



Transport & Infrastructure Committee		Agenda Item
13 March 2024		10
Title:	Bus Network Update	
Report of:	Andrew Highfield	
Lead Member:	Cllr Anna Smith	
Public Report:	Yes	
Key Decision:	No	
Voting Arrangements:	A No vote required	

Recommendations:

A	To receive and consider the initial development work on the precept funded investment in bus services and demand responsive transport services
B	To receive and consider the initial development work on the £1 youth fare scheme
C	To note the update on network changes from commercial operators and CPCA's proposed approach
D	To note the proposed methodology for improvements to targeted bus stops/shelters

Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
X	Achieving good growth
X	Increased connectivity
X	Enabling resilient communities

1. Purpose

1.1	Transport is a cornerstone of the economic, social, and environmental fabric of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. As we navigate a post-pandemic landscape, the need for a resilient, efficient, and user-centric public transport system is more pressing than ever. Our region's prosperity and growth are inextricably linked to the vitality and effectiveness of our connectivity, with buses playing a pivotal role.
1.2	The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) supports a bus network that is integral to the daily lives of our residents, facilitating access to employment, education, healthcare, and leisure activities.
1.3	The Combined Authority board recently considered and approved investment into the bus network that will improve residents' access to services, offer cheaper fares to Under 25 year olds in the region and provide a safer, more secure waiting environment at bus stops and shelters for passengers.

1.4	Following the decisions made at the Combined Authority board on January 31 st 2024, this paper outlines the work that has taken place to deliver the investment in bus services, the investment in bus stops/shelters and the implementation of the £1 youth fare scheme for Under 25s. The paper also sets out network changes that the authority to which the authority is responding following announcements by Stagecoach.
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2. Proposal

2.1	Recent approvals at the Combined Authority board (January 31st 2024) have enabled development work on investment into the bus network, namely the implementation of new and enhanced services, the implementation of a £1 fare for Under 25s in the region and the improvement of bus stops/shelters.
2.2	<p>Bus Network Service Improvements:</p> <p>The aim of the development work into bus service improvements is to improve connections for residents, increase patronage and enable easier access for communities to public transport. A project team has been set up and a methodology for assessing the potential services against critical metrics has been established.</p> <p>The methodology from inception to implementation is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Assess and analyse the shortlist of bus route suggestions from the public consultation and survey in line with key bus network planning metrics to inform the nature of route. 2 Outline recommendations of routes aligned with success factors, operational costs and patronage forecasts. 3 Deliverable: 'Plan on a Page' for each service proposal, setting out the background to the proposal, main characteristics and metrics along with summary maps and analysis, accompanied by a summary spreadsheet bringing together all the main metrics. 4 Recommend services that would need to be implemented via a contracted method and (subject to legal/procurement advice) those via commercial negotiations. 5 Devise timetables for routes that enable efficient operational delivery. 6 Engage with local community groups and/or other forums. (following Leader advice and in line with timescales). 7 Engage with bus operators on tender opportunities and make recommendations on seeking new entrants into the market to ensure effective competition. 8 Collaborate on branding requirements to ensure clear expectations with operator engagement. 9 Conduct the tender process and negotiations with bus operators. 10 Recommend monitoring and evaluation methods for route improvements including collection of patronage data and reliability/punctuality and clear measures of success.
2.3	<p>Progress to date</p> <p>Work has commenced on the initial assessment of the precept proposals alongside an understanding of the baseline (current) position with the bus network, alongside work to develop the likely routes to market, in line with procurement and legal advice.</p> <p>Engagement sessions have been held with the Leaders of each council to work through the route outlines, demand responsive transport proposals and seek additional feedback on local considerations to inform final bus route planning. Further clarification sessions and feedback have been sought from community groups and officers as required.</p> <p>These sessions and feedback have informed the construction of initial route and timetable proposals. Further analysis of the routes using software modelling will enable officers to consider the suggestions against a range of metrics. The proposals fall into three main types of solution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency improvements to existing services; • Amendments to existing routes (and the resulting timetable); or • New Services to improve connectivity, or provide new journey opportunities.

