



Title: **Better Bus Area Fund**

Public Agenda Item: **Yes**

Wards Affected: **All Wards in Torbay**

To: **Transport Working Party** On: **10 May 2012**

Contact Officer: **David Whiteway**

☎ Telephone: **01803 208828**

✉ E.mail: **David.whiteway@torbay.gov.uk**

1. Key points and Summary

- 1.1 Torbay Council has been awarded £514,700 to improve bus information across the Bay. The Department for Transport has announced that Torbay is one of 24 local authorities to successfully bid from its £70 million Better Bus Area fund, which aims to boost growth in bus services, improve partnerships with bus companies and increase passenger numbers.
- 1.2 Torbay currently lags behind other similar sized local authorities when it comes to the provision of passenger transport information. This successful bid provides the opportunity to develop high quality, cutting edge passenger transport information across the authority.
- 1.3 This paper sets out how the funding will be used to improve Torbay's bus service information.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Better Bus Area fund was announced in December 2011. The fund is intended to support local authorities in urban environments to achieve modal shift, reducing congestion and carbon emissions. The fund prioritised conurbations and urban areas where lack of road space and congestion are most acute.
- 2.2 Successful proposals needed to demonstrate improved bus patronage, encouraging growth and reducing carbon emissions, by making bus travel more attractive. This could be achieved through improved reliability, or enhancing access to services.
- 2.3 The successful Torbay bid was based on establishing a Real Time Information (RTI) system across the Bay, to provide accurate service information to passengers. The RTI system will enable service information to be provided relating to all bus stops in the Bay, with screens and kiosks in key locations.

3 Bid Details

- 3.1 The bid enables the introduction of Real Time Passenger Information for all bus services in Torbay, together with some supporting measures to aid bus punctuality.
- 3.2 A web based RTI system will be established, which will allow passengers to access RTI wherever they are through the use of Smart Phones and QR (Quick Response) codes. Passengers will be able to better plan their journeys and give confidence that their bus will turn up, reducing the number of trips by car and helping to lessen the impact of traffic growth to 2031.
- 3.3 Alongside the web-based system, it is proposed that RTI screens will be placed at three major passenger interchange locations:
- Paignton Bus Station (two screens – one at either entrance)
 - Torbay Hospital
 - South Devon College.

An information kiosk will be provided at Paignton Bus Station, with those at South Devon College and Torbay Hospital to be upgraded.

- 3.4 All bus stops in Torbay will be upgraded to display QR codes linked to the RTI website.
- 3.5 The RTI system will be managed through the installation of a Fleet Management System at the Stagecoach and Local Link bus depots alongside Torbay's existing Traffic Management System.
- 3.6 As detailed above, a series of improvements at key signal controlled junctions will be installed to provide bus priority along busy town centre corridors.

4 Project Benefits

- 4.1 The aim of the provision of RTI to passengers is to improve the passenger experience and to make bus travel as convenient as possible.
- 4.2 The focus on the provision of a comprehensive web-based service allows the widest possible number of passengers to benefit by enabling full coverage. RTI is seen as key to retaining passengers already using public transport whilst attracting new passengers who previously would have used their car through the provision of accurate service information. This increase in public transport usage will help the Council to achieve its target to reduce CO2 emissions by 60% by 2050.

5 Project Funding

- 5.1 The total allocation of £514,700 is split between revenue and capital funding (£114,700 revenue, £400,000 capital). Over and above the contribution from the DfT, Torbay Council will contribute an additional £236,000 over the life of the project from the Local Transport Plan Integrated Block as match-funding bringing the total package cost to £750,700.
- 5.2 The Local Transport Plan match funding will be spent on existing projects outlined in the Plan, that can be integrated into the Better Bus Areas project, to reduce congestion and improve passenger information
- 5.3 The estimated costs of the individual elements over the two year period are as follows (proportion of Local Transport Plan match funding in brackets):
- Real Time Information - £88,350 (£0)

- Travel Information Kiosks - £72,350 (£6,000)
- Control Room Centres - £240,000 (£90,000)
- Bus Priority at Junctions - £235,000 (£115,000)
- Development of Web-based RTI Applications - £115,000 (£25,000)

6 Project Programme and Milestones

- 6.1 The funding is provided over two years with the available from mid-April. Project update reports will be required every six months, providing the DfT with information as to project progress.
- 6.2 The project timetable set out in the bid document is as follows:
- Real Time Information Screens – 31st March 2013
 - Travel Information Kiosks – 31st March 2013
 - Development of Web-based RTI application – 1st September 2013
 - Control Room Centres – 1st November 2013
 - Bus Priority at Signalised Junctions – 31st March 2014

Sally Farley
Senior Service Manager – Environmental Policy

Appendices

None.

Documents available in members' rooms

Better Bus Areas Application Form - <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/bbaapplication.pdf>

Background Papers:

The following documents/files were used to compile this report: