

CABINET – 5 December 2013 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEM 12

Report title: Better Bus Area project

Wards affected: Citywide

Strategic Director: Neil Taylor

Report Author: Alistair Cox

RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor's approval:

1. That the Mayor endorses the Better Bus Area wider programme of spend (as detailed in Table 1) and agree to proceed with the proposals contained in this report.
2. That the Mayor agrees that Bristol City Council will deliver the project in collaboration with Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Council and is the accountable body in reporting to Government on behalf of the partnership authorities.
3. That the Service Director for Transport, in consultation with the Assistant Mayor, Executive for Transport, Planning, Strategic Housing and Regeneration, be given delegated authority to proceed with the proposed project (listed in Table 1) and authorised to implement the option best suited to the local circumstances and that brings the most benefit in terms of modal shift from car to bus.

Key background / detail:

a. Purpose of report: To summarise the key areas of the 3 year Better Bus Area project and seek authority to work in partnership with Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils. To agree the changes to concessionary travel reimbursement and to proceed to design, consultation and implementation of the proposed bus priority measures.

b. Key details:

1. In February 2013 the Government set out guidance and invited applications from Local Authorities to designate Better Bus Areas (BBA). Better Bus Areas are designed to incentivise partnership working offering bus operators and local authorities the opportunity to work together to grow the bus market to improve the economy. Bristol City Council has experience of this partnership working approach.
2. The West of England Partnership submitted a successful bid to the DfT for BBA for eight corridors within the administration boundaries of Bristol City, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils. Three corridors are wholly within B&NES, 2 in Bristol and 3 cross boundary. The eight corridors are listed in Table 1 and detailed on the map in Appendix 1. The total overall funding is £1.3 million made up of £939,683 BSOG and £369,301 uplift from the DfT. The grant is made up of £512,328 revenue and £796,657 capital.

Table 1

Corridor	Scheme Name	BBA uplift	BSOG	Total budget	Affected Local Authorities
1	London Road, Bath	£25,667	£64,638	£90,305	B&NES
2	Lower Bristol Road, Bath	£10,847	£19,728	£30,575	B&NES
3	Wellsway, Bath	£26,269	£72,997	£99,266	B&NES
4	A38 Arches to Thornbury Health Centre	£69,045	£191,280	£260,325	Bristol/South Gloucestershire
5	A4/A43029 Anchor Road to Ashton Road	£80,381	£258,342	£338,723	Bristol
6	A420 Lawrence Hill Roundabout to Kingswood Town Centre	£41,019	£62,514	£103,533	Bristol/South Gloucestershire
7	A37 Three Lamps to A368	£46,967	£131,229	£178,196	Bristol/B&NES
8	A38 Bedminster Parade to Kings Head Lane	£69,106	£138,955	£208,061	Bristol
	TOTAL	£369,301	£939,683	1,308,984	

3. The devolved funding has been allocated on a package of targeted measures on these eight BBA corridors. These measures have been identified in conjunction with bus operators to improve reliability of bus service through better use of the existing bus priority facilities and enhancements on each corridor to deliver reduced operating costs and/or deliver patronage growth. These schemes include new and extended bus lanes, bus gates, CCTV monitoring and enforcement cameras, parking controls, improved signage, bus stop upgrades and extended active operational control of the road network in evenings, Saturdays and for events. Funding will be targeted on the corridors.
4. The scheme delivery arrangements will be overseen by an established cross boundary Programme Board (as set up for the delivery of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and Better Bus Area 2012) comprising representatives from the authorities. Bristol City Council will be the lead authority in behalf of the partnership. To ensure that operators are fully involved with the project a partnership board will be established that will make recommendations on delivery.

**BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL
CABINET
5 December 2013**

REPORT TITLE: Better Bus Area 2013

Ward(s) affected by this report: Citywide

Strategic Director: Neil Taylor, Interim Strategic Director, Regeneration

Report author: Alistair Cox, Service Manager, City Transport

Contact telephone no. 0117 922 2357
& e-mail address: alistair.cox@bristol.gov.uk

Purpose of the report:

To summarise the key areas of the 3 year Better Bus Area project and seek authority to work in partnership with Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils. To agree the proposals as set out in the bid submitted to the Department for Transport and proceed to design, consultation and implementation of the proposed bus priority measures.

RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor's approval:

1. That the Mayor endorses the Better Bus Area wider programme of spend (as detailed in Table 1) and agree to proceed with the proposals contained in this report.
2. That the Mayor agrees that Bristol City Council will deliver the project in collaboration with Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Council and is the accountable body in reporting to Government on behalf of the partnership authorities.
3. That the Service Director for Transport, in consultation with the Assistant Mayor, Executive for Transport, Planning, Strategic Housing and Regeneration, be given delegated authority to proceed with the proposed project (listed in Table 1) and authorised to implement the option best suited to the local circumstances and that brings the most benefit in terms of modal shift from car to bus.

