



Greater Bristol Bus Network Major Scheme Business Case

Appendix 4M

Marketing Plan

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4M.1. Introduction

- 4M.1.1 The Marketing Plan provides an analysis of the GBBN in terms of the issues faced, (strengths and weaknesses), and sets out the marketing objectives and strategy for the overall project. The Marketing Plan also identifies the actions and resources necessary to deliver the marketing strategy.
- 4M.1.2 The overall aim of the Marketing Plan is to assist in the delivery patronage growth along the GBBN corridors, by promoting public transport as a viable alternative to the private car. The Marketing Plan supports the Communications Plan and Consultation Plan which are in Appendix 4K and 4L respectively. The Marketing Plan will help launch the GBBN consultation process, raising the profile of GBBN amongst stakeholders, the general public and the media.
- 4M.1.3 Existing public transport networks show that developing a credible brand at the start will help capture the audience's 'heart and minds'. P&R bus services have a history of attracting the commuters out of their cars and onto the bus. Whilst location is likely to be a key factor in this, there are other elements from these services can be incorporated into the GBBN. Similarly Virgin Trains have achieved success by creating a high quality product with the strap line 'Virgin Trains for business brains'.
- 4M.1.4 The infrastructure measures in the MSBC will be combined with comprehensive marketing and promotion campaign to win 'hearts and minds' and change the common perceptions of bus travel. The key messages that the marketing of the GBBN need to convey are:
- ◆ Improved travel choice;
 - ◆ Step change in the quality of public transport provision in our area; and
 - ◆ If more people choose to use public transport everyone will benefit from improved air quality, reduced congestion, and reduction in road traffic accidents.
- 4M.1.5 The delivery of the Marketing Plan will be led by the GBBN Marketing and Communications Team. The Marketing and Communications Team Manager is a member of the Joint Delivery Vehicle reporting to the IPD.

4M.2. Marketing Plan Objectives

4M.2.1 The objectives of the Marketing Plan are to:

1. Increase bus patronage on all showcase bus services (linking in with JLTP targets);
2. Raise aspirations of public transport, providing a viable alternative to the private vehicle;
3. Promote peripheral advantages (cycling, road safety) alongside the main messages; and
4. Raise awareness of public transport as an alternative choice option to the private car through aspirational promotional campaigns during project implementation phase of GBBN.

4M.3. Background

PLACE

4M.3.1 Bus tickets can be purchased in a variety of ways at present. Singles, returns and FirstDay tickets can be purchased on bus from drivers. Season tickets and Ten Journey tickets can be purchased from First Travel Shops, on-line via www.firstgroup.com and via networks of "bus shops", typically newsagents in Bristol. In addition, in Somerset and Avon, adult weekly and ten journey tickets can be purchased on the buses.

PRICE

4M.3.2 For deregulated services the price is set by the operator however on supported services the Councils work in partnership with the operators on pricing.

PROMOTION

4M.3.3 Promotional activities along Showcase 1 have been minimal. Consultation was undertaken in conjunction with a few mailings to households along this route. There has been a 12% growth in patronage along this corridor, however surveys has shown that users of the services are unclear about what the changes have been and are unable to describe/vocalise any changes.

4M.4. The GBBN Product

4M.4.1 The GBBN Major Scheme includes the following measures:

- ◆ New bus lanes and improvements to traffic junctions to give priority over other traffic;
- ◆ RTPI on major bus stops with information available on the internet and via mobile phones;

Modern new low-floor buses with enhanced bus stops to allow easy access plus new shelters the the stops;

- ◆ Higher standards of driver training and customer services;
- ◆ Enforcement of bus priority measures including new powers to use cameras to enforce bus lanes;
- ◆ Bus information made available in new formats to public and businesses including mailing to households; and
- ◆ Improvements for walking, cycling and road safety.

4M.4.2 The GBBN services will compete more competitively than existing services with its primary competition, the private car by:

- ◆ Providing fast and reliable bus journey times along corridors;
- ◆ Enabling passengers to make a range of cross-Bristol and other journeys without the need for interchange;
- ◆ Enhancing standards of passenger comfort;
- ◆ Achieving greater service levels for a range of key destinations;
- ◆ Connecting efficiently with rail and coach services.

4M.5. SWOT Analysis

GBBN SWOT ANALYSIS

- 4M.5.1 The SWOT Analysis in Table 4M.1 considers internal (Strengths and Weaknesses) and external (Opportunities and Threats) factors which will need to be taken into account to ensure successful marketing and promotion of the GBBN.
- 4M.5.2 The aim is are to create a quality brand image which is set apart and distinctive from all existing bus services within the area. It is important that people's expectations are met by the GBBN product, which have been lifted as a result of the GBBN marketing campaigns. Potential opposition from traders and residents needs to be managed through timely communications via press coverage, consultation, leaflet drops and advertising.
- 4M.5.3 Best practice from other public transport services which have a strong brand image and positive perception are to be taken into account. If the service is promoted as a step above what is currently on the public are likely to perceive it in a different light to existing services.

Table 4M.1 – GBBN SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weakness
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Biggest change to public transport in the Greater Bristol area for many years; ◆ High levels of external funding coming into the region to achieve this work; ◆ Improvements for the showcase bus corridors will promote an aspirational image of public transport across the region; ◆ Step change to the level of bus service provided; and ◆ Implementation of Showcase 1 has resulted in a 12% patronage growth despite limited branding and marketing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ There is currently a poor perception of public transport by the general public; ◆ The GBBN is limited to ten corridors, improving radial bus services, but limited impact on orbital bus services; and ◆ People who do not live on a GBBN route may feel isolated and short changed.
	Opportunities	Threats
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To build on the good work already done (Showcase 1) and complement further work to come (if Bath Package bid successful) to create a genuine step change for bus services in the area; ◆ An improvement of services across the whole network will raise the profile of public transport and enhance perceptions in the area; ◆ High quality network will provide a genuine alternative to the private car which will help achieve the JLTP objectives; ◆ Whilst public transport has a relatively poor image, some operators have managed to create good brand identities e.g. Virgin Trains, most Park and Ride (P&R) services and Trent Barton (in the Midlands); ◆ To enhance the image of all GBBN partners through delivering the GBBN; and ◆ The population and economy in Greater Bristol is growing, providing an opportunity to encourage mode shift in existing communities and also to encourage bus travel amongst new arrivals into the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Relative motoring costs are continually decreasing; ◆ Opposition from traders, residents and some road users. The potential risk of bus priority measures being watered down, reducing the impact/effectiveness of schemes, diluting improvements to journey times and reliability, potentially leading to unfulfilled expectations/ disappointment with the overall performance of the route; ◆ Bus fares are already high across the sub region, in comparison to other areas, and are likely to rise further; and ◆ People are 10 times more likely to tell others of a negative experience on public transport than a positive one.

Table 4M.2 – Competitor Analysis of the Private Car

	Strengths	Weakness
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provides door to door service; ◆ Perceived security; ◆ Relative costs reducing; ◆ The car is perceived as aspirational; many aspire to own and drive a car; ◆ Convenience; and ◆ Perceived to be faster than public transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Increased congestion leading to unreliable journey times and greater stress; ◆ Parking, the cost and difficulties finding a space; ◆ High levels of pollution; ◆ Poor sustainability; and ◆ Cost of car ownership.
	Opportunities (for the GBBN)	Threats (for the GBBN)
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Change perception of public transport including safety, reliability and cost; ◆ No need to park; ◆ Value of money; and ◆ Can have alcoholic drinks (prior to boarding the bus). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Standards of motoring ever increasing at a faster pace than public transport; and ◆ Massive marketing spend within the industry which keep raising aspirations and consumer expectations.

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COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

4M.5.4 The main competitor to GBBN is the private car. Real costs of motoring are reducing, more companies are re-locating to 'out of town' locations to improve parking facilities, and car manufacturers have large marketing budgets to compete with.

4M.6. Marketing Strategy

INTRODUCTION

4M.6.1 The GBBN marketing strategy is based on differentiating the bus network from all other bus services, by using a consistent brand identity to promote an aspirational image of a quality service to attract new users.

TARGET MARKET

4M.6.2 The marketing strategy will be differentiated to reach each of the following target markets:

- ◆ **Existing customers** – Need to be informed of improvements to their bus services. Research on Showcase 1 shows the average user is female, less than 44 years of age, from C2/DE occupational group and renting their home;
- ◆ **Businesses** – Businesses that located along the GBBN may have concerns about trade. Also employers can help by promoting the improved services to their employees;
- ◆ **Non/occasional bus users** – (commuters/shoppers/students): research on Showcase 1 has shown that half of new users (12%) have access to a car on a day to day basis;
- ◆ **Young Adults** – Research from showcase 1 shows 37% of passengers are 16-29 years old. By encouraging independent teens to utilise the network at an early age they are more likely to continue to do so throughout their entire life;
- ◆ **Leisure users;**

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- ◆ **Cyclists** – To encourage to use bus lanes by cyclists;
- ◆ **Visitors to the Greater Bristol area;**
- ◆ **People with Accessibility Needs** – disabled, elderly and those with buggies;
- ◆ **Concessionary pass holders and those eligible for passes;** and
- ◆ **Local media contacts** – (TV/radio/newspaper).

POSITIONING STATEMENT

4M.6.3 The GBBN will deliver substantial improvements to the speed, quality, reliability and attractiveness of bus services in ten corridors across the Greater Bristol area in partnership with the major bus operator, First. In summary the GBBN comprises:

- ◆ Extensive bus priority measures in each corridor;
- ◆ New, modern accessible low-floor vehicles;
- ◆ Improved service frequencies and new routes;
- ◆ Improved passenger facilities;
- ◆ Improved passenger information including the expansion of the current Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) system; and
- ◆ Measures that will also provide benefits to other road users including pedestrians, cyclists, cars and goods vehicles.

4M.6.4 The GBBN will provide an attractive alternative to the private car and benefit existing users with a higher level of service.

BRANDING STRATEGY

4M.6.5 The GBBN brand will make a memorable impact on the general public in the Greater Bristol area. The brand will be recognised for high quality with a clear consistent image which will follow agreed design guidelines. It is essential that the brand is immediately recognisable through literature, bus stops, shelters and an aspiration is for branded livery similar to the ZIP corridor services in Hampshire (<http://www.hants.gov.uk/a3buscorridor/>).

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PRODUCT STRATEGY

- 4M.6.6 The unique selling point for GBBN is:
- ◆ Greater reliability and reassurance through RTPI; and
 - ◆ Highest quality service across the GBBN.

PRICING STRATEGY

- 4M.6.7 The GBBN partners will work to deliver value for money.

DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY (PLACE)

- 4M.6.8 First will continue to offer customers a variety of methods to purchase their bus tickets, and aim to increase customer accessibility.

PROMOTION STRATEGY

- 4M.6.9 Two consultation phases have already been undertaken for preparation of the JLTP. The promotion of GBBN will be proactive and timely in its delivery, and will be rolled out in two further phases:
- ◆ “Big Bang” consultation process during Spring-Summer 2007 to raise awareness of the GBBN to all stakeholders (Consultation Phase 3); and
 - ◆ Corridor-specific consultations will take place prior to finalising individual corridor proposals (Consultation Phase 4).
- 4M.6.10 These consultation phases are an appropriate mechanism in creating momentum for the building of understanding of the GBBN concept amongst the public and key stakeholders in Greater Bristol.
- 4M.6.11 The Communications Plan (Appendix 4K) provides further information about how the four Councils will liaise with the public and the media.

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Public Relations Strategy

- 4M.6.12 An individualised plan will be produced for each GBBN corridor. The Councils will be proactive to raise awareness of any works commencing on the highway. Throughout the development of the project PR must be used to keep stakeholders informed of how developments are progressing. Importantly, once each corridor is delivered, success must be reported to raise perceptions of the scheme. It is expected the four Councils and First will utilise any existing channels (such as newsletters and websites) to communicate messages to their stakeholders.
- 4M.6.13 Existing Council PR facilities will be utilised to write and submit articles to the press and ensure all media contacts are kept up to date with developments. GBBN updates will be included in all relevant Council publications. The Councils will work jointly to ensure the message is consistent with one officer to oversee all activities.

