



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 2.2

Bus Service Reform

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board

Meeting Date: 27 October 2021

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson

From: Rowland Potter, Head of Transport

Key decision: Yes

Forward Plan ref: KD2021/050

Recommendations: The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:

- a) Delegate authority to the Head of Transport, in consultation with the Chair of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, to submit the Authority's Bus Service Improvement Plan to the Department for Transport no later than 29th October 2021;
- b) Delegate authority to the Head of Transport, in consultation with the Chair of the Transport and Infrastructure Committee, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, to progress at the earliest opportunity the designated BSIP activities should the funding from Department for Transport (DfT) be approved; and
- c) Approve public engagement on the Bus Reform proposals following completion of the independent audit of the Outline Business Case.

Voting arrangements: A vote in favour by at least two thirds of all Members (or their Substitute Members) appointed by the Constituent Councils present and voting, to include the Members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, or their Substitute Members.

Any vote in favour must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor acting in place of the Mayor, to be carried.

1. Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

- 1.1 In Spring 2021 the Government announced a National Bus Strategy which involved a major change in the way the bus industry operates. The Department for Transport (DfT) has allocated three billion pounds nationally over three years to substantially improve public transport and significantly grow the number of passengers compared to the period before Covid.
- 1.2 Local Authorities have been invited to create ambitious but deliverable BSIPs. To qualify for access to this pot of money.
- 1.3 The Combined Authority (CPCA) is required to submit a BSIP to DfT by the 29 October 2021 to qualify for any consideration of funding support.
- 1.4 This BSIP is a mechanism intended to guarantee better joined up public travel by requiring all of the bus operators and the Local Transport Authority (LTA – in this case CPCA) to work together to submit a joint bid for funding. The DfT is clear in asking LTAs for ambitious plans, which can make a significant difference for the travelling public.
- 1.5 The key part of the BSIP is a set of spreadsheets devised by DfT, which look at the costs and outcomes of the proposals submitted by the LTA and look at the benefits and costs associated with the proposals. That is backed by a detailed report. BSIPs will be requested each year to measure the effectiveness of the measures.
- 1.6 Our starting point is our CPCA Vision For Bus, developed before lockdown, which states that everyone should have the opportunity to travel; their chances in life should not be constrained by the lack of travel facilities open to them.
- 1.7 We have also rooted our proposals in the large-scale tracking survey data compiled by Transport Focus which indicates that the top items that matter to passengers are:
 - punctuality;
 - frequency;
 - polite driver;
 - clean bus;
 - personal safety.Other sources of data have been used as well, including East Cambridgeshire District Council's (ECDC) 2020 report on bus needs in East Cambridgeshire, and the Greater Cambridge Partnership's City Access Strategy.
- 1.8 The BSIP we have developed is a balanced and pragmatic report which recognises the importance of delivering significant improvements and creating a position from still more strategic planning around buses as a core component of an integrated and inclusive transport plan.
- 1.9 In our BSIP we propose additional buses to the existing network to improve the frequencies of city services and our important inter urban routes;

- 1.10 Overlaying our existing network is proposed a rural network where we wish to see a dramatic increase in mobility for people living in rural areas and our many villages. This will mirror our newly launched Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service in West Huntingdonshire or specific variants of within the diverse geographical and demographic locations.
- 1.11 We have identified a need for a new fast express bus service between Huntingdon and Cambridge.
- 1.12 We are proposing trials of evening services which serve different desire-line destinations to the daytime services, to reflect the travelling public's different travel patterns.
- 1.13 We seek to create improvements in the bus services, and other measures, to encourage more people out of cars into public transport, generating revenue which can be fed into sequential expansions, gradually increasing patronage numbers.
- 1.14 Peterborough is developing its 2040 City Centre Transport Vision. The BSIP will help to lay the groundwork for this vision, and will explore the need to give the city a new bus depot for charging and maintenance.
- 1.15 CPCA is working closely and will continue to work collaboratively with all partners to deliver the ambitions of this BSIP.
- 1.16 As required by the DfT, we have worked closely with our operators to create a formal, independently chaired, Bus Operator Forum which has met regularly and considered the challenges in developing network and service improvements particular following the impact of covid. In turn the forum created:
 - A Fares Working Group which has agreed the principles for county-wide all-operator bus tickets to be introduced in 2022;
 - A Passenger Charter working group whose output is being taken by Transport Focus as an exemplary piece of work.

As part of the charter, all buses in the CPCA area will have to be cleaned daily and fitted with CCTV.

- 1.17 The report to the Transport and Infrastructure Committee on 8 September 2021 provided a progress update on the ZEBRA (Zero Emission Bus Regional Area) Phase 2 Application. as a decision is still awaited the Zebra proposal has been added as part of the BSIP.
- 1.18 We have undertaken a data driven approach to identifying route pinch points and there are proposed interventions to include:
 - Highways Improvements
 - Enforcement measures where appropriate
 - Signal improvements to enhance flow
- 1.19 The BSIP needs to work closely in line with our Local Transport & Connectivity Plan (LTCP, due out in spring 2022) in order to ensure close integration of active travel, Bus, DRT and rail integration that incentivise multi-modal travel across wide areas.

- 1.20 It is intended to upgrade bus stops one corridor at a time, systematically rolling out better bus maps and at-stop information alongside vehicle branding and timetable upgrades.
- 1.21 Behaviour and cultural change will be key to mode shift and incentives will be developed with partners to make bus transport a real alternative choice to the motorist.
- 1.22 The DfT has requested ambitious BSIPs from Local Transport Authorities. DfT is seeking bids for sufficient funding to sustain and build public transport patronage and achieve better financial stability as a result.

2 Bus Reform

- 2.1 The CPCA has finalised an Outline Business Case for Bus Reform and this is now being independently audited by external auditors. Once the OBC has been audited it is intended to go to a full, three-month public engagement with a mix of electronic, online and local roadshow engagement opportunities to explain what Bus Reform might mean for citizens. This work is being carefully carried out in line with criteria set within Bus Services Act 2017.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The BSIP will outline the need for significant financial interventions over the next 3 years to deliver the service envisioned; however, the Department for Transport recognise that the plans will be outlines at this stage in the process and thus more detailed work is expected on individual schemes within the BSIP before final decisions on individual interventions, and funding requirements, are agreed. As such, there are no direct financial implications arising from this decision: the BSIP is a statement of intent and a vision rather than a detailed investment plan.
- 3.2 While the delivery of the different interventions would be spread across the local bus service operators, the Combined Authority, and the local Highways Authorities; the Combined Authority will, at a minimum, need to take responsibility as accountable body for the funds flowing through it, and it is likely there will be significantly higher resource requirements for specific interventions where the Combined Authority takes a more delivery focused role. Where the resourcing needs for support and delivery of the interventions is not expected to be met within existing capacity the additional cost for resourcing is included in the indicative project budget.

4 Legal Considerations

- 4.1 Legal comments within the body of this report.

5 Appendices

- 5.1 None

6 Background Papers

- 6.1 None