

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 9 DECEMBER 2009

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
18 NOVEMBER 2009**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

BUS PUNCTUALITY IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report is to inform Members of the development of the Merseyside Bus Punctuality Improvement Partnership Framework Agreement (PIP). This Framework has been approved by the Merseytravel Executive on 5 October 2009 for formal ratification by the Local Authorities of Merseyside.
- 1.2. The PIP is an agreement between the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, Bus Operators and the Local Authority to facilitate improvement to the punctuality of bus services within Merseyside.
- 1.3. The aim of the PIP is, as part of an improved public transport offer, to continually improve and then maintain the punctuality of bus services operating within or originate/termination within Merseyside.
- 1.4. Cabinet are requested to ratify this agreement as requested by Merseytravel.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Rising levels of traffic and congestion have led to lengthening journey times along some bus routes. This situation has been addressed through the Merseyside Local Transport Plan, which advocated a mixture of capacity improvements and demand management measures designed to control this group in congestion.
- 2.2. The Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) have all signed up to deliver the Merseyside Local Transport Plan, and the Merseyside Bus Strategy, and therefore have demonstrated their commitment to improving the punctuality of bus services within Merseyside recognising that improvements to punctuality can contribute towards:

Economic development – by providing improved journey times for commuters and freer flowing traffic

Reduced congestion – by providing a real alternative to the car for leisure and work trips

Improved air quality – by reducing the number of vehicles on the road

Improving social inclusion and accessibility – by creating more sustainable communities and improving opportunities for better access to training, jobs, healthcare and education.

2.3. Within the context of the Merseyside Bus Strategy, the objective is:-

“to provide a high quality bus network that meets the needs of the people of Merseyside in a secure, accessible, sustainable and cost effective way.”

2.4. The concept of Punctuality Improvement Partnerships was first raised in 2004 by the Bus Partnership Forum, which was chaired by the then Minister of State for Transport and was set up to determine combined ways forward between the Government (DfT), local authorities, bus operators and the Senior Traffic Commissioner on a number of issues relating to the Bus Industry where differences of viewpoint were seen as stifling progress. A number of sub-groups were set up to deal with specific issues.

2.5. One such sub-group was the Performance Monitoring Task and Finish Group, established to allow common determination of minimum acceptable bus reliability and timekeeping standards as well as agree ways forward for making improvements. The major recommendation from the group was the creation of Punctuality Improvements Partnerships (PIPS) between bus operators, local authorities and PTEs.

2.6. The Traffic Management Act 2004 places obligations on Local Transport Authorities to adopt policies that will ensure the efficient use of the road network and minimise delays to road users. Under the TMA 2004, Local Transport Authorities are required to work with relevant partners, including bus operators and Traffic Commissioners to develop improvement plans to ensure compliance with the TMA 2004. The Partners recognise that partnership working will help achieve mutual ends of a punctual public transport system and a free flowing road network.

3.0 THE PIP

3.1. The PIP is an agreement between Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, the Local Authorities and the Bus Operators of Merseyside. The PIP is included at Appendix 1. The main report sets out the background, definitions and objectives of the PIP as well as information surrounding achievement of shared objectives. The PIP also includes 3 appendices which detail the data sharing agreement (draft), monitoring methodology and proposed joint actions to assist with overcoming any identified issues.

3.2. The PIP is designed to facilitate improvement to the punctuality of bus services within Merseyside, and is a demonstration of:

- (a) A commitment to genuine co-operative working between the bus operators and the local authorities.
 - (b) A shared objective to achieve measurable improvement in the punctuality of bus services.
 - (c) An agreement between the bus operators, the Transport Authority, and the Highway Authority as to the method of monitoring the punctuality of bus services.
 - (d) A willingness jointly to use the findings of punctuality monitoring surveys together with any other relevant data to identify methods of improving the delivery of bus services.
 - (e) Jointly agreed targets for improvement.
 - (f) A common understanding of the confidentiality of any commercially sensitive information and an agreed framework which such information may be used by any of the partners.
- 3.3. It has been drafted jointly by officers of the Merseytravel Executive, Liverpool City Council, Arriva, Stagecoach and First.
- 3.4. Fundamental to the Merseyside PIP is the concept that data will be collated and presented in standard quarterly Punctuality Performance Monitoring Reports. The reports will help to identify any route specific or operational issues that have had a negative effect on service punctuality.
- 3.5. The PIP will be applied to a chosen route or “corridor”, whereby the Merseytravel Executive, Wirral Council and the Bus Operators will sign to demonstrate their commitment to the objectives, targets and crucially, the Data Sharing Agreement.
- 3.6. The PIP clearly specifies the data to be shared. The data shall not be shared outside these parameters (except in accordance with the provisions of any legislation, e.g. Freedom of Information Act 2000) and there shall be remedies available to all parties for any breach of the Agreement. It should be noted that discussion pertaining to the Data Sharing Agreement (Appendix 1 of the PIP) is ongoing, and may be subject to change. This does not affect the principles, aims and objectives of the PIP, which is what the Merseytravel Executive have approved.
- 3.7. There are natural synergies with the emerging work on Statutory Quality Partnerships (SQP). It is intended that PIPs will be implementing alongside SQPs, but will be able to be applied to any given route or corridor should all relevant partners agree.
- 3.8. The aim of PIPs is clearly consistent with the DfT’s drive to address congestion, through the specified 11 congestion corridors across Merseyside. Thus in accordance with the provisions of the joint

Merseyside Local Transport Plan, and within the wider context of a wider Quality Bus Partnership, the PIP Partners will seek to build on the improvements already made to the bus network, and achieve a continuous growth in bus passenger numbers.

4.0. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1. There are no financial or significant staffing implications arising directly from this report.

5.0. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are no specific equal opportunities implications arising directly from this report.

6.0. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no specific planning implications arising directly from this report.

7.0. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are no specific community safety implications arising directly from this report.

8.0. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are no specific human rights implications arising directly from this report.

9.0. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no specific Local Agenda 21 Implications arising directly from this report.

10.0. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no anti-poverty implications arising directly from this report.

11.0. ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

11.1. No background papers have been used in the preparation of this report.

12.0. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 This report is relevant to all Members.

13.0. RECOMMENDATION

13.1 Cabinet is requested to ratify the agreement described in this report as requested by Merseytravel.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES