



Transport & Infrastructure Committee

04 November 2024

Title:	Bus Network Update
Report of:	Andrew Highfield, Assistant Director Public Transport
Lead Member:	Cllr Anna Smith, Chair of Transport and Infrastructure Committee
Public Report:	Yes
Key Decision:	No
Voting Arrangements:	No vote required

Recommendations:

A	To note the progress on the improvements to the bus network
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Strategic Objective(s):

The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s):

	Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities
X	Achieving good growth
X	Increased connectivity
X	Enabling resilient communities
	Achieving best value and high performance

1. Purpose

1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Members on the work to date to improve the bus network, since the decision to approve an uplift in the Mayoral precept at the CPCA board in late January 2024.
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2. Proposal

2.1	Over the spring 2024, officers undertook a design process to identify from the initial list of proposals approved, how services could be best designed to deliver the maximum benefit to residents and communities.
2.2	The design process used bus service planning logic to underpin new services, connecting communities whilst focusing on the length of the route and the frequency (which drives the operational cost of the service). The process also focused on existing services, to ensure integration and avoid duplication.

2.3	During this design process, engagement sessions were held with the Leaders of constituent councils to outline the designs and seek local feedback. Further sessions were held in conjunction with CAPALC (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils) over June 2024 to convey information related to the proposals to interested Councillors.
2.4	Following the design process, officers undertook an engagement session with the local bus market. This outlined the opportunities that would be advertised to the market, whilst seeking feedback on the proposals and the ability of the market to respond.
2.5	Over the spring/summer 2024, officers undertook detailed work to move from the design process to a procurement exercise. A number of the bus services have gone through a tender exercise (with some of the outcomes known at the time of drafting this report) to seek operators. Those services are detailed in the table in the appendix (And denoted with a Tiger in the route number column).
2.6	A number of services have also been improved, through negotiation with the existing operators. These improvements have been implemented primarily in September and October 2024. Communications have been published to enable residents to be aware of these improvements, with bus operators also issuing communications and updating maps/timetables etc.
2.7	At the September 2024 Transport and Infrastructure Committee, it was outlined that it was the intention for all the improvements to be put in place by the end of November 2024 (subject to tender). The Demand Responsive Services (Tiger 6,8,10 and 11) are currently in the mobilisation phase, post tender to commence at the end of November/early December 2024. Officers are working with the operations (vehicle/drivers) providers as well as the technology provider to ensure the app and telephone support is in place and the operational detail is clear for how residents can travel within the Demand Responsive Zones. The other Tiger routes are still being worked through post tender with legal/procurement officers to inform a launch date for the services.
2.8	Officers are working on a range of communication and marketing campaigns to ensure the services are known by residents and to demystify the complexity of the network, to encourage use. This will include some on bus branding, digital campaigns and a trial of bus stop/shelter publications.
2.9	Officers will be working collaboratively with bus operators to capture a range of metrics to inform how successful the improvements are. This will include capturing patronage data, forecasting modal shift and reliability information as well as commissioning qualitative surveys.

3. Background

3.1	In January 2024, as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25, approval was given at the CPCA board to fund a series of bus service improvements.
3.2	Over the winter of 2023, the Combined Authority undertook survey work and asked respondents to the consultation to propose new routes for buses and where more frequent buses on existing routes would be beneficial. The significant amount of responses was used to form the list of proposals which were attached as an appendix the January 2024 CPCA board and approved. The routes covered all the areas administered by constituent councils across the Region.
	The Tiger pass has now reached 29,543 applications since its launch in late May 2024. There have been 199,383 journeys undertaken in 4 periods (data up to end of Period 6) with Period 6 seeing the highest usage thus far. The Combined Authority is undertaking further evaluation of bus routes where the pass is being most used and to what extent the journeys are increasing patronage and/or modal shift. Evaluation findings will be communicated to the committee on an ongoing basis.
	Following approval at the Combined Authority board on 16 October 2024, officers are progressing engagement with local bus operators to implement the pre 0930 concessionary usage scheme for the start of the financial year 2025/26. Further updates will be brought to this committee in the run up to the commencement date outlining progress.

	The bus reform consultation is still open until 20 November 2024. A range of events have been held, focused on statutory consultees, protected characteristics groups, business and education and drop in sessions for the public. Following the consultation close date, Officers will prepare the required reports and material to inform a Mayoral decision in early 2025.
	The Combined Authority has commissioned work to deliver an updated bus network map, that outlines all of the services in the current network, frequencies and key links. The work will deliver both a printed and online version. The aim of the map is to give greater clarity to residents on how to access the current bus network and also to inform discussions on the current state of the network and the potential improvements, subject to outcomes of bus reform. Further updates and the map will be brought to this committee once finalised.

4. Appendices

4.1	EXEMPT Appendix 1 – Overview table of bus service improvements.
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5. Implications

Financial Implications

5.1	The approved 2024/25 budget provides the revenue for the investments into the bus network as outlined in the initial proposals approved. Officers are working to understand the final contract costs for the Tiger named routes via the ongoing procurement exercise. A final spend can then be calculated once this process has concluded.
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Legal Implications

6.1	Internal legal advice has been sought to ensure the ongoing procurement exercise and <i>deminimus</i> arrangements meet the requirements of the transport act.
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Public Health Implications

7.1	Increased bus use and options for residents to have a viable alternative to the private car and to encourage first/last mile active travel options are positive implications as part of the package of work to improve the bus network. Further evaluation and monitoring will be undertaken to calculate benefits once all the improvements are launched.
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Environmental & Climate Change Implications

8.1	Increased bus use and options for residents to have a viable alternative to the private car are positive implications as part of the package of work to improve the bus network. Further evaluation and monitoring will be undertaken to calculate benefits once all the improvements are launched.
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Other Significant Implications

9.1	N/A
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Background Papers

10.1	CPCA Board, January 2024 - CA Board - Jan 2024
10.2	Transport and Infrastructure Committee, March 2024 TIC - March 2024
10.3	Transport and Infrastructure Committee, September 2024 TIC - Sept 2024