



CABINET – 26 OCTOBER 2021

NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on work associated with the implementation of 'Bus Back Better' the National Bus Strategy, setting out the financial implications and seeking approval for the Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan, which will inform the proposals for an associated Enhanced Partnership plan and scheme in line with the Department for Transport's (DfT) requirements and timescales as specified in the NBS and associated guidance (the guidance).

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) The initial financial implications and ongoing funding requirements arising from implementing the National Bus Service (NBS) and associated Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), including the appointment of an Enhanced Partnership Scheme Manager and support team, as set out in paragraph 14 of the report, be noted;
 - b) The outcomes of the public engagement survey undertaken by the Authority in respect of the NBS, as attached at Appendix A and summarised in paragraphs 36 to 47 of the report, be noted;
 - c) The draft Leicestershire BSIP, as attached at Appendix B and summarised in paragraphs 53 to 59 of the report, be approved and that it be noted that the Director has delegated powers to make any necessary amendments unless such amendments represent a material change in policy in which case a report on such changes will be submitted to the Cabinet;
 - d) The County Council's longer-term BSIP funding requirement, as set out in the template attached at Appendix C and summarised in paragraphs 60 to 65 of the report be noted and the Director of Environment and Transport be authorised to submit the template to the Department for Transport by no later than 31 October 2021;

- e) The work undertaken to date to develop the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme (EPS) for Leicestershire, as set out in paragraphs 48 to 52 of the report, be noted;
- f) The requirement to issue a statutory notice of the EPS to Bus Operators in November, providing them with a 28-day period for objection, be noted;
- g) Subject to no objections being received during this period, the undertaking of a public consultation on the EPS, be approved;
- h) That the current Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy be reviewed and amended to take account of the formal establishment of the EPS and the delivery of the BSIP;
- i) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet in March 2022 presenting the outcomes of the consultation, progress with implementation of the NBS and the associated formalisation of an Enhanced Partnership.

Reason for Recommendations

3. To comply with the requirements of the NBS and the guidance, which requires the County Council to publish its BSIP by the end of October 2021. Compliance with the NBS and the guidance will ensure the Authority is still able to access DfT bus recovery funding, be eligible for the NBS implementation support funding and also be eligible to access a further share of the £3bn funding that the Government is making available to fund delivery of the NBS.
4. Engagement with stakeholders is an important part of the process for developing an approach to the delivery of bus services. It helps to ensure that the Authority takes account of customer and user expectations and delivers the most appropriate service levels, consistent with the budget available.
5. As a new approach for the delivery of improvements to bus services, flexibility is required to enable the Authority to be 'fleet of foot' in evolving the BSIP in light of experience with its implementation, whilst still ensuring appropriate levels of oversight and governance are in place. The delegations in place to the Director regarding the future review and update of the BSIP will achieve this.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. Further to the publication of the Statutory Notice in June 2021, which set out the Authority's decision to establish an EPS to improve bus services in Leicestershire, work will continue to develop the EPS for implementation by the Government's deadline of end March 2022.
7. A report on the BSIP and EPS will be considered by the Highways, Transport and Flooding Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November.
8. It is currently anticipated that a further report on progress with implementation of the NBS and the associated formalisation of an Enhanced Partnership will be considered by the Cabinet in March 2022.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. In October 2018 the Cabinet approved the Authority's Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy.
10. In May 2019, the County Council declared a Climate Emergency. The updated 2020 Environment Strategy sets out how the Council will reduce the environmental impacts of travel and transport. Providing frequent, high quality passenger transport services is a key element in delivering the Climate Change commitment and the Environment Strategy.
11. In November 2020 the Cabinet approved the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities document (2020-2050), which highlights where Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council will work together to deliver common transport aims and objectives. Its principle aims including:
 - support the transition to a low carbon and circular economy;
 - adapting to climate change;
 - improve connectivity;
 - support and drive the economy to unlock growth;
 - support the efficient movement of both people and goods around and through the County.
12. In June 2021 the Cabinet approved the establishment of an EPS and publication of a Statutory Notice to that effect in order to comply with the requirements of the NBS and the guidance. As requested by the Cabinet, this further report sets out proposals for the EPS and BSIP.

