

**Board Meeting Bus  
Passenger Link Paper**

**Jul 10 BM 9.2**

Contains restricted or confidential Information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



<b>If confidential, protective marking<sup>1</sup></b>	
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2010
<b>Agenda Item</b>	9.2
<b>Report Title</b>	Government Offices – South West / South East / East
<b>Sponsor</b>	David Sidebottom
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**1. Passenger Focus objectives**

1. To demonstrate improved bus punctuality by working with operators and funders of local bus services to publish performance and identify areas of poor performance
2. To work with operators and funders to ensure local service provision, including capacity, meets passengers' reasonable requirements
3. To work with operators and funders to promote multi-operator tickets allowing passenger to travel on all bus services in local area
4. To improve the coverage and reliability of electronic real-time information (RTI) at bus stops
5. To bring about improvements in the complaints handling and appeals process.

**2. Reasons for objectives**

All of these objectives (except no. five) are based on the Passenger Priorities Research published in March 2010 and reflect key findings from the Bus Passenger Satisfaction Survey (BPSS).

1. Supports national passenger priority one (more buses are on time or within five minutes of when they are scheduled to arrive). Punctuality is a key driver of dissatisfaction identified in all areas.
2. Supports national passenger priority two (buses run more frequently at times when you want to use them), national passenger priority three (passengers are able to get a seat) & national passenger priority five (buses go to a wider range of destinations in your local area).
3. Supports national passenger priority four (tickets and passes are available that entitle you to travel on all bus services in your local area, not just those operated by a specific operator).
4. Supports South East passenger priority four (electronic displays showing correct length of time until next bus is due is available at all bus stops).
5. National objective published in Work Plan in response to Department for Transport request.

**3. Progress report**

General update

1. Passenger Link Executives Joe Lynch and Linda McCord work with Gavin Smith in these regions. Objectives for 2010 / 2011 have been formalised for the team.
2. Good progress has been made across all three regions in meeting senior contacts within bus companies, local authorities and other stakeholders, e.g. Traffic Commissioners, Confederation for Passenger Transport, Bus Users UK (BUUK), Travelwatch and special

<sup>1</sup> ie RESTRICTED plus COMMERCIAL / POLICY / STAFF / PERSONAL PROTECT

interest groups. It should be noted that this work was already more advanced in the South West.

3. All pilot and phase 1 BPSS research has been briefed to the relevant parties within laid down timescales. I would like to formally record my thanks to Jocelyn Pearson and Paul Bentley for their work in this area which has enabled an orderly and seamless handover. The team are now turning their attention to formulating action plans based on this research, starting with a joint meeting in Plymouth with bus operators and the city council.
4. One of the key issues discussed with each bus company is a request for them to inform us of any significant service changes they are planning prior to its' implementation to ensure we are aware of service changes before they appear in the local media..

#### Specific area update & wins – South West

1. The team have been working closely with First Bristol and Wessex Connect to raise the profile of Bristol area multi-operator ticket the "Freedom Travelpass" following personal experiences which clearly indicated a lack of knowledge of this product among the bus drivers I met, many of whom had never heard of the product or declined to accept the ticket on board their bus.
2. The team have presented at First Devon and Cornwall's customer service conference at Plymouth, explaining the role of Passenger Focus and sharing First's results from BPSS.
3. The team have forged a good working relationship with Justin Davies, the Regional Director for First in the West. Key areas we are exploring are the widespread roll out of Customer Panels (there is one planned for Bristol in early July), and the publication of performance data across the area. Performance data in the industry is not widely published yet is important to inform consumer choice.
4. Following intervention on a bus stop scheme in Cornwall, the Highways Agency has confirmed that it will strengthen its' processes to ensure that a Non-Motorised User (NMU) audit is carried out on each scheme.
5. Following Passenger Focus investigation of First's major route changes in Bath, First are commissioning a study by Halcrow to take a fresh look at the whole network. We will be consulted as part of this process.
6. We have convened a BPSS action planning meeting in Plymouth in July which involves the city council, First and Plymouth City Bus. It is anticipated that this type of meeting will be replicated across all areas where a BPSS has taken place. Key issues to discuss will be the impact of the "bus war" on the wider network, bus priority measures and multi-operator ticketing, which currently does not exist.

#### Specific area update & wins – South East

1. The relationship with Arriva Southern Counties has already delivered a number of wins around passenger timetable information and bus driver customer care.
2. The team have joined forces with BUUK to ensure that passenger concerns regarding the new Arriva bus timetable in Milton Keynes are captured, and Arriva challenged to respond appropriately.
3. BPSS results fed back to the King's Ferry coach company.
4. Passenger Focus attended the formal launch by Stagecoach in Oxford of the enhanced Route 66 between Oxford and Swindon.
5. Excellent progress has been made in the South East in further raising our profile in the area among bus operators, local authorities and other stakeholders building on earlier work during the pilot phase. This has been the main thrust of our activity in the South East.

Specific area update & wins – East of England

1. BPSS results fed back to Cambridgeshire County Council and Stagecoach in Cambridge.
2. The team has investigated a passenger complaint in Chelmsford regarding the punctuality and capacity of First's route 45. A constructive meeting was held with the local MD and we are confident that there are measures in place that meet both passenger expectations in terms of punctuality and capacity.
3. Excellent progress has been made in the East of England in raising our profile in the area among bus operators, local authorities and other stakeholders from what was a low base. This has been the main thrust of our activity in the East.

**4. Other issues**

There are a number of key themes that seem to be emerging from our meetings with operators:

1. General reluctance to publish performance data in case this results in a Traffic Commissioner's investigation.
2. Poor planning and co-ordination of roadworks in some areas causing performance problems.
3. Perception that some local authorities are reluctant to enter into Performance Improvement Partnerships as it may commit them to infrastructure upgrades they cannot afford.

**4. Confidential issues**

Nothing to report