

## Sheffield Bus Partnership – Strategic Marketing Plan

Author	Date	Version	Comment
Richard Spooner	17 May 2012	0.1 draft	Creation/for comment
Kayleigh Hayes	22 June 2012	0.2 draft	Comments
PTE	25-26 June 2012	0.3 -0.5 draft	Comments
PTE	9 July 2012	0.7 FINAL	Sign off

### 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. This document outlines the Strategic Marketing Plan principles to support the launch of the Sheffield Area VPA, for the benefit and use of all parties within the Sheffield Bus Partnership (SBP) – South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE), Sheffield City Council (SCC), First, Stagecoach in Sheffield, and all other bus operators within the city, as well as Stagecoach Supertram.
- 1.2. The implementation of a Sheffield Area VPA follows the launch of the Optio Orange and Red schemes in Sheffield during 2011, which have both delivered successful patronage increases in July and October 2011 respectively, and supported the long-term vision of improving bus services across the region.
- 1.3. The Plan will support scheme implementation on 28 October 2012, through agreement of all parties in the WP4 working group, and will be used to form the basis of tactical marketing campaigns over a 5 year period.
- 1.4. A range of factors may influence the 5 year Strategic Marketing Plan. Where possible, marketing activity will account for these, but the level of impact remains unknown at this stage. These include:
  - 1.4.1.1. the delivery of the Sheffield Highway Maintenance Private Finance Initiative (PFI) from August 2012 – this is a 5-7 year project to improve the road systems in Sheffield and related infrastructure, and will directly affect the public transport network whilst the improvements are being rolled out.
  - 1.4.1.2. the launch of Smartcard technology across the region, which may or may not be directly interlinked with this project.
  - 1.4.1.3. “Bus Boost” is an integral part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid, which is a strategic programme of activities running in South Yorkshire through to 2015. The Better Bus Area Fund will also be delivered in 2013/14, and will dovetail with the Smartcard rollout over the prevailing years.
- 1.5. This Plan is to be implemented alongside the Information Products Strategy and Customer Service Strategy to ensure consistency, and capitalise on cross-functional and cross-organisational synergies and requirements.

### 2. Interdependencies

- 2.1. Effective implementation of this Plan relies upon timely and accurate information from other Work Packages within the Sheffield Area VPA –

specifically from WP1 Networks and WP3 Ticketing & Fares, being provided on an ongoing basis to allow any Marketing changes to be properly proposed and considered

- 2.2. Clarity and communication of the decisions made within all of the other Work Packages in the Sheffield Area VPA is essential to all messages communicated in the customer proposition.
- 2.3. Interdependency with Travelmaster – Citywide communication plans/branding/messages communication and promotion of ticketing aspects of the project including the price reduction to existing Citywide ticket and new product extensions will be dependent upon the marketing objectives and communication plans of the Travelmaster Panel. These messages and branding will be incorporated into the overall SBP communications.

### 3. Overall Aims

The overall aims of the Strategic Marketing Plan are:

- To ensure that existing transport users are prioritised when making amendments to any service, route or ticketing option within the Sheffield Area VPA.
- To maximise a range of communication channels across all parties to notify the public of any changes, as per an plan agreed by all parties.
- To segment new or lapsed customers to determine the key customer groups to target with specific tactical or behavioural change initiatives during the lifetime of the Sheffield Area VPA.
- To commit each party on an annual basis to carry out a number of joint marketing activities that will support and drive forward the SBP and its specific objectives.
- To discuss and agree individual marketing campaigns at quarterly reviews, to ensure that sufficient resources and funding can be made available where appropriate to support the Sheffield Area VPA in any one period.

Both the Project and Marketing Campaign Objectives have been provided in this Plan to ensure alignment and a common thread between them.

#### 3.1. Project Objectives

- 3.1.1. Achieve 3% passenger growth throughout Sheffield in year 1 of the Sheffield Area VPA.
- 3.1.2. Achieve a further 2% annual passenger growth throughout Sheffield in years 2 to 5 of the Sheffield Area VPA.
- 3.1.3. To provide a customer proposition that provides better service through network design and changes, frequency, ticketing, vehicle and customer service standards etc., that satisfies the aspiration of providing quality bus transport for those with or without access to a car.

- 3.1.4. To actively involve and maximise stakeholder engagement to drive improvements, regular communications and any specific needs arising at the time of changes.
- 3.1.5. To achieve more positive than negative media coverage, both public and trade, on an ongoing basis.

### **3.2. Marketing Campaign Objectives**

- 3.2.1. Deliver increased patronage in line with Project Objective 3.1.1, contributing 0.25% growth in year 1, and 0.5% annual growth in future years against these targets
- 3.2.2. (source of project and marketing patronage targets: DY presentation, November 2011)
- 3.2.3. To provide information and communication about the Sheffield network and ticketing offer outlined by the Sheffield Area VPA to existing, lapsed and non-bus users
- 3.2.4. To provide information and communication about the Sheffield Area VPA, its values and function to existing, lapsed and non-bus users.

## **4. Tactics and Approach**

- 4.1. Specific pre-launch, launch and post-launch marketing and communications campaigns will be devised using this Plan as a basis. Campaigns will be created in line with the objectives detailed above.
  - 4.1.1. Campaigns will differ depending upon population concentration and the level of changes to the geographical area.
  - 4.1.2. Whilst retaining a common theme, the creative approach will vary across tactics i.e. between marketing channels and information products.
- 4.2. Provisions for online information will be provided via the Travel South Yorkshire website. Individual operators also commit to providing promotional space on board buses.
- 4.3. In Year 1, there are four phases of communication to consider when developing the tactical marketing campaigns:
  - 4.3.1. 'Corporate' launch – media/stakeholder engagement
  - 4.3.2. Information provision – alignment with Information Products Strategy and "Business As Usual" service change activities for October 2012
  - 4.3.3. Marketing and communication of the new network and ticketing – to existing bus users in October 2012
  - 4.3.4. Marketing and communication of the new network and ticketing proposition, targeting new (lapsed/non) users once the new network and ticketing structure is established. Proposed as of mid November 2012.

- 4.3.5. Future years' plans will be developed in partnership with all concerned on an annual basis.
- 4.4. Key messages – literature content and design will be developed and approved in conjunction with all parties, referencing any lessons learned from previous campaigns. This includes copy checking of materials by the Advertising Standards Authority to ensure clarity of messaging and avoidance of potential customer complaints
- 4.5. Communication of all ticketing options, including the CityWide product range, Optio Orange and Optio Red. At the time of writing, it is intended that information about all available tickets throughout Sheffield will be provided as part of the communications programme, in addition to the TravelMaster/ Sheffield Area VPA tickets. The tactical marketing plans will address how this is positioned to ensure clarity, both in terms of messaging and dissemination, and referencing prices where appropriate.
- 4.6. Tactical plans will work back from key dates such as timetable registrations or any media 'in-charge' dates, as listed in the overall WP4 project plan, to ensure that all required timescales and milestones are adhered to.
- 4.7. Information gathered from tactical campaigns and data sharing to build databases of bus users.
- 5. Communication Tactical Aims - segmented by communication phases & deliverables**
- 5.1 Consultation Phase (June-July 2012)**
- 5.1.1 Communicating network and ticketing changes to current, lapsed and new bus users
- 5.1.2 Encouraging and facilitating feedback from stakeholders and customers through website, printed literature and Traveline
- 5.1.3 Collating feedback from stakeholders and customers and feeding this information back to relevant Work Packages within the Sheffield Area VPA
- 5.2 Pre-launch – until October 2012**
- 5.2.1 Communicating and encouraging acceptance of network changes throughout various stakeholder groups
- 5.2.2 Promotion of the Sheffield Area VPA, aims and public benefit to stakeholders and the public
- 5.3 Post launch – November 2012 until the end of year 1.**
- 5.3.1 Communication and promotion of any further changes to the network after the consultation period – We Listened to Your Feedback etc.
- 5.3.2 Promotion of positive improvements – people who have benefited from the changes – PR etc

5.3.3 Identify areas of potential passenger growth and target localised communication/promotion – e.g. direct mail, email depending on household volumes

5.3.4 Communication of prices increases on Citywide in May 2013

5.3.5 Communication and integration of PFI improvements

#### **5.4 Year 2**

5.4.1 Communication and promotion of the Sheffield Area VPA 1 year on

5.4.2 Positive reinforcement of changes, communication on passenger growth

5.4.3 We Are Still Listening– number of network changes reduced but alterations to the network where customers feed back to make improvements

