

Ticketing

Purpose of Report

1. To update the Committee on opportunities for enhanced public transport ticketing.

Background

2. The Bus Strategy in the Joint Local Transport Plan 2006/07 to 2010/11 includes the following statements:

(7.6) We will work with operators on developing improved ticketing. This embraces more opportunities for off-bus ticket purchase as well as a potential multi-operator travelcard and use of smartcard technology. Better ticketing arrangements will improve boarding times, increase convenience and encourage greater use of the bus.

(7.29) Fares and tickets in the JLTP area are commercially determined by the operators, except those on Council-supported services. We will work with the operators to continue to simplify ticketing structures where appropriate. In addition, the Councils will seek, in consultation with the operators and the Office of Fair Trading, to introduce a travelcard to cover travel on all bus services.

3. The West of England Partnership commissioned a feasibility report on smartcards that was published in July 2008. The key recommendations are shown in Appendix 1.

Glossary of terms

E-money – Monetary value which is stored on an electronic device issued on receipt of funds and accepted as payment by persons other than the issuer.

Integrated ticketing – Tickets that are valid on more than one operator's services or on more than one mode of transport.

ITSO – The specification that allows smart ticketing to be technically compatible with other systems.

Multi-modal – Ticket that is valid on more than one mode of transport.

Multi-operator – Ticket that is valid on the services of more than one operator.

Smart ticketing – Tickets that are stored electronically on a microchip, usually embedded in a smartcard (but possibly in other forms of smart media), and their validity is checked by placing them next to a smart reader.

Travelcard – A pass valid across a local network.

Current Government initiatives

4. The Department for Transport recently published a consultation paper entitled “Developing a strategy for smart and integrated ticketing.” The paper gives a comprehensive overview of the current situation and seeks views on possible ways forward. The consultation period ends on 28 October 2009. The Department for Transport (DfT) intends to use the consultation to inform the development of a final Integrated and Smart Ticketing Strategy for England. The document is available at www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/smartticketing.
5. Also, the Government recently published a strategy document entitled “Building a society for all ages” which envisages an “all-in-one” smartcard covering a much wider range of applications than purely transport. The document is available at www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingasocietyforallages.aspx.
6. As part of its reform of Bus Service Operators Grant, the Department for Transport intends to pay a higher rate of Bus Service Operators Grant in respect of vehicles that are equipped with ITSO and satellite tracking equipment, beginning in April 2010.
7. The Government Office for the South West held a conference in April 2009 to sound out views on development of a regional multi-application smartcard. There was broad support for the project from local authorities. The region has recently received £80,000 funding to take the work forward. The West of England Partnership is represented on the Board.

Current local initiatives

BathRider – Bath & North East Somerset Council has used powers under the Transport Act 2000 to “make” a ticket scheme under which all bus operators in the Bath urban area will be required to issue and accept tickets valid on other operators’ services. At first, daily and weekly tickets at adult, student and child rates will be issued. Prices will be set by agreement between the operators. It is anticipated that the scheme will start in October 2009. The Order making the Scheme is shown in Appendix 2.

Bristol smartcard project – Bristol City Council will be piloting a smartcard scheme on Wessex Connect buses, using back-office equipment installed for the Vivaldi project and on-bus equipment already used on Ulink services.

Diamond Travelcard – The English national bus concession pass for persons aged 60 and over and those with qualifying disabilities (branded Diamond Travelcard in the West of England) is a smartcard and has the potential to be “read” by smart-enabled ticket machines in those areas where buses are so equipped.

Freedom Travelpass - A multi-operator bus and rail ticket covering three zones in the West of England that was launched in January 2008 by First Great Western as part of its rail franchise commitments. A map of the zones is shown in Appendix 3. The flexibility of the ticket is limited (for example, the only single zone ticket

available is that covering Bristol). More information is available at www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk

Major schemes – The implementation of Quality Partnership Schemes for the Greater Bristol Bus Network and Bath Transportation Package will provide an opportunity to require bus operators using the improved infrastructure to be required to accept integrated tickets as part of the specified standard of service.

PlusBus – A multi-operator bus and rail ticket that allows unlimited travel on participating bus operators' services in either the origin or destination town of a rail journey, as an add-on. Schemes operate in Bath, Bristol and Weston-super-Mare. More information is available at www.plusbus.info.

Ulink – Wessex Connect runs a smartcard ticketing scheme on its Ulink bus services to the University of the West of England. More information is available at www.uwe.ac.uk/hsv/transport/bus.shtml. The scheme uses back-office equipment at Bristol City Council that was installed as part of the Vivaldi project.