Resource Implications

13. Since the report to the Cabinet in June 2021, the Authority has received a further payment of £297,000 from the DfT to support initial implementation of the NBS (which combined with the pre-June payment of £100,000 gives a total received to date of £397,000). Presently, the Authority continues to use these funds to help to pay for consultancy support commissioned to assist with the development of the EPS and BSIP.
14. The report to the Cabinet in June 2021 noted that the Authority was not resourced to deliver the NBS. Having since undertaken a further assessment of resourcing requirements, an initial need is to appoint an EPS Manager and support team to be in place by the time that the EPS is expected to be implemented at the end of March 2022. This will be an ongoing 'base' requirement to ensure the Authority's effective participation in the EPS. The estimated annual total (revenue) cost (based on current pay rates) is circa £230,000; funding for this forms part of the Authority's BSIP Funding Requirements submission to DfT (detailed in Part B of the report). In the meantime, should this additional resource need funding for a balance of the current financial year (bearing in mind likely recruitment process timeframes and notice periods), the intention is that this will be paid for from the DfT monies already received.

15. Over the longer-term, it is presently estimated that the costs of implementing a Leicestershire EPS and BSIP are in the order of £58m over the next three years (i.e. 2022/3 to 2024/5) and of the order of £173m over a ten-year period (the assumed life of the BSIP). The matter of longer-term funding is dealt with in more detail in Part B of this report, but in effect the Authority is once again reliant on having to 'bid for funding from Government in order to deliver its BSIP.
16. At this point, however, it bears repeating the content of the June Cabinet report, which noted that however ambitious the Authority (and bus operators) might want to be in improving bus services to meet the needs and wants of the residents and businesses of Leicestershire, the costs of delivering on those ambitions will not be affordable to the Authority in either revenue or capital terms without receipt of additional funding. Thus, accordingly, the Authority continues to expect the Government to provide:
 - consistent and sustained *revenue* funding for the resources that it currently does not have (and the DfT acknowledge many other Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) do not have) to enable the implementation of, ongoing operation of and monitoring and review of the EPS and BSIP;
 - consistent and sustained *revenue* funding to enable it, if and as required, to continue to provide any financial support for bus services; and
 - the levels of *capital* funding required to deliver on the Authority's ambitions.
17. As set out in Part B, there are some significant uncertainties regarding the further share that the Authority might receive of the already announced £3bn NBS funding, in any event, this only covers the lifetime of the current Parliament (i.e. until 2024/2025 if this Parliament runs to its full term) and the level of funding available beyond 2025 is subject to the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review.
18. Notwithstanding such uncertainties and the immediate and longer-term financial implications arising from seeking to deliver on the NBS, there are likely to be equally significant consequences arising from any failure to do so. The Government continues to make clear that ongoing access to passenger transport funding (both 'temporary' pandemic related and 'permanent' NBS related) remains contingent on compliance with the requirements of the NBS and the guidance, including the specified delivery timetable. In addition, there is an inference from the guidance that this might not just be in respect of bus related funding, but in respect of wider highways and transport funding.
19. It should also be noted that separately, costs are still likely to fall to the Authority where a service ceases to operate on a commercial basis and it is required to fund a replacement in accordance with the Authority's adopted Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy.
20. BSIP funding is intended to provide transformational investment to support the bus sector over the life of the current Parliament and in the long term. In the shorter term, it is expected that the Authority will continue to receive existing

bus funding such as the LTA element of the Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) and the Revenue Support Grant.

21. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

This report has been circulated to all Members of the County Council

Officers to Contact

Ann Carruthers
Director, Environment and Transport
Tel: (0116) 305 7000
Email: Ann.Carruthers@leics.gov.uk

Janna Walker
Acting Assistant Director, Development and Growth
Tel: (0116) 305 0785
Email: janna.walker@leics.gov.uk

PART B

Background

National Bus Strategy (NBS)

22. As explained in the report to the Cabinet in June 2021, the National Bus Strategy (NBS) 'Bus Back Better' was published in March 2021, marking another radical change in Government transport policy.
23. The NBS sets out an ambitious vision to dramatically improve bus services in England outside of London through greater local leadership, to reverse the recent shift in journeys away from public transport as a result of the pandemic and encourage passengers back to buses. Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and local bus operators must work at pace with local communities to plan and deliver a fully integrated service with simple, multi-modal tickets, more bus priority measures, the same high quality information for all passengers in more places, and better turn-up-and-go frequencies that keep running into the evenings and at weekends.
24. The NBS explains that there can be no return to a situation where bus services are planned on a purely commercial basis with little or no engagement with, or support from, Local Transport Authorities.
25. The Government has previously committed £3bn of new funding to support delivery of the NBS, some of which has already been paid to LTAs to assist with work to implement the NBS (i.e. the £397,000 of funding already received by the Authority). LTA's access to a further share of this funding is contingent, inter-alia, on compliance with the DfT's timeframe requirements as set out in paragraph 28, with the amount potentially available to each LTA to be dependent on the DfT's assessment of the scale of ambition of an LTA's BSIP.

Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP)

26. The Government describes BSIPs as being how LTAs, working closely with their local bus operators and local communities, set out a vision for delivering the step-change in bus services that is required by the NBS.
27. The Government expects BSIPs to be comprehensive, living documents that will evolve over time. All relevant LTAs are required to prepare a BSIP.

DfT requirements and timeframes for implementing the NBS

28. The guidance is very prescriptive in placing significant requirements on LTAs in very short timeframes.
 - **Step 1 - by the end of June 2021:** LTAs to decide which statutory path to follow for improving bus services – Cabinet approved an EPS in June 2021 and the required Statutory Notice was published to that effect.
 - **Step 2 – by the end of October 2021:** Publish a BSIP for its area.

- **Step 3 – by the end of March 2022:** Have the EPS in place.

NBS Engagement Survey

29. Engagement with stakeholders is an important part of the process for developing a new approach to the delivery of bus services. It helps to ensure that the Authority takes account of customer and user expectations and delivers the most appropriate service levels, consistent with the budget available.
30. The guidance also makes clear that BSIPs should be developed taking into account the views of service users.

Overview

31. To inform work on the EPS and development of a BSIP a public engagement survey was undertaken between 15 June and 30 July 2021.
32. The survey was undertaken primarily as an online survey. However, people were also offered the option of completing and returning a paper copy of the questionnaire. The survey was widely publicised through a marketing and communications campaign.
33. The main purpose of the survey was to find out what local people think would improve local bus services and what would make them use local buses more. This included engaging with people who already use buses and with those who currently do not. The survey also invited opinions from representatives of public, private, and voluntary organisations who have an interest in making Leicestershire's bus services work better.
34. Within the survey, questions were asked about local bus services as well as buses that operate on a regular timetable, which included 'demand responsive transport' (or DRT). Dedicated school bus services were excluded from the scope of the survey. The survey consisted primarily of 'closed' questions with the opportunity for respondents to express their more detailed thoughts freely, with response to an 'open' question.
35. Whilst a detailed report on the survey findings is included at Appendix A, the following sections summarise some of its key findings.

Respondent characteristics

36. A total of 1,483 responses were received, with 1,428 online responses and 55 paper responses. The vast majority (92%) of respondents were residents of Leicestershire, with a marked skew towards white (93%), females (68%) and relatively older age groups (with 42% of respondents being aged 55 or older and only 5% under 25 years of age).
37. 1,385 respondents answered the survey question about concessionary passholder status. 64% of respondents were not concessionary passholders, while 36% held a concessionary pass.

Pre-Covid-19 frequency of bus use and journey purpose

38. The survey data has been consolidated into two main categories - 'regular bus users' (those who use bus once a month or more) and 'infrequent or non-bus users' (less than once per month or never). Of the 1,398 respondents that answered in this regard, 63% were regular users and 37% were infrequent/non-users.
39. Excluding respondents that reported they 'never' use local buses within Leicestershire, a total of 1,324 respondents indicated at least one trip purpose. The majority of respondents used the bus for shopping (60%), closely followed by social reasons (58%). Just less than one in four respondents (23%) used the bus to travel to and from work.

