
**Decision Session
(Cabinet Member for City Strategy)**

21st February 2012

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Bid to the Better Bus Area Fund

Summary

1. The Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) provides an opportunity to assist in the realisation of the Council's objective to 'Get York Moving'. A successful bid will help to deliver a step change in the quality of the bus service across the City. This will make a significant contribution to the 'Reinvigorate York' initiative and by tackling congestion support economic growth.
2. The City of York bid seeks to deliver three objectives;
 - a. Making bus travel easy and attractive through the transformation of public transport ticketing options and the delivery of an easy-to-use suite of bus information, including for multi-leg journeys.
 - b. The provision of high quality passenger waiting and interchange facilities designed in harmony with the architecture and fabric of the City.
 - c. Improvements to the highway network facilitating the reliable operation of bus services through the heart of York, minimising unnecessary delays and increasing the attraction of bus travel.
3. In addition to the Council's sole bid, it will be partnering West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (Metro) in their bid to the fund for the delivery of wholesale changes to the ticketing options available to bus service customers.

4. Work remains ongoing with operators and Metro to identify match funding. Subject to continued work on indicative costings the realisation of the proposed package will cost around £4m.

Recommendations

5. The Cabinet Member for City Strategy is recommended to:
 - a. Note the contents of this report
 - b. Agree to the submission of a City of York bid to the Better Bus Area Fund in partnership with York's bus operators.
 - c. Agree to support West Yorkshire PTE's bid to the Better Bus Area Fund in the interests of realising significant ticketing benefits for City of York bus passengers.

Reason: This course of action will greatly assist the Council and York's bus operators to make a step change improvement to the bus network which will deliver an increase in bus passenger numbers.

Background

6. The objective of the Department for Transport's 'Better Bus Area Fund' (BBAF) is to assist 'those local authorities who take a partnership approach to bus services in congested urban areas where increasing bus occupancy and achieving modal shift can free up valuable road space and reduce carbon emissions'.
7. The Department for Transport (DfT) is providing a total fund of £50m for which any urban local authority, working in partnership with its main bus operators, can bid to a total of £5m. A bid can be made for capital (infrastructure) or revenue (promotion, marketing, information, etc) measures or a combination of the two. Bids may not be submitted without the support of key local bus operators.
8. The DfT's guidance states that the bids will be judged on the strength of their evidence and analysis base. Further, the bid must be able to demonstrate that a sound implementation strategy is in place for each component of the proposed package of measures.
9. The BBAF is strongly aligned to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in terms of its policy outcomes, but the BBAF is designed specifically to support the bus market and to deliver a growth in bus

ridership over the short term, with the expenditure to be spent in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

The proposal

10. The York bid is divided into three distinct elements:

Ticketing and Information

11. This year will see the introduction of a paper based ticket for multi-leg journeys for use on any of York's buses, irrespective of the company operating the service. This is designed to address the problem of increasingly dispersed employment and retail centre distribution and the need for bus services and ticketing to match changed journey patterns. Building on current and proposed bus operator investment in 'smart' enabled bus ticket machines, this bid will then enable the Quality Bus Partnership to launch a multi-operator smart ticket.
12. The introduction of smart ticketing across the York bus network will increase the range of travel options, making the bus more attractive. Potential passengers who are dissuaded from using the service due to not knowing how much the bus costs or not having the appropriate change to pay for their fare will, with the assistance of bus operators, be a thing of the past. Bus loading times and consequently journey times and reliability will be improved.
13. The Council will work in partnership with the bus operators to undertake a programme of targeted marketing to encourage and incentivise bus usage. Further, the Council will work with the Quality Bus Partnership to deliver a step change transformation of at-street, on-line and mobile bus information output, attracting users of all generations and ensuring that it is as easy as possible for anybody wanting to use a bus to do so.

