

London Councils' Transport & Environment Committee

TfL and Borough Bus Service Engagement

Item No: 04

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Summary:

This paper has been prepared for the Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) of London Councils to provide a high level update on TfL's series of meetings with boroughs regarding bus network and bus priority development.

The paper sets out the background to TfL's new approach to strategic bus engagement with boroughs and the impact of the first round of meetings.

Recommendations:

The committee is asked to:

- Note the update.

Developing engagement on the bus network and bus priority

The strategic context

1. London's bus network carries around 2.4 billion passengers a year, making it the most-used form of public transport in London. Bus ridership has grown by 60 per cent over the past decade. Demand is expected to increase further as London's growth continues, with around 2.6 billion passengers per year forecast for 2020/2021.
2. The network is continuously changed to maintain and enhance its reliability, capacity and connectivity. This is part of an overall approach to quality including improving customer service and augmenting environmental performance. TfL and the boroughs work together to consider how London's development will affect future bus demand, using information from a range of sources such as the planning system.
3. London's bus priority infrastructure has been developed over many years in support of reliable services. In addition to bus lanes it can take many forms including: traffic-signal priority; bus-only access points; bus gates; and bus stops protected from parking and loading. Boroughs take a leading role in developing and implementing schemes with around four-fifths of bus mileage on borough-controlled roads.
4. This paper updates the Committee on a specific programme to enhance strategic engagement between TfL and boroughs about the development of the network and the development of bus priority. The programme has delivered two main initiatives to date: (1) a series of strategic engagement meetings with individual boroughs; and (2) bus network seminars to which all boroughs are invited.

Strategic engagement meetings

5. The meetings are usually attended by a borough cabinet member and senior staff. TfL is usually represented by the Head of Network Development for Buses and the Head of Consultation. The main objectives are to review how TfL and the borough are prioritising work on network planning and the development of bus priority.
6. Twenty-three borough meetings have taken place at the time of writing. Feedback has been positive, with boroughs welcoming TfL's commitment to partnership working and stating that increased understanding of our strategic approach will assist their own planning work. Some themes are apparent:
 - Strong support for provision of a high-quality bus network
 - Ways of dealing with the challenge posed by population growth, for example the role of buses in responding to and supporting residential development, or interaction with strategy for additional high schools and colleges
 - The interaction between buses and the street environment, for example where town centre enhancements are being considered
 - How buses support air quality strategies
 - Ways to ensure that bus priority funds are invested, particularly to move towards delivery of schemes in suburban growth areas and pinchpoints.

7. All these topics are, of course, already the subject of various programmes and initiatives. However, participants to date have tended to agree that there is added value in taking an overview at senior level to assist with prioritisation of work commitments.

Bus network seminars

8. The first seminar in October 2014 focused on bus priority and network development. The second took place on 11 November 2015, addressing the themes of customer service and environmental performance. They were attended by London Assembly members, councillors, borough officers, interest groups and TfL staff working on the bus network.
9. Feedback indicates delegates found the sessions useful and that they would consider attending another seminar in 2016.
10. The 2015 seminar highlighted the steps being taken to improve the environmental performance of the bus fleet. All TfL buses will meet Euro IV standard for particulate matter and oxides of nitrogen by 2015, with 1700 hybrid buses in the fleet by 2016. Wandsworth Council described how air quality in Putney High Street has significantly improved as a result of collaboration with TfL to provide cleaner buses. Boroughs asked about plans for future deployment of hybrids and the impacts of the planned Ultra Low Emission Zone.
11. Investments to develop the customer care skills of bus drivers were also discussed. This includes working with bus operators on driver training and communications to improve service delivery. Operator Tower Transit provided concrete examples of the way it is improving the customer experience through staff initiatives.

Conclusions and next steps

12. Both parts of the programme have been welcomed by participants. The round of strategic engagement meetings should be complete by March 2016 and it is currently intended to commence a second round later that year, subject to a review. A third bus network seminar is planned for late 2016. A further update for this committee will form part of the review process.

Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

- Note the update.

Legal implications for London Councils

None as a direct result of this paper.

Financial Implications for London Councils

None as a direct result of this paper.

Equality implications for London Councils

None as a direct result of this paper.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 - Bus Network and Priority Development Meetings (Round 1)

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Inner London Boroughs

City of London	22/01/15
Camden	03/02/16
Greenwich	06/11/15
Hackney	09/12/14
Hammersmith and Fulham	30/07/15
Islington	To be arranged
Kensington and Chelsea	24/02/15
Lambeth	19/06/15
Lewisham	12/11/15
Southwark	16/07/15
Tower Hamlets	06/10/15
Wandsworth	23/09/15
Westminster	29/01/15

Outer London boroughs

Barking and Dagenham	11/06/15
Barnet	13/01/16
Bexley	04/02/15
Brent	21/04/15
Bromley	To be re-arranged
Croydon	01/12/14
Ealing	26/11/15
Enfield	To be arranged
Haringey	15/10/15
Harrow	To be arranged
Havering	24/03/15
Hillingdon	To be arranged
Hounslow	18/09/15
Kingston upon Thames	10/03/15
Merton	To be re-arranged
Newham	10/03/15
Redbridge	03/12/15
Richmond upon Thames	23/07/15
Sutton	23/04/15
Waltham Forest	22/05/15