

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	Enhanced Bus Partnership for the West Midlands	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Steve Evans, Cabinet Member for City Environment	
Wards affected	(All Wards);	
Accountable Director	Ross Cook, Director of City Environment	
Originating service	Transport Strategy	
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Report to be/has been considered by	Cabinet	19 February 2020

Summary

This report advises of the Cabinet decision to approve the development of the Enhanced Bus Partnership Plan and to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Environment in respect of “making” the Plan and approving details of any contracts or agreements necessary for its implementation.

Recommendations for decision:

That the Cabinet Member for City Environment, in consultation with the Director for City Environment:

1. “Make” the Enhanced Partnership Plan, subject to compliance with the statutory preparation, notice and consultation on the Enhanced Partnership.
2. Note the delegated authority to approve the details of any contracts or agreements necessary for implementation of an Enhanced Bus Partnership.

This report is PUBLIC
[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Signature
Name of Cabinet Member

Date:

Signature
Name of Director

Date:

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Strategic Vision for Bus (adopted by the WMCA Board on 9 November 2018) clearly sets out the objective to achieve modal shift by providing exceptional service and reliability, along with comfort and accessibility for passengers.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 28 June 2019, the West Midlands Combined Authority Board gave approval for Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) to proceed with the development of an Enhanced Partnership (EP). An EP is a formal agreement between a local transport authority, local highway authorities and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services.
- 1.3 An Enhanced Partnership was then developed covering the West Midlands region excluding those areas designated for Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes, of which Wolverhampton city centre is one. The Enhanced Partnership features an EP Plan containing an EP scheme for the A34 and A45 corridors. In time other corridors may be considered for inclusion in the EP Plan.
- 1.4 When Cabinet approved the above recommendations they asked that it be noted that participation in the development of the Enhanced Partnership and making of the Enhanced Partnership Plan cannot commit the Council to future Enhanced Partnership Schemes without their agreement.

2.0 Progress.

- 2.1 On 4 November 2019, the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee approved the Consultation Strategy for the EP Plan and associated EP Scheme, and approved TfWM proceeding to formal (public) consultation, subject to sufficient operator support. Bus operators indicated no objection to the EP Plan.
- 2.2 The EP Plan was reported to the Council's Cabinet in February 2020, where authorisation was delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment to "make" the Plan and approve the details of any contracts or agreements necessary to the implementation of the EP.
- 2.3 Following this a formal public consultation was carried out. TfWM reported the consultation outcomes and sought the approval of the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee to 'make' the EP Plan and the EP Scheme in July 2020. The final "making" of the EP was delegated to the WMCA Head of Governance in parallel with constituent authorities.

3.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 3.1 Alternative courses of action were considered in the prior report to Cabinet on 19 February 2020, and the adoption of the EP as recommended was agreed.

4.0 Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The establishment of the Enhanced Partnership has been agreed within Wolverhampton Council and across the West Midlands Combined Authority. "Making" the EP is a necessary step to achieve this.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications for City of Wolverhampton Council arising from the making of the Enhanced Partnership Plan itself, nor from the EP Scheme identified in relation to the Enhanced Partnership Plan to date. The EP plan development has been funded by TfWM and the EP schemes proposed are delivered in other local authority areas and therefore have no financial costs to Wolverhampton.
- 5.2 EP schemes may be proposed by the City of Wolverhampton, TfWM or local bus operators in the Wolverhampton area. Any future EP Schemes which impact Wolverhampton will be developed and any financial implications of such will be detailed as part of a further report to request any relevant approvals. As stated above Cabinet noted that participation in the development of the Enhanced Partnership and making of the Enhanced Partnership Plan cannot commit the Council to future Enhanced Partnership Schemes without their agreement.

[SB/13052021/L]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 The EP represents a legal agreement encompassing the West Midlands Highway Authorities, the Combined Authority and bus operators to collaborate in the EP. The terms of the EP are such that any schemes proposed for the City of Wolverhampton Council area will be subject to authorisation by the normal procedures.

[TC/13052021/C]

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 The purpose of the EP is to facilitate improvements in bus service quality. This is by nature of benefit to all potential users irrespective of socio-economic grouping. There are no apparent negative equalities implications arising from the making of the Partnership. Any individual schemes developed under the Enhanced Partnership will require dedicated equalities impact assessments which will be reported as required through the routine authorisation process.

8.0 All other Implications

- 8.1 This report has climate change and environmental implications in that the Enhanced Partnership includes the aim for the entire bus fleet in the West Midlands metropolitan area to meet at least Euro VI emissions standards by April 2021, cutting harmful pollution from buses by up to 95 per cent. Combined with an anticipated modal shift in travel

choices from private car to public transport this is anticipated to have positive impacts on carbon emissions, air quality, and noise.

9.0 Schedule of background papers

9.1 Cabinet - 19 February 2020 – West Midlands Enhanced Bus Partnership