Bus interchange points

14. A successful bid will result in the implementation of an on-street bus information strategy and five city centre bus interchanges to be located:
 - a. (East) The Stonebow

- b. (South) Piccadilly
 - c. (West) York Station
 - d. (North) Theatre
 - e. (West/Central) Rougier Street/ Station Road.
15. Each of the interchanges will be equipped with improved waiting infrastructure and will be accompanied with clear static (timetable/mapping) and real time electronic information to ensure that intending passengers know where to get their bus, when it will depart and any unexpected delays.
 16. Many of York's bus stops are located in areas of historic importance and within the City Centre conservation area. The improvement of waiting facilities at many of the stops will form a part of the programme to 'Reinvigorate York' and will be delivered in partnership with the relevant organisations to ensure that the design is sympathetic to its surrounds.
 17. The alterations to these major stopping points will be undertaken with consultation with the bus operators to ensure that the bus routes are tailored to the stop improvements and vice-versa, and better serve cross city movements.

Reliability improvements

18. The handful of streets and two bridges linking Clarence Street, the Station, Piccadilly and Peasholme Green accommodate all of the bus services in York at one point or another. This proposal will include a range of measures to improve the ease with which buses can pass through the central area of the City. While some delays to the bus network are unavoidable, two of the main obstacles to improving the attractiveness of the buses are delays occasioned by the volume of other traffic in York's often very narrow city centre streets, and the unpredictability of the delays.
19. Data provided by bus operators identifies that operators build slack into schedules to counter delays experienced in York city centre. Thus the measures to improve reliability will reduce incidences of buses waiting at stands in the city centre and consequential bus stop congestion issues, as operators will build less slack into timetables. This is corroborated by the Council's own data which

shows that some on-street stands in the city centre are occupied for as much as 35 minutes of every hour by waiting buses.

20. Reducing the length of time buses wait at stops lessens pressure on the limited stopping space and also reduces air pollution (an issue of significance that the Council is separately seeking to address to meet Government targets) and carbon dioxide emissions in the areas where buses wait. Improvements to reliability will reduce the travelling time for a significant majority of bus passengers in the city and will make the bus more attractive when compared to the car.
21. Measures proposed to tackle unpredictable delay include CCTV-based enforcement of the central Coppergate area; a length of bus lane along Clarence Street to ease bus flow and the introduction of a bus controller for all of York's bus services to monitor punctual operation of services and, where necessary, take action (e.g. removing obstructions to buses).

The West Yorkshire PTE (Metro) proposal

22. Metro, who are responsible for the procurement, strategy and delivery of passenger transport services for the West Yorkshire area, intend to submit a bid to the Better Bus Area Fund. The Metro bid seeks funding for the accelerated delivery of smart ticketing for the area.
23. City of York Council works closely with Metro on a number of projects and work streams within the context of the Leeds City Region. In particular, it has been working closely with Metro over the past three years as proposals for the launch of 'Yorcard' have been developed. 'Yorcard' is not a ticketing product in itself, but rather the company established by West & South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executives for the delivery of smart ticketing in both areas.
24. Metro will include York as an optional addition to their bid. This would enable York to take advantage of a significant level of research and development at a lower cost than it could ever attain were it attempt to introduce a smart card on its own. The optional addition will secure up to £0.75m of funding for York to develop on-street ticketing solutions and to build the business rules for the delivery of a 'pay as you go' smart bus ticket.

