

Item 10**Report to Solent Transport**

Date: 24 June 2015

Report by: Philip Marshall

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Subject: Better Bus Area Fund Update

1. Summary**1.1** The following decisions is sought:

That the Joint Committee notes:

- The final outturn expenditure for the Better Bus Area Fund programme, in particular that Solent Transport was successful in spending 99.8% of the available grant; and
- Notes the final position with regards to delivery and the comparison between the original and outturn programmes.

2. Reason**2.1** Solent Transport is required to deliver a programme of improvements to buses in accordance with Better Bus Area Fund grant conditions.**3. Other Options Considered and Rejected****3.1** Taking no action – This is rejected as there is a requirement to deliver the Better Bus Area Fund project.**4. Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Decision Maker or Other Executive Member Consulted – None.****5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel – None.**

6. Reason(s) for the Matter being dealt with if Urgent – None.

Approved by: Date:

**Councillor Jacqui Rayment
Vice Chairman
Solent Transport**

On behalf of

**Councillor Seán D T Woodward
Chairman
Solent Transport**



Agenda Item 10

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Purpose of the Report

Recommendations

1. That the Joint Committee notes:

- **The final outturn expenditure for the Better Bus Area Fund programme, in particular that Solent Transport was successful in claiming 99.8% of the available grant; and**
- **Notes the final position with regards to delivery and the comparison between the original and outturn programmes.**

Introduction

1. In February 2012, Transport for South Hampshire submitted a successful bid of £4.47million to the Department for Transport's Better Bus Area Fund, in partnership with the South Hampshire Bus Operators' Association (SHBOA) operators.
2. Although the funding was originally provided for the 2012/13 and 2013/14 financial years, the project was later extended to include the 2014/15 financial year.

Scheme Delivery

3. **Table 1** illustrates the actual revenue and capital expenditure of the Department for Transport (DfT) grant against the planned expenditure outlined in the original bid.

Table 1

	Original Budget £'000	Actual Outturn £'000	Variation to budget £'000
Revenue Funding	766 ¹	789	23
Capital Funding	4,011 ²	3,981	-30
TOTAL	4,777	4,770	-7

Notes

- (1) £80,000 transferred to Capital with agreement of DfT
(2) £80,000 transferred from Revenue with agreement of DfT and also includes £300,000 of local contributions.

4. In overall terms, 99.8% of the total budget has been spent, although this includes a £23,000 overspend on the revenue account and £30,000 underspend on the capital account. In order to address this imbalance, we are seeking consent from the DfT to transfer £23,000 of capital budget back to the revenue budget, to cover its shortfall.
5. The project has physically delivered the following measures. Note there has been some reallocation of the budget during the life of the project, in agreement with the DfT. This has been primarily due to the costs in some budget areas being less than originally anticipated:

On Board Wi-Fi

The original commitment was to fit On Board Wi-Fi to 500 buses. The scheme has actually delivered this to 571 buses.

Next Stop Audio Visual

The original commitment was to fit Next Stop Audio Visual equipment to 500 buses. However, this has been increased to 526 buses.

LED Lighting

The original commitment was to fit LED Lighting to 500 buses. In practice, 549 buses have been fitted.

Bus Refurbishments

The original commitment was to refurbish 141 buses. However, a total of 148 buses have been refurbished.

Bus Rapid Transit Infrastructure Enhancements

The project has funded improvements to the Fareham to Gosport Bus Rapid Transit corridor. This includes improvements on the A32 in Gosport at Brockhurst Roundabout and The Crossways junction. A contribution has also been made to the A27 Western Way Bus Gate

scheme in Fareham, due to utility costs on the A32 being less than originally anticipated.

Smartphone App

The original bid included funding to develop a Smartphone App to promote bus usage. However, this has been delivered by the My Journey *Journey Planner*, funded by the Better Connected South Hampshire Local Sustainable Transport Fund project. This funding was therefore reallocated to deliver additional Wi-Fi, LED, Next Stop Audio Visual and Bus Refurbishments.

NFC Tags

This funding was reallocated to deliver additional Wi-Fi, LED, Next Stop Audio Visual and Bus Refurbishments.

Apprenticeships

The apprenticeships project has gone particularly well. The original commitment was for 16 new apprentices within the bid, but First has recruited 80 apprentice drivers, 7 customer service apprentices, and 1 apprentice engineer. In total, 90 apprentices have been recruited by bus operators within the TfSH area.

Marketing

The project has delivered a marketing strategy to promote The Bus, naturally following delivery of the capital infrastructure. This work has therefore been focussed towards the latter end of the delivery period.

This campaign is specific to bus travel and functions as a separate campaign on behalf of Solent Transport and local bus operators. The campaign consists mainly of a clever yet simple creative that challenges preconceived ideas around bus travel - 'The bus has changed. But can you change your mind?'

Specific elements of the Marketing component include:

- Try a Bus Roadshows, including providing free Try a Bus vouchers to the general public;
- Advertising on billboards, bus stops, via direct mail and local radio;
- Provision of a micro website *Try A Bus*, to which all communications have been directed;
- A refresh of the Solent Go Smartcard marketing literature; and
- Southampton City Council Legible Bus Network.

Monitoring

Monitoring of the outcomes of the Better Bus Area Fund project will be undertaken by the University of Southampton. These will consider how the project has delivered against its originally stated objectives, including modal shift from the car to public transport.

Summary and Conclusions

6. The Better Bus Area Fund project is an excellent example of partnership working between the SHBOA bus operators and Solent Transport and has been successfully delivered between 2012 and 2015, maintaining the area's reputation for project delivery.

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background papers

The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.

NB the list excludes:

1. Published works.
2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.

TITLE

LOCATION

None