

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
held at 11.00 am on Wednesday, 25 February 2015

Present:

Members of the Board: Councillor G Duggins (Chair)

Councillor R Bailey

Councillor L Bigham

Councillor K Mulhall

Councillor H Sweet

Councillor D Welsh

By Invitation:

Pete Bond, Centro

Guy Craddock, Centro

Councillor J McNicholas (Deputy Cabinet Member for
Business, Economy and Employment)

Employees (by Directorate):

Resources G Holmes, M Salmon

Place M Waters

Apologies:

Councillor J Birdi

Councillor T Skipper

Councillor S Walsh

Public Business

41. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

42. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2015 were agreed and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

43. Public Transport

The Board received a briefing from Guy Craddock, Centro's Area Manager for Coventry, and Pete Bond, Centro's Head of Transforming Bus Travel, on bus service provision in the City. Councillor J McNicholas, Deputy Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment and the Chair of Centro, attended the meeting for this item.

Centro was responsible for delivery of public transport in the seven metropolitan councils of the West Midlands: Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton. It was largely revenue funded through a levy, totalling £138.7m for the current financial year, and was proportionally based on the population size of each district. Centro worked to ensure everyone benefited

from an effective transport system that met the economic and environmental needs of the region, as well as providing access to jobs, finding innovative ways to help reduce congestion and offering seamless connections for people and goods. Across the Country road based public transport was defined as a bus service that was open for any member of the public to use and that the user pays a separate fare for that travel whether personally or on their behalf in the case of concessionary travel holders.

In Coventry:

- Bus reliability stood at 98.0%, above the West Midlands average of 96.7% and currently the highest of the districts
- Overall bus customer satisfaction was running at 81% who were satisfied or very satisfied with the bus network
- 19.6 % of all subsidised bus journeys operated in the West Midlands were in Coventry and Centro spent around £1.56M per year on these services
- 12% of all registered users of Ring and Ride lived in Coventry and they made 13.6% of all trips made across the West Midlands
- All bus services in Coventry were operated by low floor wheel chair accessible buses apart from service 30 which would be from 26th April.
- There were a total of 1430 bus stops in Coventry and 450 had Real time passenger information scenes and 550 had bus shelters.
- There were 53,083 active English Travel Concessionary Scheme cardholders living in the Coventry area (from 537,000 card holders across the Centro area).

In 2011 in response to general concerns that the Coventry bus network did not meet user requirements, Centro undertook a fundamental bus network review in the City (along with a number of others across the Centro area). This was in conjunction with the bus operators, City Council, elected Members, users and other key stakeholders.

The new network was launched in February 2012 and included:

- More buses between the rail station and the City Centre
- Improved links to the Coventry and Warwickshire University Hospital
- Generally a more simple network of routes that are easier to understand
- Increased frequencies on many radial corridors of less than every 10 minutes eg. London Road every 7-8 minutes and Foleshill Road every 5 minutes

A key output was the creation of a voluntary multilateral bus partnership agreement for Coventry. Partners to this were Centro, Coventry City Council, the bus operators, Warwick University and the Coventry and Warwickshire University Hospital. This had proved to be one of our strongest of the partnerships Centro had and had resulted in a series of very real quality improvements like more new buses, more real time passenger information displays, and a Coventry area all operator smartcard ticket.

Since 2012 Centro had monitored the satisfaction of passengers, in addition to patronage and bus reliability and punctuality in Coventry and this was currently running at 81%. Significant improvements were noted with stop cleanliness, lighting and graffiti, driver helpfulness, and information provision.

Many local authorities across the Country had seen major cuts in evening and Sunday bus services because of major cuts in funding available. However despite these pressures, through close working with bus operators, frequencies including evening and Sunday services had been maintained in Coventry.

