

REPORT TO: WECA OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE: 28 NOVEMBER 2018
REPORT TITLE: METROBUS UPDATE
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MANAGER

Purpose of Report

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

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 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 first Metrobus service commenced operation on the 29th May 2018, on the m3 route from Emersons Green to City Centre. Due to the demand seen on this route, a

Sunday service was introduced on the 16th September. Further changes to provide a higher frequency and improve capacity are proposed for January 2019. These changes reflect the levels of demand being experienced, which have been beyond original expectations. There are some operational issues on the m3 relating to morning peak reliability.

- 2.7 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. From the 28th October 2018, the A1 Airport Flyer service commenced operation via the South Bristol Link and the busway.
- 2.8 Service m2 has replaced the service 903 Long Ashton Park & Ride service and introduced new, exclusively off bus ticketing arrangements. Mobile phone ticketing is a key element of the off bus ticketing proposal and in the first week of launch, there was an intermittent fault that affected the ability of passengers to make use of the phone application. This did generate extra demand for the iPoint at Long Ashton in the first week of operation, which raised concerns that one may be insufficient. However, as passengers have become familiar with the ticketing options that don't require an iPoint, this concern has receded. The service has seen an increase in usage of circa 20% compared to the previous Park & Ride service. One of the key differences of the m2 service is that it calls at stops along the route, serving a number of additional areas.
- 2.9 From the 28th October the Airport Flyer service (A1) was rerouted to use the South Bristol Link and the Guided Busway to central Bristol. This has brought into operational use some previously unused sections of metrobus infrastructure. We are currently experiencing some issues with unauthorised use of the Guided Busway by other vehicles and appropriate enforcement measures are being taken.
- 2.10 Service m1, Cribbs Causeway to Hengrove Park, will commence on the 6th January 2019 and 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 during December in time for service commencement. A temporary fuelling station will be in place to support this, with the permanent fuelling station expected to be complete by the end of March 2019.
- 2.11 The only remaining parts of infrastructure still to be delivered are the iPoints for the m1 service. The installation of these iPoints is underway but the programme for completion in time for launch is challenging. Contingency plans have been agreed with the operator should not all iPoints be in place for the start of operation.
- 2.12 iPoint operation on the existing routes has proven largely successful, and any issues are being addressed quickly. iPoint usage has proven to be significant at the start of services, as passengers make use of them until they are more familiar with the ticketing options. The m-ticket usage is now a significant proportion of overall ticket sales. The m1 launch will be supported by 'Brand Ambassadors' who will be at stops assisting passengers with the off bus ticketing options available to them.
- 2.13 There are 2 metrobus routes yet to have a commercial offer for operation of services. Discussions are ongoing with operators to identify the opportunities to fill these gaps in provision.

Consultation

3 None.

Other Options Considered (complete as appropriate)

4 N/A

Risk Management/Assessment (complete as appropriate)

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

Public Sector Equality Duties (complete as appropriate)

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 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.*

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.

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

7 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.

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.

Advice given by: Chris Holme (BCC Finance Manager)

Legal Implications:

- 8 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 given by: Nancy Rollason (Deputy Monitoring Officer BCC)

Land/property implications

- 9 N/A

Human Resources Implications:

- 10 N/A

Recommendation:

- * That the Committee considers and notes the update on the Metrobus programme.

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 / Tim Milgate on 0117 332 1486; or by writing to West of England Combined Authority, 3 Rivergate, Temple Way, Bristol BS1 6ER; email: democratic.services@westofengland-ca.gov.uk