Expected frequency of use 'post-pandemic'

40. Respondents were asked how they expected their use of local bus services to change, if at all, following the Covid-19 pandemic (compared to how they used to travel prior to the pandemic). A total of 1,394 provided a response, with over half (54%) expecting their bus usage to remain the same. Just over one in five people (22%) expected to increase their bus usage following the pandemic, while 12% expected their bus usage to decrease. 12% of respondents didn't know how their usage might change.

Measures to increase bus usage

41. A key part of the survey from a BSIP perspective explored what measures would encourage people to use buses more. Individual survey respondents were asked to consider the extent to which 21 different measures would make them personally use local buses in Leicestershire more. Similarly, people responding from organisations were asked their views on which measures would make people whose views they represent use buses more. For each measure, respondents rated the extent to which it would increase their bus use, ranging from 'a great deal', to 'to some extent', to 'not very much' to 'not at all' and finally 'don't know'.
42. The top ten measures that responding residents and visitors said would increase their bus use a great deal, were:
 - More frequent services (63%)
 - Easier access to bus service information (54%)
 - More comprehensive services (local buses near you serving more destinations) (50%)
 - Better bus stops or shelters (50%)
 - Earlier and later services (49%)
 - Lower fares (49%)
 - Wider availability of multi-operator tickets (45%)
 - More reliable journey times (44%)
 - Contactless fare payment on buses (44%)

- Better bus service and rail service connections (37%)
43. Regular users and infrequent/non-users both consider that the measure most likely to increase their use of buses in Leicestershire is a more frequent service. In addition, easier access to bus service information and a more comprehensive service (serving more destinations) were also common considerations likely to increase bus usage.
 44. There are, however, some notable differences in the perceived effect of several measures between regular users and infrequent/non-users. The capability for contactless fare payment was considered more effective at encouraging increased bus use for infrequent/non-users than for regular users. Conversely, whilst 55% of regular bus users felt that improved bus stops or shelters would encourage increased bus use 'a great deal', only 42% of infrequent/non-users felt the same.
 45. There are also variations of response by district of residence. For example, a more frequent service was considered as being one of the most effective measures (where highest proportions of the response 'a great deal' was recorded) for five of the seven districts: Harborough (70%) Blaby (67%), Hinckley and Bosworth (67%), Melton (67%) and Charnwood (52%). For Charnwood residents, this was very closely followed by 'better bus stops or shelters' where 51% felt that this would encourage them personally to increase their bus use 'a great deal'.
 46. Only 35% of North West Leicestershire residents perceived a more frequent bus service would increase their bus use 'a great deal' (although 37% considered it would do 'to some extent'). Respondents from North West Leicestershire generally showed a different set of priorities for measures to improve bus use. Respondents from this district considered 'more reliable journey times' to be a more effective measure for increasing bus use than increased frequency, with 62% of residents considering this would increase their bus use by a great deal. More modern vehicles and zero emission vehicles also appeared in the top five most favoured measures in that district.
 47. To conclude, the survey responses suggest that the BSIP needs to have a focus on making bus travel more attractive to a wider demographic, including to those under the age of 25. Whilst the responses also helpfully highlight measures that the BSIP should concentrate on to improve attractiveness, they also serve to show that there is not necessarily a universal one size fits all approach in respect of bus users vs non-users and across the County.

Development of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme (EPS)

48. Following the decision of the Cabinet in June 2021 to establish an EPS, officers (supported by the commissioned consultants) have been working with local bus operators to agree the details of the Scheme.
49. The EPS is a formal agreement between the LTA and local bus operators, to work together to improve local bus services. It will provide the formal framework and governance for the Enhanced Partnership and the schemes

within it will mirror those within the BSIP, it is the delivery vehicle for the schemes detailed in the BSIP.