In each case, consideration of the possible impact on existing services is being factored into the analysis to ensure there are no unintended consequences (e.g. abstraction from existing services, or duplication of resource).

An example of the visual used to support those initial sessions is below, and further detailed analysis will follow. Officers will present at the Transport and Infrastructure Committee on the more detailed metrics that were produced post publication of this report.

Once the design phase of the services has concluded, work will commence on the negotiation stages, contract variations and routes to market for the delivery of the services. This work will be ongoing throughout the Spring with the aim to deliver services over the Summer 2024 period.

It is envisaged (subject to legal/procurement advice) that the new services will take longer due to the open tender process that will likely be required. This would normally be 3-4 months end to end to ensure the effective implementation of services. 11 of the list of 29 suggested services fit into this category. 12 services are currently contracted and 6 services are currently commercial.

Officers will bring further reports to TiC as the work progresses through the Spring and Summer.

Plan on a Page

Ref 1 – Cambridge – Huntingdon



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2.4 £1 youth fare scheme:

The aim of the £1 youth fare scheme is to enable a more affordable and attractive fare offer for a key demographic in the region, who are reliant on public transport for access to education, work and leisure opportunities.

Since board approval to move to the implementation of a £1 fare scheme, work has developed on the following components:

- Engagement and negotiations with local bus operators, to secure participation in the scheme. This has included working through a range of items raised in a collaborative manner through in person and online sessions
- Setting up a card production method for the scheme, to enable each young person who applies, a photo card that enables each bus driver to identify they're participating in the scheme and can implement the discount to a £1 fare at the point of use
- Work is ongoing to set up an application portal to enable each young person to apply for the card they need for the scheme

Once final approval has been secured with bus operators in the region, a formal scheme will be written up and shared with operators that participate in the scheme. This will outline the details of the scheme, reimbursement methods and any mechanisms for further review during the 12 months of the scheme.

2.5	<p>Bus Stop/Shelter Improvements:</p> <p>At the TIC in November 2023, officers outlined the approach to a bus stop audit across the region. The aim of the audit was to establish how many stops there are, where they are and an outline of their condition. At present 2981 stops have been identified in the Bus Stop database for the region.</p> <p>With budget now approved to improve bus stops/shelters, officers have devised an initial methodology on how to apply the available funding in a targeted manner to have maximum benefit to passengers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply an assessment criteria to form an initial high priority 50 stops/shelters that would benefit from investment, linked to safety, security and ease of waiting environment. • Develop a list for features that will be improved within budget requirements, with a clear before and after to demonstrate improvements to residents. • Seek feedback from local Members and communities to inform the final approach. • Link improvements to the precept investments, to ensure clearer monitoring and evaluation opportunities for investment in bus services and enable a more integrated, targeted package of improvements.
2.6	<p>Network Stability/Service Changes:</p> <p>The Combined Authority were formally notified of changes to Stagecoach's commercial network, namely Services: F, 25 and 9. Within the current deregulated environment, commercial operators submit changes to services via the Traffic Commissioner.</p> <p>Unfortunately all the services outlined below were cited as significantly loss making and unable to continue in their current form.</p> <p>Service 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagecoach has proposed changes to service 9, operating between Littleport, Ely, and Cambridge. • At present, the service operates hourly in both directions during the morning and evening peak period, and every other hour during the off-peak period. This will be reduced to three journeys operating in each direction across the whole day. • Using data provided by Stagecoach, it is estimated that the cost per passenger journey figure would be £1.76 for a potential contracted service. This is well below the benchmark of £12 that has previously been used • Due to the severe degradation in service that residents will face, it is recommended to introduce a contracted service that restores as much of the service to its current form, subject to a tender process. <p>Service F:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagecoach will remove an early morning and evening links from Fenstanton on to the Busway at St Ives • Stagecoach introduced this in 2022 and provide this commercially, but they now consider it to be unsustainable, due to running costs and low patronage. • According to the patronage data provided by Stagecoach, there is an average of two passengers per day travelling on the 07:40 journey. If correct, this would give a cost per passenger journey figure of £97.50. In the recent bus review, the benchmark figure was £12. • It is recommended to not replace these journeys due to the very low value for money figure. <p>Service 25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagecoach have cancelled service 25, currently operating between Trumpington Park & Ride and Babraham Road Park & Ride via the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Addenbrooke's Hospital. Route 25 also serves the southern section of the Great Kneighton development in Trumpington. Busway A also passes through the centre of the development, providing access to Trumpington Park & Ride, Royal Papworth Hospital (for Francis Crick Avenue), Addenbrooke's Hospital and Cambridge railway station with onward journeys to Cambridge city centre, King's Hedges, and villages on the Busway track enroute to St Ives. • It is recommended to link this into the precept work - Higher frequency services from Trumpington to the rail station and Addenbrookes is on the precept suggestion list. If

