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Committee   Economic Wellbeing Committee
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Real Time Passenger Information System and Integrated Ticketing Project Updates

1.   Purpose

To provide the Committee with updates on the implementation of the Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) project and on progress with development of the integrated ticketing project.

2.   Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3.   Real time Information Project

3.1   Background

(Note - a presentation will be provided to the Committee at the meeting).

The contract for the design, supply, installation and five years' maintenance and support of the RTPI system for Metlink bus and rail services was signed in September 2009, with a total value of $9.7M. A pilot phase was successfully completed in mid-2010, and progress towards full implementation remains within budget and subject to only a minor delay in the supply of equipment.

The system will provide accurate arrival time predictions for bus and passenger rail services, on up to 250 display signs at major bus stops and at the majority of rail stations. Arrival time information will also be available via the Metlink website and journey planner, via the txtBUS and txtTRAIN services, and may be provided to third parties for agreed use in their own premises or websites.

The need for RTPI is consistently raised as a priority, including through Metlink satisfaction surveys. In addition to the user benefits to Metlink passengers, the system will provide enhanced management potential for the Metlink network as a whole, and for public transport operators. Real time data will in due course support accurate schedule refinement, service quality monitoring and service integration and planning.

3.2 Bus RTPI Roll-out Programme

The three major bus companies will go 'live' with RTPI in turn over a period of several months, starting with Go Wellington before moving on to Valley Flyer and then Mana Newlands services. The parallel installation programme for the street display signs will spread outwards from Wellington CBD.

Following a delivery delay of several weeks due to worldwide shortage of electronic components, RTPI equipment is currently being installed in Go Wellington buses, and preparatory works for the first display signs are complete. Final system training is scheduled for late February 2011, and commissioning of the first live display signs at Lambton interchange is expected at the end of March. Real-time arrival information will be progressively introduced into Metlink information services from the same time.

Site assessments and approvals for the installation of street display signs are complete in the Wellington City and Hutt areas, and are going ahead in Porirua and Kapiti. Designs for civil and electrical works for each site are in progress.

The roll-out programme is expected to be complete in just under 12 months.

3.3 Rail RTPI

A joint project with KiwiRail is in progress. This will address the train equipment and operational systems developments necessary to support the RTPI customer service requirements of KiwiRail's Passenger Group, and of Greater Wellington. This project is now receiving KiwiRail priority.

RTPI for rail is scheduled to follow implementation on the bus network, and will also provide passengers with more reliable interchanges with bus services.

3.4 Next Steps

Immediate next steps are concerned with maintaining progress with the implementation schedules for on-bus equipment and display sign installation, and with joint development of the rail RTPI project.

4. Integrated Ticketing Project

4.1 Background

In 2009 the scope of Greater Wellington's integrated ticketing project was re-confirmed as "rail only, with capability for extension to bus at a later stage".

4.2 National context

The development direction for Greater Wellington's project remains heavily influenced by the implications for regional schemes in the emerging national approach to integrated ticketing, led by NZ Transport Agency (NZTA). This approach features access to a centralised management system, and includes the development of national standards for integrated ticketing (known as NITIS). However, it does not extend to plans for a national ticketing scheme (i.e. the ability to use the same transit card in more than one region).

Greater Wellington is actively involved in the national standards development process through advisory and technical inputs, ensuring that options for the regional development of schemes are retained as widely and as flexibly as possible.

A preliminary version of the NITIS standard will be used for a pilot phase for the Auckland Integrated Fares System (AIFS), from July 2011. In future, as well as ensuring a contestable basis between the vendors of compliant electronic ticketing equipment in New Zealand, NITIS will govern interaction with the centralised management system by regional integrated ticketing schemes, or by commercial electronic ticketing systems.

There is therefore an emerging framework within which Greater Wellington's confirmed project scope and the necessary interoperability potential may be developed. There is also a reduction in exposure to risk as a consequence of trailing AIFS in the process.

4.3 Snapper electronic ticketing on NZ Bus services

The growth potential of the existing 'Snapper' electronic ticketing system, deployed on NZ Bus services in Wellington and widely used by Metlink passengers, will be influenced by whether and how soon the system could be developed to comply with the NITIS standard. In isolation the system could exist indefinitely without change, but for it to expand to other bus operators under any other than a purely commercial arrangement - or for it to become interoperable with, for example, a Wellington rail ticketing solution provided by a different vendor - standards compliance will be a critical requirement.

Future procurement in association with Greater Wellington's project will clearly be by competitive tender. In addition to the requirement for interoperability between public transport operators and modes, it is expected that NITIS compliance will be a stipulation of NZTA capital funding. The critical compliance requirement is therefore the same for any prospective vendor.

4.4 Next steps

Planned Greater Wellington activity includes refreshment of some of the investigative work that has previously been carried out on the rail aspects of integrated ticketing in Wellington. This will take place with input from NZTA and its advisors, and will inform the scope of Greater Wellington's project development. Principles for the basis of fares structure review (note, not fare levels) with specific reference to integrated journeys, are also under consideration.

5. Communication

A preliminary communications plan for the live introduction and progressive roll-out of RTPI will be developed in further detail as implementation timescales are defined.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. ***Receives*** *the report.*

2. ***Notes*** *the content of the report.*

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