50. Several meetings of the 'shadow' EPS have been held, attended by bus companies Arriva, First Bus, Centrebus, Stagecoach, Vectare and Trent Barton (including Kinchbus). The meetings have been generally constructive and have been primarily focused initially on the content of the BSIP; the EPS will be the delivery vehicle for the BSIP.
51. Subject to the approval of the BSIP by the Cabinet a statutory notice of the EPS will be issued to bus operators in November, providing them with a 28-day period for objection. Should no objections be received a public consultation would then be undertaken towards the end of the year. Any changes resulting from the consultation would need to be ratified by bus operators prior to formalising the partnership agreement, through a further 28-day period of objection.
52. Discussions will continue and it is currently intended that a further report will be presented to the Cabinet on this matter at the end of March 2022 ahead of the EPS formally coming into existence.

Draft Leicestershire BSIP

53. The BSIP has been developed in collaboration with bus operators in the County. It also takes account of the public's views gathered through the engagement survey including those of parish councils and of the views of neighbouring authorities, including Leicester City Council, district councils; and community transport operators.
54. The BSIP recognises the very important role that passenger transport services have to play in keeping people and places connected, especially in a largely rural county such as Leicestershire. Use of such services rather than private car travel also helps reduce congestion, improve air quality in towns, and limit carbon emissions.
55. The BSIP is intended to be strongly led by users. In general terms, the focus is on increasing the fare-paying customer market, with concessionary passengers also benefiting from many of the initiatives. A particular focus is growth of patronage among young people (16-19) and young adults (19-25), as these are key life stages when people who have been regular bus travellers are often tempted to move from bus to car use. Encouraging young people and young adults to use buses more is seen as a cornerstone of a future sustainable Leicestershire bus network.
56. Whilst for the benefit of customers and also because of how the DfT intend to award further NBS funding, it is important that a BSIP for Leicestershire seeks to be ambitious, it is equally important to be mindful of a number of key points:
 - There is no reliable evidence available at present to indicate how in a world living with Covid-19, passenger transport patronage levels in the County might recover and as to how travel patterns might have changed

‘forever’. This makes it challenging to establish baseline usage levels against which to set targets for patronage increases;

- There are still considerable uncertainties about the ‘lasting’ economic implications arising from the pandemic and the impacts this might have on levels of public and private investment available, at least in the short to medium term. Combined with uncertainties about patronage levels, it is unsurprising that this is influencing operator confidence to invest, for example in more modern vehicles;
- In a rural county such as Leicestershire, with a great number of (relatively) smaller communities requiring access to a dispersed/remote range of economic and social needs, it will always be considerably more challenging and costly to deliver high quality, viable and sustainable (in financial terms) passenger transport services than in comparison to more densely populated urban/metropolitan areas;
- Hitherto, rural counties such as Leicestershire have not had access to the significant levels of funding available to urban/metropolitan areas, such as City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements for Mayoral Combined Authorities and Transforming Cities Funds.

57. Throughout the life of the BSIP, the Authority will be regularly required to report to the DfT on the progress of the delivery of the targets that it contains.

Overview of content

58. The draft BSIP is attached at Appendix B. In summary its content includes:
- i) Description of the BSIP’s area of coverage, i.e. the area administered by Leicestershire County Council as the LTA, and of current service provision
 - ii) A vision, which is one where the County’s bus services are simply *“best-in-class’*. *Our future bus network will seamlessly connect people with employment locations, education and training opportunities, key services, other transport modes, leisure destinations and, of course, each other; in a way that is reliable, affordable, environmentally friendly, easy-to-use, safe, and inclusive.”*
 - iii) An overall aim, which is to increase bus usage (compared with pre-pandemic levels) across the County through improved, financially sustainable, higher standard services that better meet the needs of Leicestershire residents, employees, and visitors – making bus travel a preferred choice for travel around the County and travel into the City of Leicester.
 - iv) Several objectives focused around:
 - creating a single, higher-quality integrated system, e.g. through a clearer brand identity and a more holistic approach to marketing and greater coordination between operators’ timetables; integration with other travel modes such as rail and cycling and e-mobility;
 - greater use of DRT to provide greater availability, particular in rural areas of the County;

