

Subject:	Local Sustainable Transport Fund – GPRS Upgrade of the Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) System		
Date of Meeting:	29th November 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Place		
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Bus usage in Brighton & Hove is continuing to increase year on year, with the number of journeys increasing from 30 million in 2000/01 to nearly 43 million in 2010/11. This is against the national trend for decreasing bus use for everyday travel. Brighton & Hove is one of a few local authorities outside London seeing bus patronage increase by this degree. The high levels of bus patronage across the city contributes to the city's sustainable transport targets set out in the Local Transport Plan (LTP), and contributes to national carbon reduction targets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008.
- 1.2 The current Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system provides reliable bus information direct to bus stops and encourages the use of public transport across Brighton & Hove and East Sussex. However, the Council's system is now dated, utilising increasingly obsolete Private Mobile Radio (PMR) technology, which is becoming prohibitively expensive to 'patch up' and repair. The existing service and maintenance contract for the system expires in July 2013. There is a consensus between all the current stakeholders that the current system needs to be updated to ensure a more modern and fit for purpose service, utilising General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) technology. It is essential that a new contract is agreed to ensure the system continues to operate and it is anticipated that by using this opportunity to upgrade the system to GPRS technology, significant cost savings can be realised over the lifespan of the new contract, as well as ensuring the expansion of the system becomes more financially viable.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Policy & Resources Committee:

- 2.1 Grants delegated authority to the Strategic Director Place to award a contract for five years for the upgrade, expansion and maintenance of the RTPI system to the successful supplier following the OJEU tendering process previously approved at

the Environment, Transport and Sustainability Cabinet Member Meeting on 4th May 2012.

- 2.2 Grants delegated authority to the Strategic Director Place to approve a maximum of five 12-month extensions to the contract following the initial 5-year period, subject to the supplier meeting agreed performance targets.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

Background

- 3.1 The current Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system, being one of the first in the UK, was installed in 2001 and utilises Private Mobile Radio (PMR) technology to communicate the location of buses, providing Real Time Information at bus stops. Currently there are 169 RTPI signs at bus stops across the city, and 11 in East Sussex. There are approximately 280 buses equipped with the onboard hardware required to transmit their geographical location across the radio system and out to the bus stop displays.
- 3.2 The current system is operated and maintained by Trapeze ITS, with Brighton & Hove City Council (the 'Council') managing the contract on behalf of the other users of the system; Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company and East Sussex County Council. The three users contribute to the financial cost of the ongoing service and maintenance of the system.
- 3.3 Due to its age, the current system is beginning to experience increasing levels of signal degradation, high levels of failure and increased levels of radio interference from Europe. There is also a strong possibility that in the immediate future OFCOM will serve notice to sell off the frequency currently used by the system, which would result in a compulsory upgrade to GPRS as the communication method for the system.
- 3.4 The success of the current system, which is recognised nationally as a best practice example of partnership working, can be attributed to the strong working relationship between the council and Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company. Both organisations have jointly fund the system since 2001 and the commitment of Brighton & Hove Buses is key to making it so successful.
- 3.5 The New GPRS system will retain existing levels of functionality and reliability for Brighton & Hove Buses, as well as providing lower cost access onto the system for small and medium bus operators to display their services in real time on the existing bus stop displays. This will ensure that Compass, Big Lemon, Stagecoach, Metrobus and Heritage services will have the opportunity to provide reliable real time information to the public across the city for the first time. The upgraded GPRS system also locks in further investment from the bus companies, including the upgrade of on-board systems, with revised Service Level Agreements to be negotiated with each bus company.

