

15 October 2021

REPORT SUMMARY SHEET

SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES

Purpose

To seek approval to carry out the procurement of supported bus services across the region and delegated authority to award contracts. This report is required as the value of the contracts to be awarded will exceed the threshold of the current delegated decisions.

Summary

This report includes the following key information:

- This item seeks delegated approval to carry out the procurement of bus service contracts due to expire in August/September 2022 and for the Cribbs Patchway Metrobus Extension (CPME) and for new contracts that emerge from the BSIP/Enhanced Partnership process.
- Officer delegation relates to the financial value of the contracts. We are retendering all our contracted bus services next year which will have a total value above the financial delegation to officers in the constitution.
- The procurement process will result in options for decisions on which contracts to award and these decisions will be taken in full consultation with the Mayor and the other Transport Board members.
- Decisions need to be made around the end of April to award contracts in time for services to commence when the previous contracts expire. To wait for an appropriate Committee to do this would not work in practical terms, especially given the need to revert to the previous lead-in times for service changes so we can ensure timetables and Real Time Information are in place.
- The CPME metrobus service will only be tendered if no operator emerges with an interest in running the route commercially – all current metrobus services have been run commercially to date but the post-Covid market may not now sustain a similar arrangement for CPME.
- The BSIP will highlight possible bus routes and services that may not attract commercial operators and these can then be tendered to the market making

use of the Bus Transformation Fund to be allocated to the Combined Authority.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

The Combined Authority has actively reviewed its key activities and work programme to reflect changing priorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific issues relating to the Covid-19 situation that impact on or are addressed through this report are as follows:

- Maintenance and enhancement of a comprehensive network of local bus services and modification of it in line with the adopted Bus Strategy will contribute positively to economic recovery and growth, assist residents in seeking employment and support the principles of clean and inclusive growth

Recommendations

Members of the Combined Authority Committee are asked to approve:

1. That a procurement process be initiated for new local bus service contracts to replace those expiring in August/September 2022, and that authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Transport Integration, in consultation with Members of the Transport Board, to award new local bus services contracts.
2. That permission for a procurement process be granted for a new local bus service operating on the Cribbs Patchway metrobus extension, if no commercial offer becomes available; and that authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Transport Integration, in consultation with Members of the Transport Board, to award new a service.
3. That permission for a procurement process be granted for any new local bus services which may be required as a result of the Bus Service Improvement Plan/Enhanced Partnership Plan and that authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Transport Integration, in consultation with Members of the Transport Board, to award any new local bus services.

Contact officer: Nicola Phillips

Position: Bus Services Manager

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**REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 15 October 2021

REPORT TITLE: SUPPORTED BUS SERVICES

**DIRECTOR: KATHRYN VOWLES, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF
INFRASTRUCTURE**

AUTHOR: NICOLA PHILLIPS, BUS SERVICES MANAGER

Purpose of Report

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Background / Issues for Consideration

Current supported bus service contracts

- 2.1 The majority of bus services in the West of England region are provided on a commercial basis by private bus companies. As Local Transport Authority the West of England Combined Authority provides support to 80 bus services in the region that supplement the commercial network with services that it considers to be socially necessary, i.e. where they meet a social need but would not otherwise be operated commercially. These services are generally orbital/rural in nature or provide links between communities that are not connected by arterial routes. The cost of these services is approximately £4m per annum which is covered by the Transport Levy from its constituent councils. The services provided are a combination of fully supported where the full operation of the service is paid for, or partially supported services where only certain journeys or extensions to the route are funded.
- 2.2 The Combined Authority currently supports 80 bus service contracts including park and ride services that were not viable as commercial operations prior to the onset of the pandemic. The current contracts for these services are due to expire on 27th August 2022/3rd September 2022 and approval is sought to carry out a procurement process for new contracts to start on 28th August 2022.
- 2.3 The pandemic has had a dramatic effect on bus services due to the sudden and sustained loss of passengers. Even now, bus passenger numbers remain only at around 65% of pre-Covid levels in the region. It is anticipated that unless passenger figures recover significantly and swiftly a number of previously commercial services may not be commercially viable in the longer term.
- 2.4 To ensure that current contracts are still fit for purpose and will meet our Bus Service Improvement Plan network proposals, we will be carrying out a review of all our supported bus services alongside reviewing commercial service provision in the autumn of 2021 including a passenger consultation exercise on any services which may require support. The steps to be followed in the procurement process are set out in the flowchart at Appendix 2. The procurement process will result in options for decisions on which contracts to

award and these decisions will be taken in full consultation with the Mayor and the other Transport Board members.

metrobus

- 2.5 At present the 3 metrobus services operate on a commercial basis under a Quality Partnership Scheme. The extension to the metrobus network from Cribbs Causeway to Parkway Station is currently under construction and will require a new service to start on the new route from early 2023.
- 2.6 We have carried out engagement with bus operators who have expressed an interest in operating a service along the extension route and at present are working with them to see if such a service might operate commercially. However, due to the impact of the pandemic on the bus market with patronage currently only around 65% of pre-Covid levels, operators are cautious about committing to a commercial offer and it is likely that the service will require some funding in the short term.
- 2.7 If a commercial offer does not come forward this autumn and funding is therefore required to support the metrobus service, even in the short term, the Combined Authority would need to carry out a procurement exercise to ensure a service is in place in early 2023.

Bus Service Improvement Plan

- 2.8 As part of the National Bus Strategy we are currently in the process of developing a Bus Service Improvement Plan from April 2022. The BSIP will set out how services are expected to improve across the region over the coming years so that passengers have access to a clear and comprehensible bus network, with more frequent and better value bus services.
- 2.9 Any services that are identified through the Bus Service Improvement Plan which may start between April 2022 and December 2022 will need to be procured on an emergency basis due to the required timescales for completing the full procurement process. As such, approval is sought to start the procurement process for any services which we will need to tender both on an emergency basis and longer term to meet our requirements. These could include radial, orbital or feeder bus services, community bus services or Demand Responsive Transport.
- 2.10 The Combined Authority needs to secure value for money with any bus service that is tendered. As part of the West of England Bus Strategy work, officers developed a framework to evaluate the relative costs and societal benefits of bus services, which has been refined and approved by the Transport Board. We now have an evidence-based tool that will help us evaluate the tenders on principles enshrined in the Bus Strategy.

Consultation

- 3.1 As part of the review of supported bus services we will be carrying out a passenger consultation exercise, which will include consultation with local ward councillors and Transport Board members. This will take the form of an online and on-bus questionnaire inviting views on what bus services people see as a priority for them. As well as the passenger consultation exercise we will also keep members up to date with any bus service changes through direct communication from the Transport Operations Team.
- 3.2 Whilst this procurement exercise only relates to services within the Combined Authority area, consideration and liaison has and will continue to take place with North Somerset Council and other Local Transport Authorities to ensure cross-border issues are addressed.

Risk Management/Assessment

- 4.1 Should the current set of bus service contracts be allowed to expire without the Local Transport Authority seeking to procure their replacement, there is a risk that some communities will see a reduction in access to public transport or even lose it completely. Making best use of the available funding to support socially necessary services reduces this risk.
- 4.2 Given the challenges presented to bus operators by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is possible that tender prices for existing or new service contracts will be higher than previously. Final decisions on the award of bus service contracts will be taken in consultation with Transport Board members in the light of the available funding and alignment with the evaluation framework previously developed.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 5.1 The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 5.2 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
 - Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
- 5.3 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.
- 5.4 A comprehensive, accessible and affordable bus network is vital to enabling people to access jobs, health, food, leisure and other services and opportunities. The measures proposed in this report aim to maintain and improve bus services across the region which will help meet the Combined Authorities obligations under the Equality Act.

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

- 6.1 Supported bus services are funded primarily through the Transport Levy from the constituent councils. This includes developer contributions that have been secured by the councils as Planning Authorities where these funds are suitable for use to support public transport.
- 6.2 It is envisaged that this procurement process will result in service delivery within the available budget. Any residual financial pressure would have to be met through either an amendment to the levy or drawdown against the Combined Authority Transport Smoothing Reserve.
- 6.3 The Government has announced a new £3bn Bus Transformation Fund available from April 2022 which is designed to support each BSIP. As yet it is unclear exactly how much funding from this source will come to the West of England Combined Authority.

