore the Bus Services Act with 3 options being assessed including franchising, enhanced partnerships and the Bus Alliance, an update was considered recently by the Combined Authority in July 2019;
- As a result of the new ticket machines for contactless payments there has been an increase in real time information accuracy;
- The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has been shortlisted for the City Region Authority of the year;
- The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Bus Alliance has also been shortlisted for three

Members enquired about the following issues:-

- The increase in patronage being contrary to the reduction in usage and if there was demand for the services available?
- Was the ‘older tyre ban’ already done locally?
- What routes have been identified for the 24-hour service?
- Are there any other bus operators considering joining the Bus Alliance?
- Any plans for another service for the High Park estate?
- How accurate is the 95.3% for the RTI punctuality and reliability system?
- How is the demand responsive travel going in the Speke area?
- What provisions are in place for rural bus services in the city region, when operators are withdrawing services at short notice?

Laura Needham responded to the questions as follows: -

- The vision and information was built upon the public consultation and forms part of the business planning with the Bus Alliance for next year.
- Regarding the vision for the 24 hour services, it is to be rolled out across all services by April 2020.
- There is one other operator who is interested in the Bus Alliance.
- A review is conducted every 6 months and the High Park estate will be looked at again.
- Using the new ticket machines in place has assisted how the RTI information is tracked.
- Demand Responsive Travel has been good and in the first full week 472 new journeys were made on the service and it was running on about 21% in comparison to the 211 bus service. There has been a further 39% growth between week 1-4 and it is currently being monitored.
- Regarding rural bus services it is down to the network review services in each of the areas and looking at the provisions.

Shane Fitzpatrick also responded as follows: -

- The 'older tyre ban' is a policy that has been expanded nationally and been in place for a period of time.
- The Support Services contracts are checked regularly through an independent audit to ensure the services comply and meet the requirements of the 'older tyre ban' policy.
- In terms of patronage there has been growth of fare paying passengers of over 16% and is currently bucking the trend in the region.
- Each small operator that tries to come into the Bus Alliance must set out a 2 year business plan, but there is also an allowance for an investment plan.
- There are currently very restricted budgets available, so it is not just providing services in the rural bus services areas. There is a protocol introduced through the Bus Alliance.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson commented about that the City Region does not have the budget it needs to cover the network in the City Region. He also complimented the team regarding the contents of the report and highlighted the good news stories including contactless ticketing being available on all buses in the region, Selwyns taking on the Avon Depot in the Wirral and coming into the region and the vision and ambition for the City Region relating to the bus service. He concluded that the nature of the devolved power is very prescriptive in the legislation and everything is being done to put together the business plan and to submit the recommendations for early 2020.

RESOLVED that the Transport Committee noted the contents of the report.

42. MERSEY TUNNELS LONG TERM OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Policy Officer, Suzanne Cain relating to the Mersey Tunnels Long Term Operations and Maintenance Strategy.

Members commented about the following: -

- Excellent report highlighting the history and the work involved in keeping the tunnels going.
- The future demand projections and the increases identified are not consistent with the climate emergency figures.
- Flood risk probability concerns raised and enquiries about what was being done to mitigate these concerns.
- What was the outstanding amount still owed on the tunnels.
- Why could hydrogen vehicles not use the tunnels without a risk assessment.
- What was the contamination 'spoil' scattered across the site at the Wallasey toll plaza.

Shane Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that the forecast was based on the Transport Model and following the approval of the strategy, the workforce would be consulted and governance arrangements would be put in place by establishing a Tunnels Board. He also stated that the hydrogen vehicles in the tunnels would be a risk, so a risk assessment would need to be completed and due consideration given. He also spoke about the contaminated land near the Wallasey toll plaza and the previous lease holders of the land.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson spoke about the traffic levels and the charging levels for emissions.

John Fogarty informed the Committee that the total amount of tunnels debt was £31.8m and there had not been any new borrowing on the tunnels.

Councillor Steve Foulkes thanked the officer team and welcomed the content of the report which provided a broader understanding of the tunnels, its network and infrastructure for the general public across the City Region.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson commented that the tunnels were part of the economic and social well-being of the region and welcomed the long-term plans for maintenance over the next 20-30 years.

RESOLVED that the Transport Committee noted the contents of the report and the officers be thanked for their work.

43. MULTI OPERATOR TICKETING SCHEME - PRODUCT AND PRICING UPDATE AND PROPOSALS

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Customer Deliver, Gary Evans relating to the ticketing scheme arrangements.

Councillor Christopher Rowe enquired about the income generated from the range of tickets across the region and how it was divided among the operators.

Gary Evans informed the Committee that there was an overarching operator scheme agreement which varied depending on the product and smart data.

The Chair, Councillor Robinson welcomed the report and reminded the Committee that it was a delegated decision being taken by the Committee and that it was the only region outside of London taking these types decisions.

RESOLVED that the Transport Committee endorsed the content of the report and the consultation response.

44. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

Ms Pam Hanson Question 1

I was on the X1 Liverpool to Runcorn bus when it broke down on the West Bound A562 just after the Knowsley Express Way around 15.35 on Friday 4 October 2019.

The reason it broke down was because it caught fire. Some of us evacuated the bus but some passengers stayed on.

My question is why did it take an hour for us passengers to get another bus?

There was a mother and a baby on the bus and if it had been a serious fire then they would have had to get off the bus on uneven terrain by a very busy road.

The driver informed us that the next X1 would stop but when it arrived the driver of this bus shook his head and said no. So we had to wait for the next one. Admittedly it could have been full and unable to take more passengers.

However surely there should be a way of transporting passengers, from a broken down bus, when it is by a very busy road and they are in a dangerous position.

Question 2

I believe that you could only charge a Walrus card at a station within the Merseyside zone, but when I boarded the X1 in Greenway Road, Runcorn I saw a lady pay for the Walrus card on this bus and she and the driver said that this was alright?

I have had other discussions with people who believe that they can use it outside the Merseyside zone. Apparently, there are tickets that you can get that you can use but this causes confusion between the drivers and passengers.

Could it not be made clearer where the tickets can be used to save confusion between the drivers and passengers?

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

Mr Andrew Wennell

Question 1

On the route towards Ecclestone in West Park there is a bus stop in Knowsley Road just before Rivington Road but the 35/35E doesn't stop there even though it says it does on the bus shelter. So instead, it stops just after it turns into Rivington Road.

Now according to Google maps there is a bus stop but on street view there clearly is no stop there, but on the bus stop on the other side going towards St Helens it states the times and says the bus will stop on the opposite side of the road going towards Ecclestone.

Why doesn't this bus stop at Rivington Road stop on Knowsley Road & why is there no bus stop with a flag going towards Ecclestone just after the bus turns into Rivington Road.

Question 2

If you apply for a Merseytravel OAP English National Concessionary Pass you could take your completed form plus evidence to a Merseytravel shop & they have a machine to make the pass while you wait.

Now if you apply for a Merseytravel DISABLED English National Pass it needs to be sent away to get approved & when its application is successful they will send out your pass in the post.

A lot of people who apply for an OAP pass can also drive and have a car.

The majority of Disabled people who apply for a Merseytravel Pass are unable to drive and use public transport to access the community.

If they can make the pass while you wait for the OAP'S then why can't they do this for the Disabled Pass?

If the people who apply for the Disabled Pass have to wait then the OAPS should wait too.

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

Mr John Brace

Question 1

At the end of the Transport Committee on the 4th April 2019, you announced that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority had been successful in its bid for £7.5 million of Access for All funding from the government to improve disabled access at various train stations (Birkenhead Park, Broad Green, Hillside, St Michael's and Hunts Cross Stations). The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority also decided at its meeting on the 28th June 2019 to also contribute £7.5 million of its own funds towards the project from the Strategic Investment Fund.

Therefore, as the budget has already been agreed could you please give timescales (or indicative timescales) as to when the LCRCA expects that works to improve disabled access at each of those 5 stations will be completed?

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

45. PETITIONS AND STATEMENTS

No petitions or statements were submitted for this meeting.

46. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR

There was no urgent business.

Chair of the Transport Committee

(The meeting closed at 3.25 pm)