Procurement Process

- 3.6 In June 2011 Brighton & Hove City Council was successful in receiving funding from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) for the Lewes Road Corridor project. The upgrade of the RTPI system to GPRS was included in the bid. The LSTF budget is a ring-fenced DfT grant and can only be spent on the specific projects contained within the LSTF bid. Additional funding has also been committed from the 2012/13 LTP capital budget to support the upgrade, with indicative allocation from the 2013/14 and 2014/15 LTP capital budgets.
- 3.7 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is a committed member of the consortium that utilises the current system and has committed to a joint funding arrangement when the system is upgraded to GPRS. ESCC was awarded funding in July 2012 from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to upgrade, expand and maintain the elements of the system within their administrative boundary. In order to obtain value for money through the procurement process, the Council and ESCC agreed to undertake a joint procurement exercise (with the Council as the lead), with both Councils' Procurement departments being involved in the process from the start.
- 3.8 Authority to procure the new GPRS service and maintenance contract was obtained from the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Cabinet Members Meeting on 4th May 2012. Since that time the Pre-Qualification Stage of the OJEU process has been completed, with thirteen suppliers submitting a pre-qualification questionnaire and four tenderers proceeding onto the Invitation to Tender stage. Evaluation of bids is due to be completed by the end of November 2012.
- 3.9 Policy & Resources Committee is asked to grant delegated authority to award the contract. Once authorised, officers aim to award the contract before the end of December 2012. The roll out of the new system and the upgrade of existing on-street equipment is planned across three phases during 2013 and will be implemented on a route by route basis. This is expected to be completed by the end of 2013. As the existing on street displays are upgraded, it will be possible for the other bus operators across the city, including those that operate cross boundary services, to have their service information displayed in real time on the upgraded signs for the first time.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 An internal consultation has been undertaken with officers from Procurement, ICT, Transport Operations and Public Transport teams.
- 4.2 An external consultation has also been undertaken with key stakeholders that support the upgrade to GPRS, this includes:
- Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company
 - East Sussex County Council
 - West Sussex County Council
 - Stagecoach
 - The Big Lemon
 - Countryliner
 - Metrobus

- Compass

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Capital: Brighton and Hove City Council was awarded a DfT capital grant of £1,840,000 being The Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which covers the four years from 2011/12 to 2014/15. Within this, the sum of £250,000 has been specifically set aside to fund the upgrade of the RTPI system to GPRS. In addition an amount of £50,000 has been allocated from within the 2012/13 LTP capital budget to support the upgrade. It is also intended that there will be further allocations of £200,000 in 2013/14, and £100,000 in 2014/15. Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company have also committed to contribute £400,000 to upgrade their onboard equipment and implement new GPRS signs in residential areas along the Lewes Road LSTF corridor. East Sussex County Council has committed to fund the costs of the upgrade within their administrative boundary and to contribute towards the project costs.
- 5.2 Revenue: There is a budget of £200,000 within the Transport Operations revenue budget, to pay for the annual service and maintenance charges.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Karen Brookshaw Date: 13/11/12

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 Policy & Resources Committee is the appropriate body to approve the report recommendations as the value of the proposed contract could have corporate budgetary implications. In addition, Policy & Resources Committee has a general power to discharge any Council function not specifically delegated to another Committee, which is the case here.
- 5.4 As the value of the proposed contract is above the EU procurement threshold, the opportunity has been advertised by an OJEU notice and the tender process is being undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contract Regulations 2006. In accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders, the contract will need to be in a form approved by the Head of Law and shall be given under the Common Seal of the Council.

Lawyer Consulted: Oliver Dixon Date: 11/10/12

Equalities Implications:

- 5.5 The upgrade of the RTPI system to GPRS will improve accessibility for all groups to public transport services in isolated areas of the city. This will also improve access to services and employment centres. The new GPRS system will also be compatible with the REACT Talking Bus Stops system, providing text to speech functionality for blind and partially sighted users.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.6 Sustainability is promoted within all contract procurement. The upgrade to GPRS will help to promote sustainable transport use, thereby decreasing carbon emissions across the city.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.7 None identified directly in relation to this report.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.8 None identified directly in relation to this report.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.9 Promoting sustainable transport use assists in promoting physical activity and active lifestyles.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.10 Improving accessibility to public transport assists in improving access to employment and services

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The current PMR system could be maintained and 'patched up' as required, but this would require an increasing maintenance budget to repair an ageing system. It would not improve the coverage of the system to areas that currently can not be served due to poor radio strength and if OFCOM sells the radio frequency currently used, an upgrade would be essential. Therefore this option has been discounted.
- 6.2 If a decision to proceed with the GPRS upgrade was not taken, a procurement process would still need to be undertaken to secure a new contract for ongoing service and maintenance. It is more cost effective to proceed with the upgrade as proposed.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To obtain delegated authority to award the contract for the upgrade of the current system to GPRS, along with the first five years of service and maintenance.
- 7.2 If the system performs as expected, and to all consortium members expectations and the supplier meets performance targets to extend the service and maintenance contracts on an annual basis following the first five years, through years six to ten.
- 7.3 To proceed with the roll out of the new system during 2013.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Cabinet Members Meeting Report – 4th May 2012

Documents in Members' Rooms

None

Background Documents

None