Youth concessionary scheme – South Gloucestershire Council has been consulting on a proposal for reduced bus fares for 14 – 19 year olds in full-time education. The concession would operate on local bus trips to, from and within South Gloucestershire. A pass is likely to be issued to prove eligibility and that may be smart-enabled.

Service X27 – South Gloucestershire Council and First have been trialling various promotional ticket offers on bus service X27 (Yate – Bristol). If successful, these may be rolled out to other bus service corridors.

Vivaldi – A smartcard project was trialled on Bristol's Park & Ride services a few years ago but was not opened up for public use owing to difficulties in making arrangements for reloading the cards with value and incompatibility with the ITSO specification.

Some current schemes elsewhere in England

E+ card – A multi-application smartcard issued by Bracknell Forest Council, which can be used to access a range of local authority services, such as libraries, leisure centres, for cashless school dinner payments and for concessionary bus travel.

NoW Card – A smart ticketing scheme operating on buses in Lancashire, Cumbria and neighbouring unitary authority areas, it allows concessionary travel using smart-enabled bus ticket machines.

Nottingham Citycard – A contact less smartcard which can be used to access a variety of services in the city. In addition to use in libraries and leisure centres, it can be loaded with day tickets for bus travel.

Oyster – A smartcard that has been in operation in London since 2003. Six million Oyster cards are in circulation and they are used for roughly 78% of all bus and Underground journeys. Oyster replaced a conventional Travelcard scheme that had been in place since 1983. However, bus operation in London is governed by

different legislation. Transport for London, the statutory body that franchises the London bus network sets fares and receives the revenue from ticket sales.

Emerging technologies

EMV – The name given to global technical standards for chip-based bank payment cards. EMV bank cards can be credit, debit or prepaid cards and are all smartcards because they include an electronic chip on which data is stored. A single card can have either contact or contact less technology or both. Payments below £10 can be made by tapping a contact less EMV card against a reader. Potentially, this could replace low-value cash transactions.

NFC Mobile Telephones – Near Field Communications (NFC) is a means of secure wireless communication across short distances that can be used to enable a mobile phone to emulate a smartcard. There have already been successful trials of loading ITSO products onto mobile phones.

Print at home tickets – These are tickets that can be purchased over the internet and printed by the passenger at home. The ticket is then verified by some form of identifier when presented for travel.

Mobile tickets and barcodes – These are tickets that can be sent to a mobile phone as a text message, usually after purchase on the internet, which are then presented for inspection at the time of travel. They are not smart tickets.

Other issues

8. Bus fares information is being loaded onto the Traveline dataset so that it can be provided as an additional facility to a timetable enquiry.
9. Bus operators are able to work together to set up voluntary multi-operator ticket schemes using a Block Exemption from the Competition Act 1998. However, in the West of England, there have been no moves to do so apart from an offer by First to Bath & North East Somerset Council to co-ordinate a voluntary scheme as an alternative to the statutory one. Under any ticket scheme (statutory or voluntary), the price is set by the bus operators. Inevitably, an operator with a dominant market share will have the major voice in such decisions. This is likely to disincentivise smaller operators from participation.
10. For bus operators, the benefits of smart and integrated ticketing are medium to long term ones. It may be difficult for them to construct a business case for investment in new ticketing technology or participation in ticketing schemes.
11. For Councils, the case for investment in smartcards may be easier to construct if a broad view is taken of the scope of services that could be included. However, there would be practical difficulties in administering a “citizen card,” particularly one covering more than one Council’s area.

Recommendations

- a) That the Joint Committee notes the contents of this Report;

- b) That the Joint Committee considers the DfT consultation on smart and integrated ticketing and agrees to respond sub-regionally;
- c) That the West of England Partnership continues to participate in the South West regional study into a possible regional smartcard scheme;
- d) That the Joint Committee seeks to ensure that Quality Partnership Schemes governing the major transport schemes in the West of England include integrated tickets as part of the specified standard of service.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Key Recommendations of West of England Smartcard Feasibility Report

Appendix 2: The Bath and North East Somerset Council Ticketing Scheme 2009

Appendix 3: Map of Freedom Travelpass zones

Background papers

Developing a strategy for smart and integrated ticketing (Department for Transport consultation paper, August 2009) -

www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/smartticketing

Building a society for all ages (Government strategy document, July 2009) -

www.hmg.gov.uk/buildingasocietyforallages.aspx

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Key Recommendations of West of England Smartcard Feasibility Report

1) Agree vision, principles, and appoint a champion

West of England authorities to obtain high level initial support for the scheme;

Identification of a respected and influential champion(s) within the sub-region for the scheme (Executive member(s), Director level appointee, business community representative);

West of England authorities facilitate cross sector agreement on the fundamental objectives of a smartcard scheme for the sub-region; and

Obtain and maintain high-ranking initial involvement from all stakeholders as early as possible to get joint sign up to initial process.

