



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

JAMES PALMER
CAMBRIDGESHIRE &
PETERBOROUGH MAYOR

Agenda Item No: 2.9

Report title: Buses Strategy Update

To: Transport and Infrastructure Committee

Meeting Date: 06 January 2021

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Mayor James Palmer

From: Paul Raynes
Director of Delivery and Strategy

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: Not applicable

Recommendations: The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is recommended to:
Note the progress of the work to date.

Voting arrangements: A simple majority of all Members.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper updates Members on developments in the bus reform programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 Work on the Bus Reform project commenced in 2019. Its aim, in line with the Local Transport Plan, is to look at innovative ways in which bus services can be drawn together into a better-functioning integrated transport network. The project is led by the Mayor, who chairs a Bus Reform Task Force. This is supported by a team which brings together officers from Councils under Combined Authority leadership. The Combined Authority appointed ITP Consultancy to provide support for the detailed work.
- 2.2 A key part of this work has been the preparation of a business case under the Buses Act 2017 proposing an alternative way of commissioning subsidised bus services. The Covid-19 pandemic has severely disrupted the financial performance of the bus industry and passenger behaviour. Work to model the impact of moving to a partnership or franchise model has necessarily been delayed as we seek to understand those impacts and the potential path to recovery. Combined Authority officers maintain constant liaison with local public transport providers during the pandemic.
- 2.3 The Mayor has discussed the developing situation with Baroness Vere, the Buses Minister, and officers from the Authority are in discussion with senior officials at the Department for Transport. The government is aiming to publish a National Bus Strategy soon, and to provide clarity about the future of the emergency public subsidy provided to the bus industry and any transitional recovery funding. The Combined Authority will be able to conclude its work on new delivery models when those national policy decisions have been made.
- 2.4 In the meantime, the Combined Authority has agreed to progress several new projects including trials which will inform and improve our public transport network in the future.

New bus service in Peterborough

- 2.5 The Committee agreed in November to proceed with a new trial supported bus service linking demand generators on the west side of Peterborough. This has since been tendered and will start running in late February. The service will run in the morning and early afternoon linking the Hampton and Orton areas to Serpentine Green shops and to Peterborough City Hospital. This will establish whether there is a demand for orbital bus services compared to high frequency radial links into the city centre.

New bus service in Fenland and Huntingdonshire

- 2.6 The Mayor, after consulting the Board, has decided to tender a second new trial bus service giving direct links from March, through Wimblington, Doddington, Chatteris, Warboys to St Ives. This will support an area that is significantly underserved by public transport and faces linked issues of deprivation. Through ticketing with the busway will provide an express link into Cambridge and onwards to Addenbrookes.

- 2.8 Separately the Authority are in discussions with Stagecoach to ensure that northbound buses from Addenbrookes, connecting at St Ives with the bi-hourly new route, display the connection on the front of the vehicles. This new trial service will serve 39,000 people and is being launched to better understand how we can maximise the benefits of the guided busway in serving the communities in the north of the region.

Demand Responsive Transport

- 2.9 The Authority has been exploring a range of ways to explore and commission the latest forms of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT). Negotiations with a range of DRT providers are ongoing at the time of drafting this paper and a briefing on the DRT plan, to go live in early March 2021, will be provided at the Committee.
- (a) This DRT service will cover most of west Huntingdonshire including Glatton, Sawtry, Great Gidding, Molesworth, Keyston, Catworth, Kimbolton, Hammerton, Alconbury & Alconbury Weston, Old Weston, Buckworth, Leighton Bromswold, Spaldwick, Ellington, Grafham, Gt Staughton, Perry, Buckden, Southoe, Hail Weston, Paxton, Offord, Graveley, Toseland, Papworth Everard, St Neots, Eynesbury, Eltisley and a small number of out of area destinations: Cambourne Morrisons, Huntingdon town centre, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and Thrapston Industrial Park.
 - (b) This operating area contains only one commercial bus service and two minimum subsidy services, with most buses being subsidised on a minimum cost basis, and therefore the introduction of the DRT scheme will not directly damage the existing bus network.
 - (c) DRT requires payment to travel, or the proffering of a valid concessionary bus pass (ENCTS card). Fares will be collected mainly online by booking a bus journey via a smartphone app. It will also be possible to book by telephone and pay on the vehicle.
 - (d) To be successful, this service needs to be run by a mix of small and medium sized vehicles which are seen to be buses not dial-a-ride vehicles.
 - (e) Certain roads and hamlets cannot be served due to the narrow width of the lanes, the absence of acceptable turnaround points or unsafe road junctions for bus use. However, officers have surveyed every lane in the area to maximise coverage.
 - (f) The Authority will run this trial service for six months and following this will consider extending the service through a new tendering round or reverting to the existing bus services (which will continue throughout the trial).
 - (g) The government messaging to avoid the use of public transport has resulted in a decline in patronage. However, officers can use data from 2018, 2019 and 2020 bus services to benchmark 2021 data that will help to decide whether there is a significant modal shift to DRT. It is intended to carry out on-bus research to gauge passengers' opinion that will provide a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the service's merits and demerits.

Ticket machines

- 2.10 To standardise through ticketing and real time data for public transport information systems, the Authority have obtained prices from the two leading providers of Electronic Ticket Machines (ETMs). This will enable the Authority to purchase ETMs on a call-off basis in Q4. As bus retendering proceeds in Jan-July, these machines can be rented to the smaller bus operators, thereby allowing the Authority to collect standardised and auditable data across all operators. This will allow better performance management, evaluation of value for money, and better route planning.

Significant Implications

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The projects listed above are budgeted to cost around £800,000 across a twelve-month period. This is funded through the budget allocated to trial bus reform projects by the Board, on the Committee' recommendation in September, and through the remaining balance of the Better Buses Fund grant provided to the Combined Authority by DfT.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 This Transport and Infrastructure Committee meeting shall be conducted in accordance with Parts 2 and 3 of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings)(England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 No.392).
- 4.2 It is a requirement to prepare a business case for each project and have it independently audited as part of Combined Authority Assurance framework governance.

5. Other Significant Implications

- 5.1 None

6. Appendices

- 6.1 None

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 09 September 2020 Transport & Infrastructure Committee report

[Bus Reform Task Force \(cmis.uk.com\)](https://cmis.uk.com)