

Cabinet Meeting

29 June 2016

Report title	Statutory Quality Bus Partnership	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Steve Evans City Environment	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	St Peter's	
Accountable director	Ross Cook, City Environment	
Originating service	Transportation	
Accountable employee(s)	Marianne Page Tel Email	Service Lead – Transport Strategy 01902 551798 Marianne.Page@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board Place Leadership Team	14 June 2016 6 June 2016

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the development and formal consultation of a Statutory Quality Bus Partnership (SQBP) for the City Centre, in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority (formerly Centro).
2. Approve the implementation of necessary changes to Traffic Regulation Orders within the SQBP area,
3. Subject to the resolution of any objections to the SQBP scheme, authorise the Director of Governance to sign the SQBP agreement with the West Midlands Combined Authority.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline the anticipated benefits of a Statutory Quality Bus Partnership (SQBP) for Wolverhampton City Centre and how these benefits would be achieved. Mainly these are an improved quality of buses and better control of operators within the confines of the city centre ring road. The processes for consulting on and implementing such a scheme are also detailed.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A SQBP is a mechanism for providing greater control of the operation of bus services within a defined area over a suggested period of ten years. It would allow the City Council in partnership with the West Midlands Combined Authority (formerly Centro) to better control the quality of vehicles, emissions standards and the management of bus stops and stands to ensure reliability of journey times within the city centre. Free commercial operation would remain for all operators, providing they are within the parameters set out within the SQBP.
- 2.2 Birmingham City Council have recently introduced a SQBP for the city centre which has resulted in improved quality of vehicles and better management of stopping at bus stops and stands. With the impending introduction of a clean air zone for Birmingham and Solihull also pursuing a SQBP, there is a real risk that high quality vehicles within operators' fleets for the West Midlands will be prioritised to those areas. This would leave the remaining lower quality and older vehicles to be used by operators for Black Country services.
- 2.3 A SQBP is one tool within the current Bus Alliance proposals which are being developed by the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) and its introduction would be contributing toward achieving the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan objectives whilst also supporting regeneration and development of the city centre. A SQBP would also contribute towards the aims of the West Midlands Low Emission Towns and Cities Programme and the ITA's Tackling Transport Emissions Framework as well as the council's own 2030 Vision.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

- 3.1 The SQBP is currently proposed to cover the city centre area within the confines of the ring road. Within the SQBP area all bus stopping areas would be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which would allow the dwell time for vehicles to be restricted and controlled. Through this TRO the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) would be able to operate a booking system for all on street space within the SQBP area, which would result in guaranteed slots for operators at bus stops and stands. Operators would benefit from guaranteed timings for their services and the city would have greater control of how vehicles operate; this would reduce instances of congestion caused by queuing / waiting buses. Abuse of stops for extended waiting or layover and conflict between services accessing stops would also be addressed.

- 3.2 Operators not meeting the requirements of the SQBP would be able to drive through the city centre providing they do not stop, as the SQBP would not include the same restrictions as a clean air zone. Access to and suspension of stops and stands for service vehicles and for essential works would be the same as the current highway maintenance criteria for Wolverhampton, with the same advance booking of road space process in place.
- 3.3 The SQBP would set an agreed standard for buses, using an incremental increase in quality, to achieve only Euro VI within the city centre by 2021/22. As the principal operator within Wolverhampton and the wider West Midlands, National Express anticipates the majority of its fleet will comply with Euro VI by 2020. All operators will be required to commit investment to the upgrade of their fleet if they wish to operate within the city centre. Officers from WMCA and the Council will work with bus operators, and the smaller operators in particular, to help them access any relevant grant funding that may be available to upgrade their vehicles. This will also impact upon the City of Wolverhampton Council operated 500 service which currently runs Euro IV vehicles, so will remain compliant for at least the initial 24 months of the SQBP. Registered school bus and specific employer services are exempt from the restrictions.

Indicative dates for incremental improvement of services:

Date	All Services with SQBP
Scheme Start Date (est. April 2017)	Euro III
2018	Euro IV
2019	Euro V
2020 / 21	Euro VI

- 3.4 Once the SQBP is established the city will be bound to providing the designated stop facilities for the duration of the partnership, which limits the flexibility of the council and WMCA to move and change bus stand facilities. This will require careful consideration given the level of development anticipated within the City in future years. In areas where change is anticipated a process of negotiation would need to be entered into with operators and the scheme re-consulted on in order to make the changes. This process would take 3 to 6 months. There are 2 designations of facility within the SQBP; stands which can be booked for departure slots and stops which are used by all compliant services. It is easier to make alterations to stops within the scheme, so it may be prudent to designate any stop facilities which are likely to be subject to change in the shorter term as stops rather than stands. These areas have been identified in consultation with regeneration colleagues and include Westside and the core pedestrian areas around Queen Square and Victoria Street. The designation of stops and stands will be discussed with operators.
- 3.5 Coach operators would not be able to use the designated bus stops and stands within the SQBP area, so on street access for operators would be limited to drop off where existing double yellow lines permitted. The new St George's Coach Link facility would be

defined as a coach stop and managed as part of the SQBP scheme. As a coach stop this area would not be available for use by buses or other vehicles.

- 3.6 WMCA would be the lead organisation on discussions with operators and pursuing the SQBP, but there are some requirements of the city council:
- The changes to the TRO for all of the bus stops within the city and the physical works required on street would be the responsibility of the city council to fund and implement. The cost of these works has been estimated at £20,000.
 - Enforcement of the bus stop TROs would be within the remit of the city council's parking enforcement team; training would be required to make the team aware of the restrictions and a fleet list with registration numbers of compliant vehicles maintained by WMCA. Persistent offenders would be identified through liaison with WMCA and challenged via the Traffic Commissioner. Birmingham has not deployed any additional resource for their SQBP enforcement.

Maintenance regimes would not need to change and the last five years of investment in the city centre represent the improvements which have been provided for bus operators already.

- 3.7 A SQBP scheme is made pursuant to section 114(1) of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Local Transport Act 2008). As a legal process there are set timescales and processes for implementation of a SQBP:
- Initial informal engagement with operators to introduce the proposal; this is undertaken at the request of the Traffic Commissioner.
 - There is then a minimum three month formal consultation process for the SQBP; any formal objection may be received within the first month of the consultation only. Objections are either negotiated with the operators directly or subject to a Traffic Commissioner decision.
 - A notice period of three months will be given for the making of a scheme.
- 3.8 There was an initial ambition to see a SQBP in place within Wolverhampton in October or November 2016 which, given the above timescales alone, would be achievable. However there are anticipated delays in the form of approval to pursue and implement the scheme and the changes to TROs will need to be advertised and implemented. An estimate of early 2017 for implementation is more achievable at this time.
- 3.9 In late 2014 the European Commission formally launched infraction proceedings against the UK for continued breaches of NO₂ limits under the EU Air Quality Directive. In response to the European Commission ruling, The Government has produced an overall UK strategy for tackling NO₂, and plans for all of the 38 zones still not complying with legal limits. It has tasked 5 UK cities (including Birmingham), through the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Air Quality Plan, to implement "Clean Air Zones". These zones will ban the most polluting heavy duty vehicles, including buses and HGVs, unless they meet the Euro 6 emissions standard by 2020. DEFRA are currently developing a framework which will allow all local authorities designated as Air

Quality Management Areas to implement such zones if they deem it necessary. The framework aims to simplify the process which is currently taken to implement a low emission zone. Guidance from DEFRA is expected later in the year and may be an option for Wolverhampton to consider in future if operators fail to comply with the terms of the SQBP.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 The costs for drafting, consulting and making of the SQBP for Wolverhampton city centre will be met by the West Midlands Combined Authority. Costs for changes to TROs, signs and lines in association with the scheme would need to be met from existing transportation capital budgets. Cost estimates of £20,000 have been included within the Transportation Capital Programme.
[TT/20062016/T]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 As a statutory document there will be legal implications arising from the SQBP; advice will be sought from legal colleagues during the drafting of the agreement.
[TS/15062016/B]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 A Stage 1- initial analysis of the equalities implications has been undertaken and there are no concerns that the proposal affects or could affect people differently or that the needs of certain groups would not be met.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 Greater control of bus operation within the city centre will deliver improvements to the public realm and reduce queuing and congestion. Emissions standards for vehicles will improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 The existing parking enforcement officers for the city will be utilised to enforce the amended TROs in line with the SQBP.