Advertising Strategy

- 4M.6.14 At the beginning of the GBBN promotional campaign there will be an advertising campaign and consultation period to inform all stakeholders of the developments. During the “Big Bang” advertising on bus backs and radio drive time GBBN adverts will raise awareness of the GBBN amongst car drivers - the Councils will also consider sponsoring the traffic bulletins or similar.
- 4M.6.15 When the individual corridors are rolled out there will be targeted advertising along the route to help raise awareness of the improvements. Once the scheme is completed, further advertising on how successful the scheme has been. To reach wider audiences relevant to each corridor, there will be advertising on new mediums (not same as “big bang”) e.g. Adshels, billboards, newspapers etc.

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Direct Marketing Strategy

- 4M.6.16 The JLTP is committed to “bus information made available in new formats to public and businesses including mailing to households”. Therefore, there will be target drops along each corridor to inform residents of bus times etc and to businesses and any relevant outlets. Additionally, newsletters will be produced to keep residents and local businesses informed about the delivery of the GBBN.
- 4M.6.17 During the “Big Bang” phase, leaflets will be distributed to every household in the four authorities. Leaflets will be distributed to employers, focusing on Green Commuter/Travel Plan contacts.

Online Marketing Strategy

- 4M.6.18 A microsite (a smaller website linked from the JLTP website) will be produced with agreed GBBN branding, communicating messages solely on GBBN project. Alternatively the previous JLTP site will be adapted for the “Big Bang” period of the marketing campaign, with links to main West of England campaign. This website will include the latest news and developments on the scheme. First and the Councils will link up to this from their websites at the appropriate locations. The website is expected to be a significant two way channel of communication as the project progresses, disseminating information as well as attracting input from the public.

Sales Promotion Strategy

- 4M.6.19 First are committed towards offering a sales promotion to customers along the route, details to be agreed nearer the time.

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Sales Strategy

- 4M.6.20 The Councils will use direct marketing agencies to target all potential users along any particular GBBN service route.

Partnership

- 4M.6.21 Quality bus partnership agreement to be signed by Councils and First.

MARKETING OF GBBN BUS SERVICES

People

- 4M.6.22 There will be higher levels of driver training and customer services across the GBBN to improve bus user satisfaction.

Process

- 4M.6.23 There will be a unique email address on all promotional and consultation literature for customer comment for GBBN network. There will be a target of responding to 100% of all enquiries within five working days.

Physical Evidence

- 4M.6.24 The four Councils and First have agreed there will be a joint set of design guidelines for promotional material, shelters, bus stops, and bus liveries, so that there is a common visual identity. This 'one voice' approach across the GBBN will ensure that existing customers and potential new users are aware of the enhanced service.

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4M.7. Marketing Resources

- 4M.7.1 Officers from each Council and First will be required to contribute to the promotional plans for each of the GBBN corridors, as and when they are developed. Consultants will be hired to manage the initial “Big Bang” launch, and then the relevant Councils will use their existing marketing and design staff to promote the individual corridor promotions within their area.
- 4M.7.2 The Councils have agreed a budget of £500,000 for the initial launch of GBBN and the individual corridor promotions as the project is rolled out (see Table 4M.3 and Table 4M.4).

4M.8. Evaluation

ASSUMPTIONS MADE

- 4M.8.1 This marketing plan is based on the following assumptions:
- ◆ The GBBN bid has Government backing; and
 - ◆ No new large bus operator will move into the market.

BENCHMARKS & MEASUREMENT

- 4M.8.2 The Marketing Plan will be reviewed every six months to ensure the Marketing Plan objectives are achieved. Key measurements for this are:
- ◆ Questionnaires to cross sections of the GBBN area (estimate £15,000 per showcase corridor) to see if they have heard of GBBN and what it means to them;
 - ◆ Patronage along showcase corridors (provided by First);
 - ◆ Number of cyclists along route (using existing technology); and
 - ◆ Amount of dissent from members, trader, local residents etc in the press to be monitored through corporate communications recording systems (standard spreadsheet/recording system to be established).
- 4M.8.3 Enumerators will be hired to undertake surveys in key venues (e.g. shopping centres, business parks) and on buses to establish whether awareness of the GBBN improvements has increased. This will be undertaken jointly between the four Councils to ensure questions are consistent and this will be overseen by consultants. Satisfaction will be monitored through the annual bus satisfaction survey and online questionnaires via the GBBN website. These surveys will also be undertaken when each GBBN corridor is completed so that any problems can be addressed for future campaigns and in updating the Marketing Plan.