Ring and Ride was a door-to-door accessible transport service operating throughout the West Midlands for those who found it difficult or impossible to use conventional public transport. It operated 0800-2300, six days a week, (not Christmas Day and Bank Holiday Mondays), and was run by a charity, Ring and Ride West Midlands, which received funding from Centro for residents living in one of the seven districts of the West Midlands. 12% of all registered users lived in Coventry and they made 13.6% of all trips.

There were a total of 1430 bus stops in Coventry, 450 of which had Real time passenger information screens and 550 had bus shelters. Centro owned and operated the 20 stand Pool Meadow Bus Station, 3 of which were used by long distance coach services, with around 79 bus departures an hour. All bus stops had bus stop flags and information, funded largely by a recharging scheme that the bus operators paid for with Centro administrating and updating the information. Centro, with financial help from the bus operators, provided comprehensive bus timetable leaflets that were available from a number of key locations including libraries and the Travel shop in Pool Meadow Bus station. As well as being available as printed material this was also available on the web and via phone apps.

In addition to the all operator partnership agreement for Coventry, Centro also had a Centro wide agreement with National Express which had resulted in around 20 new buses in the City last year with more to come this year, additional driver training, an agreed cap on annual fares rises and the service 900 would be the first 'Platinum' hi-spec route this summer with audio visual announcements, Wi-Fi etc.

Centro was working with both University of Warwick and University Hospital to build new larger bus interchanges on their respective sites. Also, as the use of Coventry Rail Station was continuing to grow and had some of largest increases in users outside London, there was a package of measures being implemented to improve access capacity for users at the station to meet this growth. Centro and Coventry City Council were continuing to jointly work to ensure improved connectivity between rail services, the bus services the new Friargate development and the wider city at Coventry Rail Station. A temporary bus interchange was currently being constructed on the site of the former Starley House next to the rail station which would open in April 2015 to allow the area outside the rail station currently being used by buses to be given over to the construction of a new pedestrian boulevard into the City Centre. Discussions were on-going about the planned more permanent and larger bus interchange which would be provided at the Rail Station to cater for projected growth in both rail use and those wanting to access the new Friargate development.

The Board discussed the information contained in the Briefing Note and the bus service provision in the City with officers, and the Chair and representatives of Centro on the following matters:

- Progress made and the on-going proposals for the implementation of bus interchanges and improved services and bus links at the University of Warwick, University Hospital and Coventry Rail Station
- The future of Rapid Bus Transit in Coventry – Pilots in Birmingham, The Black Country and Coventry
- Accessibility support from drivers for passengers with mobility issues and for parents with prams/buggies
- Cleanliness of buses and cleaning standards: provision of litter bins; public facing cleaning regime charts; cleaning reporting procedures
- Reliability and punctuality: monitoring services through Automatic Vehicle Location System Control Centre; performance timescales and targets for drivers
- Public Transport Service provisions include: Concessionary Schemes; Smartcard & Swiftcard development; car parking at bus stations; CCTV; real-time information; stops-maintenance; safer travel team contribution; and Pool Meadow Bus Station support.
- Customer Services
- Driver training: National legal requirements Certificate of Professional Competence and NVQ level 2.

The Board requested that:

- They be provided with a briefing note detailing the outputs that Coventry received for the levy contribution it made to Centro.
- Centro Officers be requested to pursue the public display of bus cleaning regime charts, to include details of the process for Members of the public to report cleaning issues
- They visit the National Express Garage - Automatic Vehicle Location System Control Centre
- They receive a presentation on Rapid Bus Transit

RESOLVED that the Business Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- (1) Notes the briefing on current bus services in Coventry.
- (2) Had no recommendations to make to the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment.

44. Outstanding Issues

Outstanding issues were included in the Board's Work Programme.

45. Work Programme 2014/2015

RESOLVED that the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3):

- 1) Notes the Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2014/2015.

- 2) Agrees that the following matters be added to the Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2015/2016:
- The Coventry Gateway
 - Visit to National Express Garage - Automatic Vehicle Location System Control Centre
 - Presentation on Rapid Bus Transit
46. Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 1.00 pm)