

REPORT FOR INFORMATION ONLY

REPORT TITLE: METROBUS UPDATE

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Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide an update on the progress of the Metrobus programme

Background

- 2.1 The Metrobus programme has been delivered as 3 separate, jointly-promoted, projects with a different local authority taking the lead for delivery of each. South Gloucestershire Council is the lead authority for the North Fringe to Hengrove (NFH) project, Bristol City Council is the lead for the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads (AVTM) project and North Somerset is lead for the South Bristol Link (SBL) project.
- 2.2 Each individual project has its own Project Board and there is an additional Integration Board that covers cross cutting aspects that are relevant to each project. Primarily this covers the bus stop infrastructure, smart ticketing, stop information and service operations.
- 2.3 Oversight of the 4 Metrobus Boards is provided by the Programme Assurance Board, which is made up of Strategic/Executive Directors (or alternates) from the 4 West of England Authorities.
- 2.4 In terms of construction, the three projects have delivered some key new infrastructure for Metrobus as well as providing improvements for cycling and walking across the network. They have also delivered public realm and traffic flow improvements in the city centre that are providing benefits for all buses in the area.
- 2.5 The network of Metrobus services comprises five core routes across the three projects, as follows: Cribbs Causeway to Hengrove Park, Long Ashton Park & Ride to City Centre, Emersons Green to City Centre, Hengrove Park to City Centre via SBL, and Emersons Green to Bristol Parkway Station.
- 2.6 The service procurement strategy for Metrobus is for the network to be provided on a commercial basis, i.e. the services are not financially supported by the authorities. A Quality Partnership Scheme (QPS) has been made that sets out the minimum standards for operation of Metrobus services. This has formed the focus of lengthy engagement with potential bus operators to secure services. Commercial proposals have been received covering 3 routes on the network. The remaining 2 routes are subject to continuing engagement and will be delivered when the commercial case for their operation improves. This may follow increased passenger demand generated from development in the areas most closely served by those routes.

Issues for Consideration

- 3 The first Metrobus service commenced operation on the 29th May 2018, on the m3 route from Emersons Green to City Centre. As a promotion of this service, First operated the m3 as a free service for 2 weeks. The service has exceeded initial expectations, with over 120,000 passenger trips in the first 2 months of operation. Due to the demand seen on this route, a new Sunday service will be introduced from the 16th September. Also from this date the timetable is being modified to improve morning peak punctuality.
- 3.1 Service m2, operating from Long Ashton Park & Ride to the City Centre, commenced on the

3rd September 2018. This operates via the new Guided Busway between the Park & Ride site and the Cumberland Basin. The opening of the Busway will also facilitate the rerouting of the A1 Airport Flyer service operating to central Bristol via the SBL and the busway. This service is expected to start at the end of October.

- 3.2 Service m2 has replaced the service 903 Long Ashton Park & Ride service. This has changed the route of the service in the City Centre and introduced new, exclusively off bus ticketing arrangements. 'Brand Ambassadors' have been at the Park & Ride site and at key stops in the city centre to assist passengers in making the transition to the new arrangements. Mobile phone ticketing is a key element of the off bus ticketing proposal and there has been an issue with an intermittent fault that has affected the ability of passengers to make use of the phone application. This did generate extra demand for the iPoint at Long Ashton but we are hopeful of a resolution of the fault very soon. This issue has affected a number of bus operators across the country and is not specific to Metrobus, or Bristol.
- 3.3 Service m1, Cribbs Causeway to Hengrove Park, will be operated by Bristol Community Transport (BCT). The service will be operated with gas powered vehicles and the required gas infrastructure and vehicles themselves have been ordered. Vehicle delivery is expected in time for service commencement in January 2019.
- 3.4 The only remaining parts of infrastructure still to be delivered are the iPoints for the m1 service. This is programmed to be completed between October and December, in time for service launch in January 2019.

Consultation:

- 4 None

Other Options Considered:

- 5 N/A

Risk Management/Assessment:

- 5 Project risks have been managed throughout the delivery programme and overseen by the Project Boards and Programme Assurance Group. There are no risks associated with the implementation of the recommendation of this report.

Public Sector Equality Duties:

- 6 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.
- 6.1 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:
- Removing or minimizing 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.
- 6.2 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.

- 6.3 There have been Equalities Impact Assessments provided through the planning and delivery of the Metrobus programme. As an update report, there are no further Equalities Issues arising as a result of the report.

Economic Impact Assessment:

- 7 The Metrobus programme met the economic criteria for the DfT funding submissions in 2009/10 delivering a benefit cost ratio in excess of 2.0. The post completion economic impact will be assessed as part of the agreed Metrobus Evaluation plan.

Finance Implications:

- 8 The report provides a progress update on each of the Metrobus routes, and as such there are no additional financial implications arising from the recommendation.

Advice given by: Chris Holme (BCC Finance Manager)

Legal Implications:

- 9 There are no legal implications to the report but it should be noted that due to recent legislation, technical changes will need to be considered to the Quality Partnership Scheme.

Advice from Nancy Rollason (Deputy Monitoring Officer BCC)

Land/Property Implications;

- 10 N/A

Advice given by:

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