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- 4M.8.4 Benchmarking could also be established against another Council with showcase bus corridors, for instance Coventry City Council, to measure our progress against a network which is advanced to ours.
- 4M.8.5 Further detail regarding monitoring the GBBN can be found in the Evaluation Plan in Appendix 4N.

4M.9. Promotions and Costs for Each Stage

Table 4M.3 - Big Bang (Stage 3)

	Description	Total costs
Design Costs	Initial design for all leaflets, displays etc to outline key theme and messages.	£8,000
PR	Use existing PR facilities within the Council to write and submit articles to the press, make sure all media contacts are kept up to date with developments, and include in all relevant Council publications. Working jointly across the Councils to ensure the message is consistent with one officer to oversee all activities.	£0
Exhibition	Purchase of pop up stands and one literature holder for each Council, total cost £5,000 Cost of hiring key venues across all four Councils, using these stands with officers from each Council (cost of officer time not included) answering queries and handing out literature £3,000.	£8,000
Direct mailing	Leaflet to every household in the four Councils cost of distribution £20,000 cost of printing and design £25,000 Leaflets to employers, to be distributed by each Council focusing on Green Commuter/Travel Plan contacts, 5-10,000 copies for each Council, cost £5,000.	£50,000
Website	Production of a microsite (a smaller website linked from JLTP website with agreed GBBN branding, communicating messages solely on GBBN project) or adapt previous JLTP site for the period of the campaign, with links to main West of England campaign.	£5,000
Advertising	100 bus backs across all four Councils cost including production £5,000. Adverts on local radio stations during drive time. Could sponsor the traffic bulletins or something similar. Cost £10,000.	£15,000
Management	Cost to hire consultants for 2 months to manage project.	£30,000
Monitoring	Hire enumerators across all four Councils visit key venues (e.g. shopping centres, business parks) and on the bus to see if awareness levels have been raised. Must be done jointly to ensure questions are consistent, to be overseen by consultants. Also measure via the annual bus satisfaction survey and online questionnaires via the GBBN website.	£1,000
	Total cost for Big Bang	£117,000

Table 4M.4 - Corridor Promotions (Stage 4)*

	Description	Total costs
Design Costs	Local authorities design teams to create the message and design style per route for advertising (as per guidelines).	£2,750
PR	Use existing PR facilities within the Council to write and submit articles to the press, make sure all media contacts are kept up to date with developments, and include in all relevant Council publications. Working jointly across authorities to ensure the message is consistent with one officer to oversee all activities.	£0
Exhibition	Use original exhibition displays (from Big Bang) but use new materials focused on route information and book venues near route, must be staffed by officers from relevant authorities to deal with any queries .	£5,000
Direct mailing	Mailing to all residents and businesses along corridors (will vary depending on size/location or corridor).	£20,000
Website	Update existing microsite with developments as corridors are rolled out.	£0
Advertising	Advertise via new medium (not same as big bang) to reach wider audiences relevant to route e.g Adshels, billboards, newspapers etc.	£10,000
Monitoring	Hire enumerators to visit key venues (e.g. shopping centres, business parks) and on the bus to assess impact of promotions at end of corridor completion, any problems can then be address for future campaigns and the promotional plan updated. Must be done jointly to ensure questions are consistent, to be overseen by one officer. Also measure via the annual bus satisfaction survey and online questionnaires via the GBBN website.	£550
	Total cost per route	£38,300
	Total cost for 10 corridors	£383,000

*Please promotions are subject to change according to monitoring results, size and location of corridors.

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4M.10. Summary

4M.10.1 In order for buses to compete with the car and to reduce the growth in congestion, a step change in bus quality is absolutely essential. This will require investment in both on-street infrastructure, but will also require a change in attitudes to travel in Greater Bristol, with more people actively considering bus as a travel choice. Marketing will be required to change perceptions of and attitudes to public transport especially in relation to the delivery of GBBN. By delivering comprehensive bus priority with network wide accessibility and image enhancements the bus can become a quality travelling experience for people travelling in the Greater Bristol area.