The proposal:

1. The bus network plays a crucial role in Bristol, linking people to areas of commerce, providing employers with access to labour markets and supporting social inclusion. Buses are therefore key to a healthy and growing economy.
2. In February 2013 the Government set out guidance and invited applications from Local Authorities to designate Better Bus Areas (BBA). Better Bus Areas are designed to incentivise partnership working offering bus operators and local authorities the opportunity to work together to grow the bus market to improve the economy. Bristol City Council has experience of this partnership working approach.

3. The Better Bus Area has reformed the way in which it directly supports the bus market through the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). BSOG is a Government subsidy administered centrally by the Department for Transport (DfT) and paid directly to every operator in the local bus market in proportion to the amount of fuel used to run eligible services. The grant helps to keep down bus fares and protect services, but it is a blunt tool which applies to profitable and unprofitable routes alike. In many congested areas the main factors constraining bus passengers are comparatively long bus journey times when compared with the car, a perception of poor punctuality and reliability, and lack of flexibility and information. Tackling these issues requires action by the local transport authority working in close partnership with bus operators, rather than a direct grant to bus operators. Moreover, BSOG is directly linked to fuel consumption and so does not promote a reduction in carbon emissions.
4. As part of the Better Bus Areas (BBA) the government will gradually transfer BSOG from bus operators to the local authority and provide top-up funding that will provide an increase in total bus funding in an area. The funding is used to deliver bus priority to improve punctuality and reliability to increase the bus market.
5. The West of England Partnership submitted a successful bid to the DfT for BBA for eight corridors within the administration boundaries of Bristol City, Bath and North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils. Three corridors are wholly within B&NES, 2 in Bristol and 3 cross boundary. The eight corridors are listed in Table 1 and detailed on the map in Appendix 1. The total overall funding is £1.3 million made up of £939,683 BSOG and £369,301 uplift from the DfT. The grant is made up of £512,328 revenue and £796,657 capital.

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6. The devolved funding has been allocated on a package of targeted measures on these eight BBA corridors. These measures have been identified in conjunction with bus operators to improve reliability of bus service through better use of the existing bus priority facilities and enhancements on each corridor to deliver reduced operating costs and/or deliver patronage growth. These schemes include new and extended bus lanes, bus gates, CCTV monitoring and enforcement cameras, parking controls, improved signage, bus stop upgrades and extended active operational control of the road network in evenings, Saturdays and for events. Funding will be targeted on the corridors.

7. The annual budget allocation will be paid by the Department for Transport to the Council at the start of each financial year. All staff costs associated with the delivery and reporting on the project including the role Bristol City Council will fulfil as the accountable body will be paid for through the grant funding.
8. The scheme delivery arrangements will be overseen by an established cross boundary Programme Board (as set up for the delivery of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and Better Bus Area 2012) comprising representatives from the authorities. Bristol City Council will be the lead authority on behalf of the partnership. To ensure that operators are fully involved with the project a partnership board will be established that will make recommendations on delivery.
9. Infrastructure enhancements will be subject to local consultation with affected parties. Statutory consultation will be carried out for any proposed changes to traffic flow, waiting and loading restrictions.
10. Investment on these corridors will be monitored with the key objectives of BBA reflecting those for the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) and Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3) to:
 - Increase the number of bus passengers
 - Improve bus reliability
 - Increase satisfaction with bus services.The core indicators will be:
 - Bus patronage on the corridors measured using data provided by bus operators.
 - Bus punctuality measured at timing points on the BBA 2013 corridors.
 - Bus user satisfaction.

Consultation and scrutiny input:

a. Internal consultation:

The bid was worked up between all Passenger Transport teams in the three authorities. The Assistant Mayor, Executive for Transport, Planning, Strategic Housing and Regeneration and the Executive Members for Transport in each of the three Local Authorities approved the final bid to the Department for Transport.

b. External consultation:

The bid has been worked up in partnership and sought support from Bus Operators as Better Bus Area designation means that the Bus Service Operators Grant will be devolved to Local Authority.

Other options considered:

- Options not to submit bids under the Better Bus Area were considered. However this was viewed as preventing Bristol City Council from accessing significant opportunities to build on plans for taking forward improvements in passenger transport.
- The overall approach to the BBA programme was assessed

Risk management / assessment:

Risk management will be overseen by the Partnership Board who will review key programme risks and mitigation at each of their quarterly meetings. Risks related to individual scheme delivery will be managed by the local authority Project Board.

The Project Manager will be responsible for tracking and monitoring risks as part of formal reporting procedures. Each risk will be allocated an individual risk owner who will be the person be placed to manage risk. We will develop individual risk registers as the projects listed in this report progress.