	analysis comes out from that process that suggests improvements, officers can package it together and work further with the local community on an integrated approach.
2.7	<p>Demand Responsive Transport (DRT):</p> <p>Work has commenced following the decision in the November 2023 TIC committee and the Combined Authority board in January 2024 to approve further DRT trials in the region.</p> <p>The areas identified for DRT are Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire. The following steps outline the components of how the services will be developed from inception to implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design outline service zones based on feedback, operational efficiency and journey purpose in parallel to the assessment of the precept investment suggestion list • Complete research work and recommendations for procuring a technology provider for all three services. This would enable integration and clear oversight from the Combined Authority over data related to the service to inform monitoring, evaluation and improvements • Complete concept designs for branding, to ensure the services are reflective of the communities they will serve • Tender services • Implement services with clear monitoring and evaluation plans to inform measures of success for the trials

3. Background	
3.1	Detail is set out above.

4. Appendices	
4.1	Appendix A - Precept investment suggestion list

Implications				
Financial Implications				
5.1	The current MTFP includes the following for the schemes referred to in this report			
		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
		£	£	£
	£1 Youth Fare Scheme	0	4,000,000	500,000
	Bus Stop Infrastructure	0	500,000	500,000
	Bus Services (including mayoral Precept)	7,015,000	15,046,000	15,318,000
Legal Implications				
5.2	Where there is a need for new bus services as part of the service improvements, a transparent tendering process will be initiated. The tender process will ensure that operators can competitively bid to provide the services, in compliance with procurement regulations.			
Public Health Implications				
5.3	The proposed development of bus services improvements, which encompass enhancements, have overall positive public health implications. Improving bus services ensures residents maintain reliable access to healthcare, fostering timely medical interventions and regular health check-ups. This not only promotes physical well-being through increased daily activity from walking to bus stops but also			

	<p>supports cardiovascular health and counters rising obesity rates. Reliable bus services reduce feelings of isolation, particularly among vulnerable populations like the elderly.</p> <p>This improved social connectivity, in turn, supports mental well-being. Furthermore, encouraging the use of public transport over private vehicles can lead to a marked reduction in emissions, subsequently improving air quality and benefiting respiratory health among the community. The primary objective of these recommendations is to ensure both public health benefits and value for money are achieved.</p> <p>By striking a balance, the recommendations provide improvements to the bus network, whilst also acknowledging the indirect health benefits brought about by economic stability, job accessibility and access to essential services.</p>
Environmental & Climate Change Implications	
5.4	<p>Bus services play a pivotal role in mitigating environmental impacts and climate change. When effectively utilised, buses reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the roads, leading to decreased traffic congestion and, consequently, reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Buses present a more sustainable mode of transportation, emitting fewer pollutants per passenger compared to cars. Encouraging the use of public buses can significantly contribute to our efforts to combat climate change, improve air quality, and reduce the carbon footprint of transport.</p>
Other Significant Implications	
5.5	None
Background Papers	
5.6	Previous paper on bus network developments, November 2023