

REPORT TO: WECA OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 27 FEBRUARY 2019

REPORT TITLE: METROBUS PROGRAMME UPDATE

AUTHOR:

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Purpose of Report

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

General background

- 2.1 The metrobus programme has been delivered as three 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) package, 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 four Metrobus Boards is provided by the Programme Assurance Board, which is made up of Strategic/Executive Directors (or delegates) from the four West of England Authorities.

Latest update information

- 3.1 Service m1 (Hengrove to Cribbs Causeway) started operating on Sunday 6th January 2019. It is operated by Bristol Community Transport (BCT), who are sub-contracted by First, with brand new bio-methane powered low emission buses which meet the quality standards set by the Quality Partnership Scheme (QPS). The m1 operates every 10 minutes between 0600 and 2400 (Mon-Sat) and every 20 minutes between 0900 and 2400 on Sundays.
- 3.2 There is still some infrastructure outstanding to support the operation of the m1 service. This includes one bus shelter (northbound at Harry Stoke) which is expected to be

installed before the end of March, and five iPoints which will be installed by the end of February, with the exception of Bedminster Parade outbound which requires a different unit due to the proliferation of underground utilities restricting available foundation size. The short term acceptance of on bus contactless payments is in place until these installations are complete. Each location where this applies has clear information for the public.

- 3.3 Service m3 (Emersons Green to City Centre) was also changed on the 6th January to increase the number of Monday-Friday peak hour journeys. It now operates every 15 minutes at these peak times, having previously been every 20 minutes. Two of the journeys each peak hour will operate more directly between Emersons Green and the City Centre, not calling at UWE Frenchay. This will provide shorter journey times for passengers from Emersons Green, Lyde Green and Ring Road stops to the City Centre. The reduction in frequency at UWE is more than offset by the m1 and this change should also benefit passengers travelling to/from the Begbrook stops.
- 3.4 Service m2 (Long Ashton Park & Ride to City Centre) has been operational, using the new Guided Busway, since the 2nd September 2018. The busway is now also used by the A1 Airport Flyer service.
- 3.5 There are two metrobus routes without a commercial offer at present; Hengrove to City Centre via South Bristol Link; and Emersons Green to Bristol Parkway. Discussions with operators are continuing on options to provide services that make use of the infrastructure and serve the communities.
- 3.6 The metrobus Board oversees the operation of metrobus services, the delivery of authorities' commitments in relation to maintenance and enforcement, and to consider amendments to existing metrobus routes.
- 3.7 Ongoing monitoring of service performance is undertaken by authorities and operators at the metrobus Performance Review Group (PRG). This Group is made up of officers from each authority and operator representatives. The purpose of the Group is to review both operational performance of metrobus and the maintenance and enforcement commitments from the authorities in support of metrobus services.

Operational Performance

- 4.1 Patronage – usage of the current metrobus network of the above three routes is strong. In January, across all the metrobus services, there were 276,927 passenger journeys.
- 4.2 Punctuality – the punctuality of all metrobus journeys in January from their respective origin stops is below. This is a percentage of all journeys that start 'on time' according to Traffic Commissioner's compliance measure of no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late:

m1: 92%

m2: 93%

m3/3x: 94%
- 4.3 Whilst these figures are strong, the PRG has identified and discussed areas of delay on metrobus services. Although in general terms the services are operating well, each service has specific areas where delays are experienced during the peak hour. For the

m3/3x services the main issue is AM peak time traffic congestion on the A4174 Ring Road. To address this issue, South Gloucestershire Council has arranged for the police to enforce the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane at a particular pinch point. This has recently been undertaken and we will be assessing the impact on service operation. For service m1, the main area of concern is northbound am peak congestion through Bedminster. This is currently exacerbated by Temple Circus works including the eastbound closure of Clarence Road which is affecting traffic levels on Bedminster Bridge. This also affects the punctuality of the m2 service as it approaches Bedminster Bridge on Commercial Road. The completion of these works should improve traffic flow generally and metrobus operation in particular.

- 4.4 The Ticketing arrangements continue to be working well, with few adverse comments. The majority of passengers are using the mobile ticketing app as their preferred method. The iPoints have proven to be generally reliable, with most problems being resolved quickly.

Consultation

- 5 Non-applicable (in the context of this being an update report for information).

Other Options Considered

- 6 Non-applicable (in the context of this being an update report for information).

Risk Management/Assessment

- 7 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 this report as it is an update report for information.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 8 *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.*

- 8.1 *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.

- 8.2 *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.*
- 8.3 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:

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

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:

- 10 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

- 11 Non-applicable

Human Resources Implications

- 12 Non-applicable

Recommendation:

- * **That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes this 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