FIGURE 1

The risks associated with the implementation of the (subject) decision :

No.	RISK Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK		RISK CONTROL MEASURES Mitigation (i.e. controls) and Evaluation (i.e. effectiveness of mitigation).	CURRENT RISK		RISK OWNER
		(Before controls)			(After controls)		
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	Operators increasing fares or removing services to compensate for loss of BSOG	High	Medium	Follow the business case outlined in the bid. Seek advice from operators through the Partnership Board	High	Low	Project Manager
2	Overspending on projects and programmes	High	Medium	The individual projects in the programme depend on local discretionary resources, and prudent costs planning and good project management is required.	High	Low	Project Manager
3	Under spending /resources to deliver.	High	Medium	With the scale of funding and relatively shorty delivery timescale, it will be essential to manage the capacity to deliver these projects. There are a number of consultancy frameworks set up to support BBA which can be utilised in order to cover capacity shortfalls.	High	Low	Project Manager

FIGURE 2

The risks associated with not implementing the (subject) decision:

No.	RISK Threat to achievement of the key objectives of the report	INHERENT RISK		RISK CONTROL MEASURES Mitigation (i.e. controls) and Evaluation (i.e. effectiveness of mitigation).	CURRENT RISK		RISK OWNER
		(Before controls)			(After controls)		
		Impact	Probability		Impact	Probability	
1	Prevent Bristol City Council from accessing significant opportunities to build on plans for taking forward improvements in passenger transport.	High	High	Investigate other opportunities to invest in improving conditions for Passenger transport interventions.	High	Medium	Service Director,

Public sector equality duties:

The interventions proposed for bus priority are measures that have been utilised through the delivery of the Greater Bristol Bus Network project. No significant adverse impacts were identified. The GBBN project helped to promote equality through improvements to physical access, information, highway safety, personal safety (e.g. CCTV) and promotion of sustainable and healthier modes of transport.

More than 30% of bus passenger journeys on services operating along the proposed Better Bus Area corridors are being made by concessionary pass holders (elderly and disabled people). Bus services are of particular importance to older and disabled people as they are more likely to be unable to make use of alternative means of transport than the rest of the population. The improvement scheme on the proposed Better Bus Area corridors include

measures to improve accessibility of buses and measures to improve punctuality and reliability of bus services. The reviews of parking provision and enforcement will help to ensure that buses can line up with raised kerbs, enhancing accessibility and enabling all passengers to enjoy the improvements in punctuality and reliability resulting from additional bus lane enforcement, parking review and the additional bus priority measures proposed.

Eco impact assessment

The significant impacts of this proposal are:

- Long-term positive impacts: investment in, and promotion of public transport providing for a reduction in car journeys and associated emissions.
- Short term negative impacts: the use of fuels and materials for construction of capital projects, and associated production of waste. It is noted that many of the engineering proposals are fairly minor – for example the installation of signage and enforcement cameras.

The proposals include the following measures to mitigate the impacts:

- Individual engineering and construction projects will be subject to the appropriate controls: operations, procurement, planning and waste management.
- It is noted that any new planning permissions will need to comply with the following policies from the Core Strategy:
 - BCS 13- Climate change – mitigation and adaptation.
 - BCS 14 – Sustainable energy
 - BCS 15 - Sustainable design and construction
 - BCS 16 – Flood risk and water management
 - BCS 21 – Quality Urban Design.

Resource and legal implications:

a. Financial (revenue) implications:

We understand that there should be no additional finance implications for either Revenue or Capital as there is, for example, no requirement to match fund. We understand that the project is fully supported by the grant, including any management costs associated with the Accountable Body role and the potential increase in the concessionary travel reimbursement.

Advice given by Robin Poole, Finance Business Partner
Date 18 October 2013

b. Financial (capital) implications:

We understand that there should be no additional finance implications for either Revenue or Capital as there is, for example, no requirement to match fund. We understand that the project is fully supported by the grant, including any management costs associated with the Accountable Body role and the potential increase in the concessionary travel reimbursement.

Advice given by Robin Poole, Finance Business Partner

Date **18 October 2013**

Comments from the Corporate Capital Programme Board:

Insert any comments on the proposal from the Corporate Capital Programme Board.

c. Legal implications:

A new LTSF/Better Bus Area 2013 partnership agreement will need to be put in place to govern the respective responsibilities of each the three participating authorities. Apart from the general power of highway improvement and enhancement, it may also be necessary to promote traffic orders to effect certain bus network and other initiatives. This will entail statutory consultation on proposals and consideration of objections before any final decision can be made. In order to ensure the effectiveness of such initiatives, it will be necessary to ensure adequate enforcement/road signage to ensure delivery of the traffic objectives.

Advice given by **P Malarby, Lawyer (Transport)**
Date **14 October 2013**

d. Land / property implications:

Not applicable

e. Human resources implications:

The Better Bus area project will be delivered through City Transport's existing resources; therefore, there are no HR implications.

Advice given by **Sandra Farquharson, HR People Partner**
Date **14 October 2013**

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Map of proposed BBAF corridors

Access to information (background papers):

BBA Bid document <http://www.travelwest.info/bba>

Eco Impact assessment BBA

EQIA BBA