2) Develop and refine outline business case/ benefits and costs

West of England authorities identify and use the present experience and understanding of smartcards and ITSO within the public transport concessionary fare sections of the four authorities. This will enable all the scheme's potential benefits are understood and ultimately realised;

The formulation of a robust business case and business plan for a concessionary fare scheme to be fully implemented within the next two years and wider phased implementation within three years;

The four authorities (through a small research party that consists of a mixture of transport, financial and other sector officers) to identify the initial and wider qualitative and quantitative benefits and those stakeholders beneficiaries;

All opportunities for cross sector usage of smartcard to be considered by a working party with cross sector representatives from health and local government providing advisory input; and

Identify immediate value benefits and potential wider applications for public/private sector organisations to obtain sub regional support.

3) Secure funding sources

Formation of a high level joint working party to choose the most appropriate method of funding, scheme phased progression, and governance;

The identification and evaluation of funding opportunities / backers for a scheme;

West of England authorities to seek to secure resources to facilitate provision of Smartcard Project board.

4) Establish preferred governance arrangements

Governance arrangement for management and administration of scheme to be agreed to ensure that the scheme can be run effectively and if necessary independently of any one body;

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) concessionary fare scheme is used as a potential template where appropriate, and contact is made with WAG to further the understanding and appreciation of their scheme.

5) Define objectives and required system specification for phased approach

West of England authorities to set in motion the process to agree objectives, implementation period and delivery method of a smartcard scheme;

System procurement, including back office set up; and

Agree ITSO back office scheme provider to minimise teething problems and provide support for future scheme expansion.

6) Card issue and ongoing data management

Implementation of a pilot scheme using concessionary fares and younger person's card to ascertain potential problems. The pilot scheme should be based on cross border services with Wales;

Major branding and promotion of the product should be consistent, but low key until scheme is up and running – a communication strategy covering options for implementation publicity to be devised;

Full usage of data management arrangements to contribute to sustained improvement of scheme and encourage wider potential partner usage; and

Operating costs minimised by making full use of appropriate telephone and internet sales channels. Retail outlets such as 'Paypoint' to be considered as a potential sales channel.

The Bath and North East Somerset Council Ticketing Scheme 2009

Bath and North East Somerset Council, as the local transport authority, in exercise of its powers under Sections 135 to 138 of the Transport Act 2000, as amended, hereby makes the following Scheme:-

1. Operators of local services are hereby required to make and implement arrangements under which persons in the categories specified in article 2 may purchase, in a single transaction, multi-operator travel cards for the periods specified in article 3, entitling the holder to make multiple journeys on local services within the geographical area described in the Schedule to this Scheme (whether or not the local services are provided by the same operator).
2. The categories of persons are:-
 - a) all persons
 - b) adults
 - c) children under 16
 - d) students, including university students and pupils aged between 16 and 19, in full time education, at other educational establishments.
3. The periods are:-
 - a) one day
 - b) one week.
4. This Scheme shall not apply to:-
 - a) park and ride bus services, other than for journeys on these services, where the journey would not normally be charged at the standard park and ride fare
 - b) long distance coach services, even where these are registered as local services
 - c) tour bus services where the price charged for the service includes a payment for live or recorded commentary about the locality, being a service intended primarily for tourists
 - d) services operated for specific events
 - e) season tickets sold for a specific bus route.
5. This Scheme may be cited as the Bath and North East Somerset Council Ticketing Scheme 2009 and shall come into operation on 4 October 2009.

Given under the Common Seal of the Bath and North East Somerset Council on 4 July 2009

The Common Seal of the)
Bath and North East Somerset Council)
was hereunto affixed)
in the presence of:-)

Authorised Signatory

Schedule

Geographical area

The following wards and parishes in Bath and North East Somerset Council:

Abbey, Bathwick, Combe Down, Kingsmead, Bathampton, Lambridge, Lansdown, Lyncombe, Newbridge, Batheaston, Odd Down, Oldfield, Southdown, Twerton, Bathford, Walcot, Westmoreland, Weston, Widcombe, Newton St Loe;

And:

The area of the parish of South Stoke extending from the parish boundary with Combe Down ward along Midford Road to the bus stop outside nos. 173/175;

And:

The area of the parish of Monkton Combe extending from the parish boundary with Combe Down ward and covering the premises of Ralph Allen School.