Consultation

25. Consultation has been undertaken with all of York's bus operators, directly and through York's Quality Bus Partnership.
26. The bid has been devised with the assistance of a number of 'critical friends' from both within and outside the Council. These include representatives from the Council's Heritage Team, the York Youth Council, West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and the York Quality Bus Partnership.
27. York's Traffic Congestion Scrutiny Committee carried out a significant consultation exercise and identified that improvement of local bus services was residents' top transport priority. Amongst the problems residents identified with buses in the city was poor perceived reliability. This bid will tackle reliability problems through the "reliability package" of bus gates and priority lanes. These measures will not tackle all the causes of unreliability in the city, so the interchange package is also important here because it will provide more attractive waiting environments for passengers whose service is, for whatever reason, delayed. Through this bid we will transform the five most used clusters of stops in the city centre, converting them from collections of sometimes mismatched bus stops into designated interchange hubs. Common design of shelters, careful design of pedestrian facilities and effective signage and information will mean that the hubs are perceived as a single space, dedicated to bus interchange.
28. Origin and destination survey work has also identified that a very significant proportion of journeys in and around the City centre are cross city journeys (over 40% on the inner ring road), with neither origin or destination in the city centre. Better interchange and information and smart multi-operator ticketing will also be important in providing a more attractive public transport alternative for cross city journeys, which in turn could reduce city centre traffic congestion and delay.
29. If the bid is successful, as with other schemes, a significant level of ongoing consultation will be required which will provide the opportunity to influence detailed proposals and maximise the benefits from the improvements.

Options

30. This report presents four options:

- a. Agree to the submission of a City of York bid to the Better Bus Area Fund in partnership with York's bus operators.

And

Agree to support West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive's bid to the Better Bus Area Fund in the interests of realising significant ticketing benefits for City of York bus passengers.

- b. Agree to the submission of a City of York bid to the Better Bus Area Fund in partnership with York's bus operators.
- c. Agree to support West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive's bid to the Better Bus Area Fund in the interests of realising significant ticketing benefits for City of York bus passengers.
- d. Decline to submit any bid to the Better Bus Area Fund.

Council Plan Priorities

31. Support for bus services in York contributes to the following Council Plan priorities:

Get York moving:

A commitment to improve York's local bus network aims to deliver an increase in the quality, reliability and punctuality of local bus services. Partnership arrangements will be agreed with the bus operators to develop all aspects of bus travel. This will include improvements to vehicle fleets, better timetables, and real-time information and more bus priority measures. Through ticketing will also be introduced, which means passengers will only need to buy one ticket to complete a journey, even if they have to use more than one bus operator's services. These improvements aim to deliver a 10% increase in bus based trips over the next four years.

Protect the environment:

York will be better prepared and more resilient in the face of a changing climate and will steadily reduce its carbon emissions. This study contributes towards the commitment in proposing more

efficient utilisation of the City's bus fleet as well as better vehicle standards.

32. Local Transport Plan 2011- 2015 (LTP3): Support for the services outlined above would contribute to several of the aims of the third Local Transport Plan, namely:
- To provide quality alternatives to the car to provide more choice and enable more trips to be undertaken by sustainable means
 - Improving Strategic Links to enhance the wider connections with the key residential and employment areas in and around York, and beyond
 - Tackling Transport Emissions to reduce the release of pollutants harmful to health and the environment.

Implications

- **Financial**

The bid aims to bring additional funding to CYC, provision is being made through the Council's budget to provide match funding up to a value of £2m.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

A successful bid will result in the recruitment of a Bus Controller for the City. The employee will be working on behalf of all of the bus operators and the Council. Advice will be sought on who this member of staff would be employed by as the Quality Bus Partnership does not currently exist as a legal entity and therefore would be unable to employ staff directly.

- **Equalities**

Consultation will be undertaken with a range of interest groups. The measures in the bid will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

- **Legal**

A successful bid would necessitate alterations to traffic arrangements in the City Centre and the associated Orders.

- **Crime and Disorder**

There are no crime and disorder implications.

- **Information Technology (IT)**

There are no IT implications

- **Property**

There are no Property implications

- **Other**

There are no other implications

Risk Management

33. A degree of risk (principally reputational) may result from the implementation of the contents of this bid. Submission of the bid in and of itself, however, is low risk.
34. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score for all risks has been assessed at less than 16. This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

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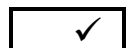
**Report
Approved**



Date 10/02/12

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report