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Report to: West Yorkshire Combined Authority

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Subject: Bus Strategy adoption

Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12a, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1	

1 Purpose

1.1 To seek WYCA approval to adopt the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy.

2 Information

2.1 To support the development of the Transport Strategy (see Agenda Item 8), WYCA also has been developing, with Local Authorities and Operators, a new, long term Bus Strategy to set the ambition and policies for the Bus System for the next 20 years. Bus is an integral element of the broader West Yorkshire Transport Strategy and the Leeds City Region SEP. Detailed development of the Bus Strategy has been delegated from WYCA to Transport Committee and over the last 24 months, Transport Committee has overseen the development of the Strategy.

2.2 As with the Transport Strategy, the Bus Strategy covers the geography of West Yorkshire but recognises the importance of the wider Leeds City Region, and that people and goods travel longer distances across administrative boundaries. The Bus Strategy is set in the context of the Leeds City Region Strategic Economic Plan and will also be used to influence national and regional decisions.

2.3 The proposed version of the Bus Strategy to be adopted is available online (http://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/Transport/Bus_Strategy/). This includes a summary document, attached at **Appendix 1**, as well as a number technical appendices. This Bus Strategy sets out that:

Bus is a fundamental and significant component in the delivery of a modern, integrated inclusive transport network for West Yorkshire. Each week people in West Yorkshire make almost 3 million journeys on local bus services, making them the most highly used form of public transport. Buses take people to work; to

school, college and university; to hospital; to shops; and to a range of social and leisure activities across West Yorkshire. In addition to the economic benefits, the bus is an effective tool of social policy for delivering inclusive growth. Vulnerable and socially disadvantaged groups in society are often the most reliant on bus networks. Bus services are fundamental to providing the jobless with access to work; young people to education and training; and providing a way out of social isolation for older and disabled people.

Our goal is to create the best bus system in Europe, where catching the bus in West Yorkshire is an attractive and natural choice for everyone. Delivering this step change is fundamental to helping to realise the ambitious economic growth targets for West Yorkshire and the City Region. To realise this, the vision for the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy is:

“To create a modern, integrated and innovative bus system which puts customer first and contributes to the delivery of West Yorkshire’s economic, environmental and quality of life ambitions as set out in the Strategic Economic Plan and the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy”

- 2.4 The Strategy sets the ambition as targeting 25% patronage growth from 2016 levels, over the next 10 years, but given the level of housing and employment growth forecast, it is not unfeasible to target even higher levels of bus patronage. In addition, bespoke analytical economic research undertaken to value the Bus Strategy has demonstrated that this level of patronage growth is achievable and that delivery of these policies has the potential to lead to an economic uplift to the Region’s economy of £455million over a 20 year period.
- 2.5 This ambition to grow the bus system needs to take into account the increasing financial pressures both on the private and public sectors delivering the bus system. This new Bus Strategy provides the opportunity to look at more innovative options to meeting the mobility needs of the City Region.

Consultation

- 2.6 WYCA is committed to working closely with District Authorities, bus operators, stakeholders and the public to help shape and deliver improvements to the bus system. The development of the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy has been informed by local and national policies and also through support from District Authorities, Bus Operators, local businesses and other key stakeholders. This adopted version of the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy follows a series of consultation phases.
- 2.7 After each consultation phase, the results were analysed and full consideration was given to the views expressed. Each phase of consultation has informed the development of this adopted version of the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy and the consultation reports for each stage are included as appendices to the consultation.

Delivery of the Strategy

- 2.8 The first steps in the delivery of the Bus Strategy has already commenced, the Bus 18 partnership with bus operators is seeking to deliver benefits to passengers in the early years of the strategy. The opening of the new Temple Green P&R site in June 2017 is already proving successful. The £173.5m of funding allocated by the Department for Transport to improve public transport in Leeds is focused on developing the City's bus service to meet the aspirations of our Bus Strategy. In addition to this, Transport Committee at the February meeting approved £875,000 towards the Bus Strategy Delivery Programme. Operators are also delivering new vehicles which meet the latest emissions standards across the Region.
- 2.9 These are only the initial steps in delivering the strategy; the Bus Services Act 2017 and devolution will provide the City Region with the powers to enable the delivery of the full Bus Strategy. In the medium/longer term, decisions regarding how the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy is delivered will be developed in the context of the new legislative powers available to this region through the Bus Services Act and in taking into account the performance of the current partnership. The main consideration will be determining whether the partnership is delivering the objectives and vision of the West Yorkshire Bus Strategy.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the adoption of the Bus Strategy, but the adopted strategy will form a key part the policy framework in the development of future strategies and schemes, which will have future financial implications.

4 Legal Implications

- 4.1 Terms of Reference set out that Transport Committee is responsible for the development of the Bus Strategy and WYCA is responsible for adoption of the strategy. At the meeting on 7 July 2017, Transport Committee recommended that following the substantial public consultations, WYCA adopt the Bus Strategy, setting out the vision and policy aspirations for the Bus System for the next 20 years.
- 4.2 The adoption of the Bus Strategy as a daughter document to the Transport Strategy satisfies the statutory duty for the WYCA, as the Local Transport Authority, to produce and maintain a Local Transport Plan for West Yorkshire.

5 Staffing Implications

- 5.1 The development of the Bus Strategy has been overseen by WYCA Transport Policy.

6 External Consultees

- 6.1 The development of the Bus Strategy has been subject to substantial public and stakeholder consultation with this feedback included within the strategy.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 That WYCA adopts the Bus Strategy, which sets out the vision and policy aspirations for the Bus system for the next 20 years.

8 Background Documents

- 8.1 None.