

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Cllr Sohail Munawar (Commissioner for Social and Economic Inclusion.)

PART I

FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

REAL TIME PASSENGER INFORMATION

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to examine information on the effectiveness of the Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system in Slough and to seek ways to improve it.

This report is designed to provide the Panel with information relating to following issues:

- To examine why only approx 30% of buses are detected by the RTPI system, and what can be done to improve upon this current level;
- To enquire what improvements have been made to the RTPI detection rates since the start of the project;
- To explore whether London Buses, Arriva and other bus companies can join the system, to provide full route coverage (including any first bus routes not yet covered);
- To examine future plans for RTPI in Slough; the routes not yet covered by bus stop displays, and which areas to be enabled next; and
- To explore the possibility of providing QR codes at bus stops, which will enable passengers to access individual bus company real time apps.

2 *Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action*

That the Panel note the progress made since RTPI was implemented in 2011.

3 The Sustainable Community Strategy, the JSNA and the Corporate Plan

Priority – Regeneration and Environment

The Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) roll-out across the borough is an integral element for improving the local economy and environment by making bus

travel a more attractive mode of transport. By encouraging commuters in Slough to travel by bus instead of car, it will lead to a healthier and more accessible Slough through reduced congestion and carbon emissions.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
None	None	There are no risks, threats or opportunities arising from the report.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no legal or Human Rights Act implications relating to the content of this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no identified need for the completion of EIA relating to this report.

5 **Supporting Information**

(a) Why is there currently a 30% detection level for buses using the system, and what steps can be taken to raise detection

There are a total of 64 buses including the services operating through Slough to Bracknell. At present 58% of the fleet (37 buses) have Electronic Ticket Machines (ETMs) fully installed and an additional 11 buses are due to be fitted which will represent a total of 75% of the bus fleet detected.

Site visits have been undertaken following concerns raised by the public and councillors including our regular spot checks via the InfoRoute system. These checks have concluded that some of the services have low detection rates. These include:

- 75 – 29%,
- 76 – 36%,
- 78 – 40%.

There have been a number of on going checks and dialogue with First and JMW that have resulted in some detection rates rising to as high as 93%. The reason for the changes in detection rates is due to the fact that a number of bus vehicles in Slough have since had RTPI equipment installed.

(b) What has been done since the start of the project?

Problems have been dealt with as they have arisen, through internal council management systems. In addition to this, we have made a number of improvements to detection rates over the past year:

- 1) Software Upgrade: Each bus fitted with RTPI equipment that can be monitored by Council officers through the RTPI system. Daily monitoring detection and observation is undertaken and reported at RTPI meetings.
- 2) Electronic Ticketing Machine Replacements: The ETM's were exchanged between vehicles to ensure that the low detection rates were not a result of faulty installation. ETM's were upgraded which in itself resulted in a delay in achieving acceptable detection rates.
- 3) Bus Fleet Replacement: Since December 2013 First Buses in Berkshire have replaced a number of bus vehicles in their fleet which had affected the overall detection. We are now in the process of fitting the RTPI equipment onto the last few buses.
- 4) New Fleet Due to Arrive in 2015: JMW and First have planned ahead to work with the bus manufacturers to pre-install the necessary equipment to ensure that the problems encountered before are not repeated. This will reduce the interruption to real-time information presented to the public via bus stop shelter and flag displays.

(c) Can London Buses, Arriva and other bus companies operating in Slough join the system, to provide wider RTPI coverage?

Slough Borough Council's Transport Team are in the process of establishing a SIRI link feed with Bucks County Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead that will enable us to detect their services that operate through Slough.

At present Bucks County Council and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead use a different RTPI system (Vix and Nimbus). In October 2014 both Local Authorities agreed to enable the sharing of RTPI data, we expect this to be complete over the coming months. We have also made plans to include the TfL 81 bus service into the complete coverage.

(d) Which Routes not yet well covered by bus stop shelter and flag displays, and which routes can be enabled next?

Slough Borough Council has a programme for the next phase of RTPI bus shelter and flag display installations in Slough. Parts of these plans are due to be amended due to the proposed Slough Mass Rapid Transit scheme which would require the location and positioning of some bus shelters to be changed. These are to be confirmed following the outcome of the consultation.

(e) What are the future plans for RTPI in Slough?

Quick Response (QR) Codes are available at a number of bus stops in Slough. These are installed in the form of a square barcode on the inside of a bus stop shelter and are managed by ClearChannel.

The Transport team at Slough Borough Council have plans to produce a dedicated mobile phone native app that will offer real time information for Public Transport in the borough. This will be highly useful for commuters with disabilities in Slough who are reliant on public transport.

We are in the process of trialling audio-visual equipment on a small number of vehicles in the borough which is similar to in the equipment utilised in London, Nottingham, Reading and other parts of the country. This feature will enable bus vehicles to audibly announce the oncoming stops of which will be great benefit to visitors to Slough and all those with sensory impairment disabilities.

6 **Conclusion**

That the Committee note the report.

7 **Background Papers**

None.