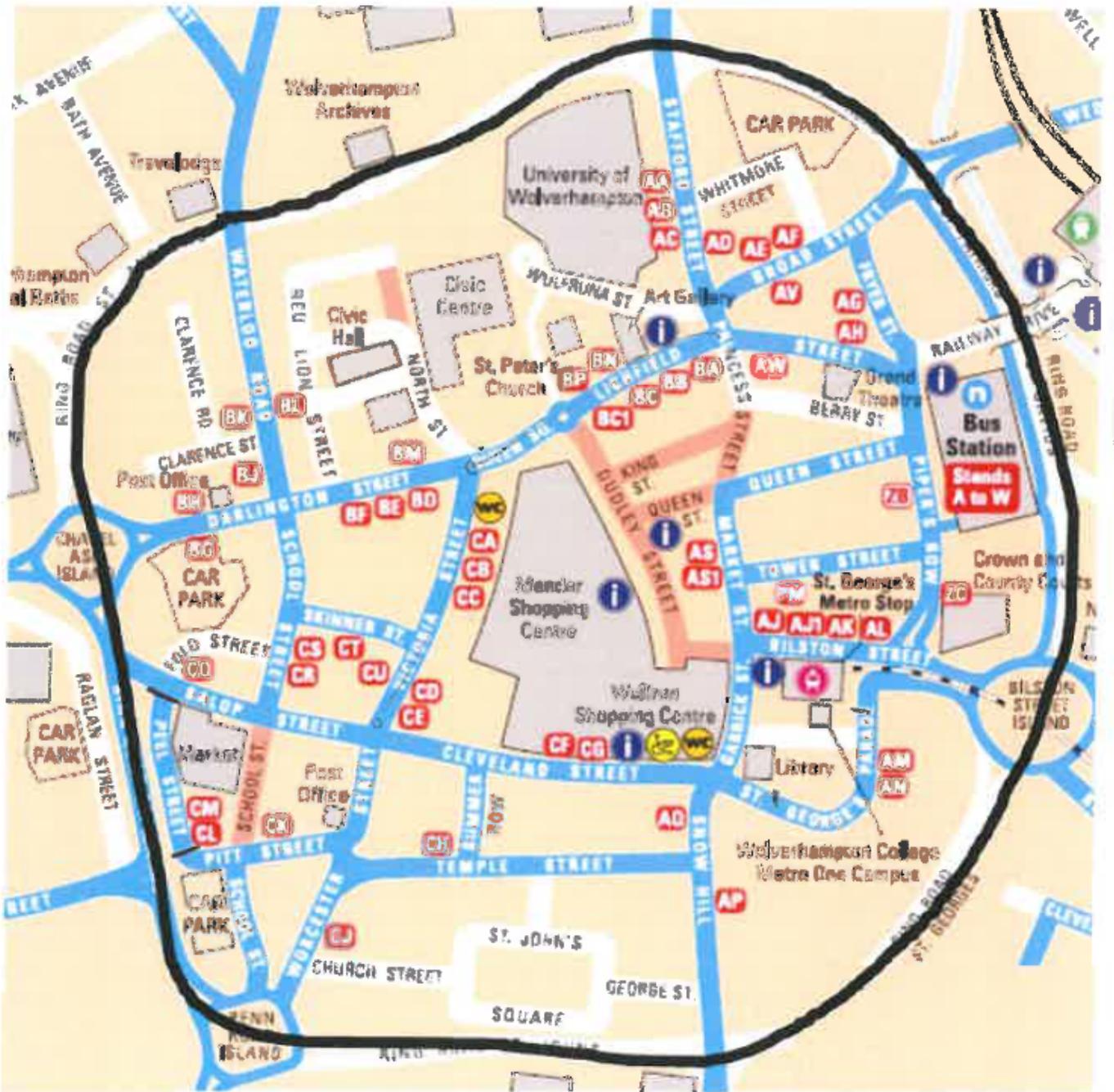
9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 Appendix A – Map of scheme area and bus stop infrastructure
Appendix B – List of services operating within proposed SQBP area.
Appendix C – SQBP Key Risks

Appendix A: Map of scheme area and bus stop infrastructure



Appendix B – List of services operating within proposed SQBP area

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Service Number	operator	Route	Uses Bus Station	City Centre Stops						
				AH	AM	AP	BH	BM	BN	ZC
1	National Express	Tettenhall Wood - Dudley	No	AH	AM	AP	BH	BM	BN	ZC
1	National Express	Dudley - Tettenhall Wood	No	AJ	AO	AW	BB	BF	BG	
2	National Express	Bushbury Hill - Warstones	Yes	AD	BC1	CC	CD	CJ		
2	National Express	Warstones - Bushbury Hill	Yes	AC	AL	AV	CG	CK		
3	National Express	Castlecroft - Fordhouses	No	AB	AS	AW	CF	CQ		
3	national Express	Fordhouses - Castlecroft	No	AD	BA	BE	BG			
4	National Express	Codsall - Spring Hill	No	AD	BA	BE	BG			
4	National Express	Spring Hill - Codsall	No	AB	AS	AW	CF	CQ		
5	National Express	Wolverhampton - Codsall	Yes	AV	BA	BD	BJ			
5A	National Express	Wolverhampton - Codsall	Yes	AV	BA	BD	BJ			
6	National Express	Wolverhampton - Wobaston	Yes	AV	BA	BD	BJ			
6A	National Express	Wolverhampton - Wobaston	Yes	AV	BA	BD	BJ			
8	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Telford	Yes	BC	BE	BG				
8A	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Telford	Yes	BC	BE	BG				
9	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Bridgnorth & Telford	Yes	BC	BE	BG				
10	National Express	Wolverhampton - Perton	Yes	AV	BB	BE	BG			
10A	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Pittingham	Yes	AV	BB	BE	BG			
10B	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Codsall	Yes	AV	BB	BE	BG			
11	National Express	Wolverhampton - Underhill	Yes	AC	AV					
22	iGo	Wolverhampton - Wednesbury	Yes							
25	National Express	Wolverhampton - Pendeford	Yes	AM	CJ					
26A	Diamond	Wolverhampton - Stowlawn	Yes	AM	CJ					
27	National Express	Wolverhampton - Dudley	Yes	AM	AP					
27A	National Express	Wolverhampton - Dudley	Yes	AM	AP					
28	National Express	Wolverhampton - Willenhall	Yes							
28E	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Willenhall	Yes							
32	National Express	Wolverhampton - Northwood Park	Yes	AB	AD					
33	National Express	Wolverhampton - Northwood Park	Yes	AB	AD					
39	National Express	Wolverhampton - Walsall	Yes							
40	National Express	Wolverhampton - Walsall	Yes							
50	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Wednesfield	Yes							
53	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Rocket Pool	Yes							
54	National Express	Wolverhampton - Stafford	Yes	AB	AW					
57	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Bilston	Yes	AE						
59	National Express	Wolverhampton - Ashmore Park	Yes	AG	AS1					