- improved journey time reliability of bus services;
 - affordability - particularly for young people who are the potential core bus market for the future;
 - ease of use – with the customer experience much easier in terms of getting information, using different operators' services, and paying fares; and
 - moving towards the use of modern, lower emission vehicles across the network.
- v) Proposals for *setting* (but not for definitively establishing at this time, for the reasons set out in paragraph 56 above) a number of targets in respect of:
- passenger growth
 - customer satisfaction
 - journey times
 - reliability (including how well buses run to the timetable, whether a bus arrives at all and consistency of journey time)
 - bus emissions
- vi) Delivery themes, and schemes within those themes, grouped around:
- Theme: Single System, which includes schemes around:
 - Operators working together to coordinate timetables on key corridors,
 - Piloting of increased frequencies on three (yet to be selected) routes,
 - Bus operators working with rail operators to seek to ensure better coordination of bus services with connections to railway stations relative to train times,
 - Provision of higher quality bus stop infrastructure and which is better maintained,
 - Working in collaboration with operators to create a distinctive brand for the Leicestershire bus network, with marketing of the network as a single entity undertaken jointly by LCC and bus operators,
 - Piloting of further DRT services, building on experience as it's gained from the Rural Mobility Fund (RMF) project in south east Leicestershire,
 - Using the RMF project to explore the piloting of evening services,
 - Agreement and implementation of minimum service quality standards across all Leicestershire bus services, covering aspects such as cleanliness of vehicles and customer service training for drivers,
 - Adoption of a Customer Charter across Leicestershire bus services.
 - Theme: Reliable, which includes schemes around:
 - The development and implementation of a programme of individual schemes and interventions to address delays to bus services and give buses priority,

- Improving traffic and parking management and enforcement particularly in areas where poor traffic and parking discipline causes problems and delays for buses.
- Theme: Affordable, which includes schemes around:
 - Rationalisation of qualification ages for child / young people discounted fare products, i.e. seeking to agree with operators a consistent age below which significantly discounted ticket products for children and young people are available,
 - Putting in place a young adult discounted fare offer for all 19 to 25-year-olds.
- Theme: Easy to use, which includes schemes around:
 - Improved bus service information availability, including online, printed and roadside,
 - Improvements to real time information provision,
 - Moving towards multi-operator capped fares that work with debit, credit card, cash, and mobile payments across all Leicestershire operators.
- Theme: Greener, which includes schemes around:
 - Piloting the use of ultra-low emissions vehicles.

59. Subject to there being no changes in national policy or funding, or any other material changes, it is currently proposed to undertake a major, wholesale review prior to the BSIP's 10-year anniversary. However, during its lifetime changes are likely to be required as progress against targets is monitored and evidence is collected about the effectiveness of the BSIP's delivery.

BSIP Funding Requirements

60. In August 2021, the Government published additional guidance as to how LTAs should present their BSIP funding requirements to Government.
61. The additional guidance on funding specifies a template that is required to be attached to BSIPs when returned to them. Furthermore, it sets out that:
- i) The purpose of the template is to provide an indicative view of potential LTA and operator priorities for additional Government funding. The template asks for detail regarding potential funding requirements, both capital and resource (revenue), to deliver the expectations set out in the Strategy. It goes on to say that LTAs should aim to include detail on specific schemes, routes and requirements where possible (e.g. bus priority measures on a specific route corridor, or detail on changes to fares/tickets).
 - ii) Given the limited amount of funding available across the country, LTAs should aim to prioritise these schemes and consider constraints on available funding. Funding amounts should be set out by year (i.e. 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25) and long term (beyond 2025) as best as able. Albeit, the supplementary guidance notes that at this stage, ahead of the DfT's spend profiles beyond April 2022 being confirmed at the Spending Review later this year, it cannot confirm specific funding

allocations. Officers understand that the DfT will release further detailed guidance in due course on the funding allocation process.