Advice given by: Malcolm Coe. Director for Investment and Corporate Services

Legal Implications:

- 7.1 The Local Transport Authority has a responsibility to seek to secure any bus services which are deemed to be socially necessary where they are not provided commercially.
- 7.2 Financial delegations for operational decisions for securing bus services have a limit of £2m. The value of the contracts being tendered exceeds this limit. Committee therefore is asked to extend this delegation in order to meet the timescale for the contract start.

Advice given by: Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal Services

Climate Change Implications

- 8 On 19 July 2019, the West of England Combined Authority declared a climate emergency, recognising the huge significance of climate change and its impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the region's residents. The Combined Authority is committed to taking climate change considerations fully into account as an integral part of its governance and decision making process.

Each report/proposal submitted for Combined Authority / Joint Committee approval is assessed in terms of the following:

Will the proposal impact positively or negatively on:

- * The emission of climate changing gases?
- * The region's resilience to the effects of climate change?
- * Consumption of non-renewable resources?
- * Pollution to land, water or air?

Particular projects will also be subject to more detailed environmental assessment/consideration as necessary as part of their detailed project-specific management arrangements

- 8.1 Provision of a good public transport network is essential to help mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing the number of vehicles on the road to meet the demand for travel. Exhaust emission standards for buses have been raised progressively over recent years and bus operators have invested heavily in new vehicles.

Land/property Implications

- 9 None

Human Resources Implications:

- 10 None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – List of all supported bus services and contract end dates

Appendix 2 – Timescale flowchart

Background papers:

None.

West of England Combined Authority Contact:

Any person seeking background information relating to this item should seek the assistance of the contact officer for the meeting who is Ian Hird on 07436 600313; or by writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6EW; email: democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk

Service	Route	Operating Days/Times	Type	Operator	Contract End Date
2	Bath City Centre -Mulberry Park	Mon-Sat Evening	Net	First	27/08/22
6A	Bath City Centre - Larkhall - Bath City Centre	Mon-Sat Evening	Net	First	27/08/22
8	Bath City Centre - Kingsway	Mon-Sat Evening	Net	First	27/08/22
10	Rock Street North and Hortham Village to Southmead Hospital	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
10/11	Southmead Hospital - Avonmouth	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
11	Bath City Centre - Bathampton	All Journeys	Net	First	27/08/22
12	Severn Beach - Bristol Parkway	Monday - Saturday	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
12	Severn Beach - Cribbs Causeway	Sundays / Public Holidays	Net	First	27/08/22
12	Bath City Centre - Haycombe Cemetery	All Journeys	Net	First	27/08/22
13	Bristol City Centre - Southmead Hospital	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
13	Southmead Hospital - Shirehampton	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
17	Southmead Hospital - Kingswood - Keynsham	All Journeys	Net	First	27/08/22
19	Bath - Cribbs Causeway via Bitton	Sun Daytime	Net	First	27/08/22
20	Bath - Twerton	Mon-Sat Daytime	Net	First	27/08/22
22	Twerton - Bath Uni	Monday to Friday University Holidays Only	Net	First	27/08/22
35	Marshfield - Bristol	All Journeys	Net	First	27/08/22
41	Malmesbury - Yate	Mon-Sat Off Peak	Net	Coachstyle	03/09/22
42	Odd Down Park & Ride - Royal United Hospital	Mon-Fri evenings	Net	First	27/08/22
52	Bristol City Centre - Hengrove	Mon - Fri extension to Hengrove Park only	Net	HCT Group	03/09/22
79	Marshfield - Bath Centre	Mon-Fri Peak	Net	Faresaver	03/09/22
82	Paulton - Radstock	All Journeys	Net	First	27/08/22
84	Yate - Wotton-under-Edge - Yate	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	27/08/22
85	Yate - Wotton-under-Edge - Yate	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	27/08/22
86	Yate - Kingswood	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	27/08/22
94	Trowbridge - Bath	Mon-Sat Evening	Net	Libra Travel	27/08/22
172	Bath - Paulton	Mon-Sun Evening	Net	First	27/08/22
179	Midsomer Norton -Bath	All Journeys	Gross	CT Coaches	27/08/22
185	Hallatrow - Trowbridge	All Journeys	Net	CT Coaches	27/08/22
202	Chipping Sodbury - Winterbourne	All Journeys	Net	Eurotaxis	03/09/22
228	Colerne - Ralph Allen School	School Days	Net	Faresaver	03/09/22
505	Long Ashton Park & Ride Site - Southmead Hospital	All Journeys	Net	HCT Group	03/09/22
506	Bristol City Centre - Southmead Hospital	All Journeys	Net	HCT Group	03/09/22
511	Bedminster - Hengrove	All Journeys	Gross	HCT Group	03/09/22
512	Totterdown - Bristol City Centre	All Journeys	Gross	HCT Group	03/09/22
513	Knowle - Brislington	All Journeys	Gross	Stagecoach	03/09/22
514	Knowle - Brislington	All Journeys	Gross	Stagecoach	03/09/22
515	Stockwood - Hartcliffe	All Journeys	Gross	HCT Group	03/09/22
620	Old Sodbury - Bath	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	27/08/22
622	Chipping Sodbury - Cribbs Causeway	Monday - Saturday	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
622	Thornbury - Cribbs Causeway	Sundays / Public Holidays	Net	First	27/08/22
623	Severn Beach - Bristol Centre	All Journeys	Net	Eurotaxis	03/09/22
626	Wotton-under-Edge - Bristol Centre	All Journeys	Net	Eurotaxis	03/09/22
634	Tormarton - Kingswood	All Journeys	Net	Eurotaxis	27/08/22
636	Hengrove - Keynsham	All Journeys	Net	CT Coaches	27/08/22
640	Bishop Sutton - Keynsham	All Journeys	Net	CT Coaches	27/08/22
663	Somerdale - Chandag Road	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	27/08/22
664	Keynsham (Somerdale) - Salford	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	27/08/22
665	Somerdale - Longmeadow Road	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	27/08/22
668	Peasedown St John - Bristol	All Journeys	Net	CT Coaches	27/08/22
672	Bristol - Blagdon	All Journeys	Net	Eurotaxis	27/08/22
680	North Yate - Filton College	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
683	Keynsham - Wells	All Journeys	Net	CT Coaches	27/08/22
684	Wick-Keynsham	All Journeys	Net	Eurotaxis	27/08/22
700	Bath City Centre - Sion Hill	All Journeys	Gross	CT Coaches	27/08/22
716	Bath City Centre - Newbridge	All Journeys	Gross	CT Coaches	27/08/22
734	Bath City Centre - Bathwick	All Journeys	Gross	CT Coaches	27/08/22
752	Hinton Blewett - Bath	All Journeys	Gross	BANES	27/08/22
754	Hinton Blewett - Radstock	All Journeys	Gross	BANES	27/08/22
757	Combe Hay - Midsomer Norton	All Journeys	Net	CT Coaches	27/08/22
768	Midsomer Norton - Bath	All Journeys	Net	CT Coaches	27/08/22
779	Bath City Centre - Gloucester Road	All Journeys	Gross	CT Coaches	27/08/22
948	Pucklechurch - Sir Bernard Lovell Academy	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
963	Patchway - Winterbourne Academy	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
967	South Yate - Chipping Sodbury School	All Journeys	Net	Stagecoach	03/09/22
Bris	Brislington P&R	All Journeys	Net	First	03/09/22
Port	Portway P&R	All Journeys	Net	First	03/09/22
D1	Trowbridge - Bath	Mon-Sat Evening	Net	First	27/08/22
T2	Thornbury - Bristol Centre	Mon-Sat Daytime Hortham Village only	Net	First	27/08/22
T2	Thornbury - Bristol Centre	Mon -Sat Late Eve	Net	First	27/08/22
Y4	Yate - Bristol Centre	Mon-Sat Evenings	Net	First	27/08/22
Y5	Yate - Bristol Centre	Mon-Sat Eves and Sun	Net	First	27/08/22
Y6	Yate - Southmead Hospital	Mon-Sun Daytime every other journey and evenings	Net	First	27/08/22

Appendix 2: Timescale Flowchart