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61	IGo	Wolverhampton - Goldthorn Park	No	AP	BC1	CC	CG	CM		
62	National Express	Wolverhampton - Compton	Yes	BA	BJ					
62A	National Express	Wolverhampton - Compton	Yes	BA	BJ					
63	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Oxbarn Avenue	Yes	BC	CA	CM	CS			
64	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Wakeley Hill	Yes	BC1	CA	CM	CS			
65	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Fordhouses	Yes							
67	Select Bus	Wolverhampton - Cannock	No	AF	BP	CR				
69	National Express	Wolverhampton - Walsall	Yes	AG	AS1					
70	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Hednesford/Cannock	No	AC	AS1	BC	CB	CE	CG	
X70	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Bereton	No	AC	AS1	BC	CB	CE	CG	
X70A	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Bereton	No	AC	AS1	BC	CB	CE	CG	
71	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Cannock	No	BC	CB	CE	CG			
71A	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Cannock	No	BC	CB	CE	CG			
76	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Stafford	No	AA	AS	BC	CB	CE	CG	
76A	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Stafford	No	AA	AS	BC	CB	CE	CG	
76B	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Stafford	No	AA	AS	BC	CB	CE	CG	
79	National Express	Wolverhampton - West Bromwich	Yes							
81	Diamond	Wolverhampton - Merry Hill Centre	Yes							
81	National Express	Wolverhampton - Merry Hill Centre	Yes							
82	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Dudley	Yes							
82	Banga bus	Wolverhampton - Bilston	No	PM						
82	National Express	Wolverhampton - Dudley	Yes							
89	National Express	Wolverhampton - Walsall	Yes	AG	AS1					
126	National Express	Wolverhampton - Birmingham	Yes	AP	CB	CE	CG			
154	National Express	Wolverhampton - Hednesford	Yes	AB	AW					
255	Diamond	Wolverhampton - Merry Hill Centre	Yes	BC1	CC	CD	CJ			
256	national Express	Wolverhampton - Stourbridge	Yes	BC1	CC	CD	CJ			
500	Wolverhampton City Council	Wolverhampton Centrebus	Yes	AJ	BB	BE	CF	CK	CP	ZC
529	National Express	Wolverhampton - Walsall	Yes							
530	Banga bus	Wolverhampton - Rocket Pool	No	PM						
530	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Rocket Pool	Yes							
545	Banga bus	Wolverhampton - Bilston	No	PM						
878	Select Bus	Wolverhampton - Brewood	No	BC	BD	BK				
891	Banga bus	Wolverhampton - Telford	Yes	BC	BD	BE	BG			
905	Coastal Liner	Wolverhampton - Mecca Bingo	No	AK	AN	AP				
X68	Arriva	Wolverhampton - Cannock	Yes							

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Appendix C – SQBP Key Risks

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Risk Rating	Action / Control	Status
Poor quality vehicles operating within City Centre, contributing to poor air quality.	2	2	4	Introduce SQBP – subject to Cabinet approval.	
Future changes to bus infrastructure required – related to regeneration activities and development opportunities.	1	3	3	Infrastructure can still be relocated within SQBP parameters, subject to consultation with operators.	
Loss of services due to operating constraints of SQBP – some operators may be unable to meet the prescribed standards.	1	1	1	Operator lists have been reviewed and limited services would be impacted. Overall accessibility across the city is unlikely to change.	
Objection from operators to introduction of SQBP	1	2	2	Consultation to be undertaken with operators in advance, outstanding objections can be overruled by traffic commissioner.	