

Notes of West Berkshire Enhanced Partnership Forum

Thursday 25 May 2023 Forum No. 4

Present were representatives of:

- Bus Operators (Carebus, Go Ahead, Reading Buses, Stagecoach, WBC).
- West Berkshire Council (Network Management, Transport Services).
- WBC Portfolio Holder for Highways, Housing and Sustainable Travel.
- Local Representative from CPRE (Countryside Charity).

The Service Lead for Highways and Transport Innovation from West Berkshire Council chaired the meeting.

Notes from Forum No. 3 in February 2023 were agreed.

Matters arising from previous Forum, which are not covered in the Agenda:

- Information about using Google Maps to find bus information has been made available on the Council's website. **COMPLETED**
- Agreement received in Forum No. 3 to amend the service frequency table in the EPS, however a wider update of the EP will be looked at before change implemented. **ACTION: WBC**

Funding:

- Request submitted to DfT (Department for Transport) to carry forward unspent year 1 monies. Verbally agreed but awaiting written confirmation. **ACTION: DfT**
- WBC allocated additional £239,039 BSIP+ revenue to spend by 31 March 2024. **ACTION: WBC**

Passenger Charter:

- Charter agreed and will be published on Council website. **ACTION: WBC**
- Request made for operators to publish on their website and advertise on buses. **ACTION: Ops**

On-board bus announcements:

- Requirement by DfT to have announcements on most vehicles by October 2026. Approval granted to change EP accordingly. **ACTION: WBC**

Targets:

Journey times data:

- Initial data reviewed as too complex. To concentrate on specific BSIP and comparable corridors. To be identified and data provided. **ACTION: Ops**

BSIP Capital Schemes:

- BP1. Pangbourne. Preferred option uses Station Road car park. With discuss with Parish Council before public consultation. **ACTION: WBC**
- BP2. Atherton Road. **COMPLETED**
- BP3. Robin Hood. Bus lane impractical so exploring traffic light priority. **ACTION: WBC**
- BP4. Bath Road. Will look at feasibility study. **ACTION: WBC**

BP5. Congestion Hotspots. Identified key stops for bus stop clearways, and will prioritise implementation. **ACTION: WBC**
Operators prefer on-carriageway stops rather than laybys. Asked to review congestion hotspot list as not updated for a while. **ACTION: Ops**

FT1. Fares/Ticketing:

1. Fare Cap. Operators still awaiting more detail before confirming extension. Difficult to assess success of scheme over a short period of time, however seems to better for longer journeys. **ACTION: Ops**
2. Early Bird. Operators to consider extension into Eastern area. If not possible then other options could be considered. **ACTION: Ops**
3. Local Ticketing Schemes linking discounted Bus/Train Travel. Liberal Democrat manifesto pledge but not clear how it would work. **ACTION: WBC**
4. TfL Day Travelcards. Issue raised regarding possible withdrawal.

BSIP Revenue Schemes:

- BS1. Downlands DRT. Anticipate launch in later summer. Liftango to provide software and app. Publicity to begin shortly with help from T-Level marketing students. **ACTION: WBC**
- BS2. Pangbourne. Will follow completion of BP1.
- BS3. Harwell. Procurement led by Oxfordshire CC and awarded to Thames Travel. Monday to Saturday service Newbury – Harwell – Didcot starts July 2023. Launch event scheduled for early July 2023. **ACTION: WBC/TT**
- BS4. Newbury / Thatcham evening service. Newbury & District will operate on Jet Black 1 route Friday and Saturday evenings from September 2023 subject to confirmation of use of BSIP funding. **ACTION: DfT**
- BS5. Mortimer Sunday service. Reading Buses will operate on Lime 2/a route from September 2023 subject to confirmation of use of BSIP funding. **ACTION: DfT**
- Operators requested to identify further service enhancements. **ACTION: Ops**

Other issues:

- GWR Community Bid 2023. WBC bid to provide improved information and signage for Newbury Railway Station. **ACTION: GWR**
- Bus Users Survey 2023. Received approximately 1400 responses in 2022. Will run for two months from June/July. **ACTION: WBC**
- Clean Air Day 15 June 2023. WBC asked operators whether they could promote. **ACTION: WBC/Ops**
- Supported bus services. All contracts expire September 2024. New tender in preparation for Newbury-based services. **ACTION: WBC**

Next Forum proposed for 1.30pm on Thursday 14 September 2023 at Shaw House, Church Road, Newbury, RG14 2DR.