5.4.4 Investment in vehicles/routes & infrastructure

5.5.5 Communication and integration of PFI improvements

5.4.6 Ongoing communication of the benefits of CityWide products

5.4.7 Smartcard options/online ticketing – ease of use/convenience

#### **5.5 Year 3 – 5**

5.5.1 Investment in vehicles/routes & infrastructure

5.5.2 Continued communication of PFI improvements

5.5.3 Ongoing communication of benefits of CityWide products

5.5.4 Smartcard options/online ticketing – ease of use/convenience

5.5.5 Any future project extensions/benefits

### **6. Communication Channels**

**6.1** Each strategic and tactical campaign implemented by the Bus Partnership will require a variety of communication channels to be employed by all parties. These could include, but are not limited to:

- On bus communication through parties' vehicles
- In Interchanges throughout Sheffield
- Websites of all parties
- On-street channels

**6.2** External communication and publicity are equally important elements of the communication channel mix, and again will be determined by each individual activity or campaign, but could include, but are not limited to any of the following:

- Outdoor advertising targeting bus users, lapsed and non users through bus externals, 48 sheets, 6 sheets
- External events – city centre, shopping centres, on bus, community events
- Advertising in the local press
- Website communication and advertising

**6.3** Different parties will lead and coordinate elements of the supplementary delivery plan, dependent upon experience and Optio lessons learned. These are suggested as the following:

Information Products - SYPTE  
 Marketing - Stagecoach  
 E Marketing (direct) - First  
 E-Marketing (macro) - SYPTE  
 Personal Selling - SYPTE  
 External Relations - SYPTE  
 Corporate Media Relations - SYPTE  
 Campaign PR - SCCI  
 Internal Communications – First  
 Behavioural Change Initiative/Greener Journeys – SYPTE & First

Further information on each of these elements can be viewed within the supplementary delivery plan.

## **7. Budget**

The total budget for delivery of this Strategic Marketing Plan is to be confirmed, following discussion and agreement between all parties. The budget is dependent upon the scale of the activities planned throughout the 5 year timeframe, and both product and communications plans agreed by the Travelmaster Panel in relation to Citywide products.

A supplementary delivery plan provides further detail as to planned tactical marketing activity.

All parties are in agreement that the minimum spend for Sheffield is £100,000 – an investment of £25,000 per party, which applies up to/and inclusive of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013. Any further marketing and communications expenditure will be fully justified through appropriate documentation to Operations Group, for agreement by all parties. Future budgets and activity will be determined by the success or otherwise of initiatives implemented during the period, and as dictated by individual party budgeting cycles.

The budget assigned to the Sheffield Area VPA is to be utilised to add value to existing business as usual commitments of all parties, and where it has been identified that specific ‘new’ products are required in order to support the overall objectives. The budget will also cover the development of the campaign creative that will be used to promote the scheme and ticketing options. The members of WP4 are clear that additional support is necessary to communicate service changes to those areas most affected by the changes, and that strategically there are a number of routes where operators are combining their network that will need specific marketing activity to drive and improve overall bus patronage.

At the stage of presenting this Plan proposal (11<sup>th</sup> July 2012) full costings and availability of the specific channels has yet to be fully determined and procured and so a full breakdown of how the budget is to be used will be able to be provided at a later stage.

This budget does not include any costs for evaluation, and it is expected that this will be incorporated into the WP5 – Intelligence actions.

## **8. Measurement and Evaluation**

Measurement and evaluation metrics for each tactical marketing communications campaign are to be based upon the objectives set in section 2. These are likely to include:

- Patronage trends
- Website visits
- Clickthroughs and visitor rates from targeted enewsletters
- Any direct measurements from media activities
- Feedback from stakeholders.

## **9. Summary and Conclusion**

**9.1** All parties share equally in the responsibility for accuracy, timeliness and development of marketing campaigns as per the agreed approach.

**9.2** All parties must agree to specific campaign objectives and the timely provision of any associated performance monitoring data or profiling information that will enable a full and accurate evaluation to be compiled

**9.3** A 'lessons learned' and set of recommendations to be produced as a result.

**9.4** All parties within Work Package 4 believe that the activities prescribed in this document and the individual marketing campaign delivery plans and budgets will help contribute towards achieving the growth targets specified in the Objectives of this plan.