

Date: 13 September 2023

Item: Initiative to Promote Women in the Bus and Coach Industry Update

This paper will be considered in public.

1 Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the [Women in Bus and Coach](#) initiative being led by our Bus Operations directorate. The aim of the group is to encourage more women into the bus and coach industry and provide support in line with similar groups such as Women in Transport, Women in Rail and Women in Maritime.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Panel is asked to note the paper.**

3 Background

- 3.1 We want to encourage and support more women to work in the bus industry at every level, from drivers and mechanics to engineers and managers. Unlike in UK rail and aviation, there was not previously a comparable national cross-industry network for supporting and promoting women's participation in the bus and coach industry.
- 3.2 The current workforce of the bus industry does not reflect the community it serves. Data shows that in 2020/21 only around 16 per cent of bus and coach drivers were female, and across a sample of four London bus operators in 2020, around 10 per cent of the total staff were female. In comparison, more than half of bus passengers in London are female. Having a workforce that better represents passengers can help identify and address barriers to an inclusive bus service.
- 3.3 Building upon our commitments in the Bus Action Plan - including our new Bus Safety Strategy - attracting more women into the bus industry will also help to address the severe workforce shortage, improving the quality of service to customers. It will also ease the pressure on frontline staff, contributing to improved health and wellbeing.
- 3.4 The lack of women working in the industry can be considered a barrier itself, contributing to a perception that it is not a valid career choice for women. We must challenge and change this perception.

4 Women in Bus and Coach

- 4.1 We commissioned a scoping study in 2022 to explore the current challenges facing the bus and coach industry, the challenges facing women who work in the industry, the wider benefits of improving the gender balance of the workforce, and best practice in promoting this. The outcome of this research and detailed discussions with women drawn from across the bus and coach industries and wider transport industry was that positive action was not only needed but would be enthusiastically welcomed. This document was included in our first briefing.
- 4.2 Our Bus Operations directorate is helping to establish an independent, free-to access [‘Women in Bus and Coach’](#) network to help encourage and support more women to work in the bus industry at every level, focused on making changes from the ground up. Looking at change such as cab design, uniforms and rostering.
- 4.3 A Steering Group, chaired by Louise Cheeseman, Director of Bus, has been established, drawing on high-level expertise from across the bus and coach industries nationally. We are pleased to have the support of senior figures including our Sponsor, Lord Peter Hendy CBE.
- 4.4 A London regional launch and networking event took place on 28 June 2023. At this event people from across the bus and coach industry, from bus operator MDs to frontline staff came together to discuss change. Then took action by making commitments to act, for example providing free period products in all female bathrooms. Ninety commitments were made, of which over 40 directly related to London. Commitments from senior attendees are attached in Appendix 1.. All London MDs and Louise Cheeseman signed our London charter, attached in Appendix 2. To further discussions on the day, we unveiled our video on [Women in the front line](#), in which the women featured who work in the industry outlined some important changes that are needed.
- 4.5 A London Regional working group has been established following the launch event. This group will enable us to focus on ensuring these 40 commitments are carried out, while running other programmes and projects to make the industry better for our colleagues.
- 4.6 Four other groups are focussing on barriers to entry (research), communications and engagement, sponsorship (to make the organisation self-funded) and the national charter.
- 4.7 The London Regional launch will be followed by a national summit on 8 November 2023 in Birmingham, where we will launch our national charter, introduce the group to further national industry colleagues and look to obtain additional commitments to drive our industry forward.
- 4.8 In addition, there will be a Parliamentary launch on 20 November 2023. Senior dignitaries, MPs and industry experts will be in attendance. A Women in Bus and Coach wrapped bus will also be at the event. This will be a great

opportunity to gain support for the initiative and what we hope to achieve. A working group is being established in the lead-up to this event.

5 Summary

- 5.1 [‘Women in Bus and Coach’](#) has moved forward in strides in the last few months, and will continue to do so in our lead up to the National Summit and Parliamentary launch in November.
- 5.2 There are many recruitment and retention challenges facing the bus and coach industry in the UK, including London. TfL is taking positive steps to help overcome these challenges and to eliminate barriers facing women joining and remaining in the industry.
- 5.3 We are steadily becoming the industry group we want to be, supporting change and leading conversations on core issues. These include cab design, uniforms and rostering.
- 5.4 We are focused on delivering our Bus Action Plan and this initiative will help us to achieve a workforce that better represents passengers and that can help identify and address barriers to achieving an inclusive bus service.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 - London Regional launch: Senior staff Commitments

Appendix 2 - Women in Bus and Coach: London Charter (2023)

Appendix 3 – Photographs from the London Regional Launch

List of Background Papers:

None

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