

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

SURFACE TRANSPORT PANEL

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON NEW BUS FOR LONDON

DATE: 17 FEBRUARY 2011

1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED

1.1 This paper updates the Panel on the New Bus for London (NBfL) project.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The contract for the NBfL was awarded to Wrightbus of Northern Ireland in January 2010 for the design and development of a mock up, prototypes and the delivery of the first five production vehicles by March 2012. Heatherwick Studio was appointed as design partner.

3 PROGRESS UPDATE

- 3.1 As of the end of December 2010, Wrightbus and Heatherwick had completed the majority of the detailed concept and engineering design. A full scale mock up was delivered to the London Transport Museum Acton Depot in November 2010 and has been used for stakeholder engagement. Work continues on the build phase of the engineering test vehicle and the chassis for the prototype vehicle.
- 3.2 A wide range of stakeholders across London were invited to visit the mock up including Assembly Members, senior transport officers and cabinet members of all the London boroughs, representatives of 23 pan-London mobility groups, and representatives of buggy and pram users. Also consulted were bus operating companies, drivers and staff representatives, the Department for Transport and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. A separate customer research campaign has also been conducted, which involved members of the public viewing the mock up and completing a detailed questionnaire.
- 3.3 The overall feedback from both stakeholder and passenger research groups on the design of both interior and exterior features have been overwhelmingly positive, with over 90 per cent in favour.
- 3.4 Areas highlighted for improvement included the layout of the wheelchair bay and step heights to the raised seating area. A new wheelchair bay layout was built into the mock up in order to be re-tested with key stakeholders at the end of January 2010. The new bay and the step heights, as well as a number of other issues noted by stakeholders, will be addressed as part of the detailed design process. These issues include the location and additional provision of

hand poles.

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The results of the stakeholder and passenger research feedback will be reviewed in detail and will be fed back into the design process.
- 4.2 The engineering test vehicle will be completed in March 2011 and undergo extensive engine systems and durability testing at a vehicle proving ground. The testing will last for eight months.
- 4.3 The prototype vehicle will continue in build phase and be delivered in the autumn of 2011. This vehicle will be certified and used for operational and driver familiarisation before the first five production vehicles enter service in early 2012.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Panel is asked to NOTE the paper.

6 CONTACT

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