- iii) LTAs should also set out what alternative sources of funding are available to support delivery of BSIPs (e.g. operator or LTA contributions).
 - iv) The DfT do not expect BSIPs to provide detailed, definitive costings. As explained in the primary BSIP guidance, given that the plans have to be produced by October, they will necessarily be outlines.
 - v) BSIPs will enable the Government to understand the appetite for transformational investments which support the bus sector in the funding period and over the long term (i.e. beyond 2025). In the shorter term, there are also existing bus funding sources (such as the LTA element of the Bus Services Operators Grant, and the Revenue Support Grant) and other funding schemes with transport elements (such as the Levelling Up fund, or the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements for Mayoral Combined Authorities) that are expected to be considered, where relevant, in how the BSIP is supported and delivered. The BSIP is not purely a bid for funding from the buses £3bn and should not rely on additional Government funding to deliver a basic level of service integration, investment and improvement. The template also contains a section to note the other funding which will support delivery of the BSIP.
62. Whilst the additional guidance does not clearly state, the process for the further award of NBS delivery funding is in effect a bidding process. As such there is no guarantee as to its outcome.
63. The completed template setting out the Authority's BSIP funding requirements is attached at Appendix C. This takes into account the additional guidance; the position on funding previously set out in the report to the Cabinet in June 2021 (and as set out in the Resource Implications in Part A of this report); and discussions with operators.
64. The total estimated requirement is £173m, which allows for:
- *revenue* funding required over a ten-year period (assumed life of the BSIP) to resource the management of the EPS and also to manage implementation of, monitor the impacts of and the continued development of the BSIP (the NBS guidance is clear that BSIPs should be 'living documents' that continue to evolve over their lives);*
* **This includes funding of the EPS Manager and support team**
 - *revenue* funding to deliver measures set out in the BSIP, e.g. in relationship to branding and marketing; and
 - *capital* funding to deliver measures set out in the BSIP, e.g. improvements to bus stop infrastructure or highway works to remove pinch-points that are causing delays to bus services.
65. As noted in Part A, Resource Implications, the extent to which the Authority (and bus operators) are able to deliver on ambitions to improve bus services

in Leicestershire will be dependent on the level of further NBS delivery funding received from the Government.

Further Consultation

66. There is a Statutory requirement for the Authority to undertake a consultation exercise with bus operators in respect of the EPS.
67. Bus operators will receive notice of the EPS in November, providing them with a 28-day period for objection. Statutorily, any objections received by bus operators would need to be resolved before the Enhanced Partnership can be formalised.
68. Subject to no objections from bus operators, the Council would undertake a three to six-week public consultation on the EPS in Winter 2021 through an on-line survey with paper version available on request. Other key stakeholders such as district councils, the police, Transport Focus and the Traffic Commissioner, will be consulted. It will be promoted through the Council's website and through social media.
69. Any changes resulting from the consultation would need to be ratified by bus operators prior to formalising the partnership agreement, through a further 28-day period of objection.
70. Any delays caused in resolving any bus operator objections would need to be reported to DfT accordingly.
71. A report detailing the BSIP and EPS timeline will be considered by the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 November 2021.
72. It is intended that a further report on the outcomes of the consultation will be presented to the Cabinet in March 2022.
73. Going forward specific schemes and measures delivered through the EPS and under the BSIP will, as appropriate, be subject to separate engagement and consultation exercises.

Implications for the Authority's Adopted Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy (PTPS)

74. It is inevitable that the formal establishment of the EPS and delivery of the BSIP will have implications for the adopted PTPS.
75. The BSIP sets out that the PTPS will be reviewed in full once the BSIP and EP Plan have been developed to ensure that full alignment is achieved and a further report will be brought to the Cabinet once that work has been completed and the implications for the PTPS are understood. For the avoidance of doubt, officers will continue to use the adopted PTPS where appropriate in considering whether the Authority should provide funding to

support local bus services where they are no longer able to operate on a commercial basis.

Conclusion

76. Publication of the NBS marked another radical change in Government transport policy. The role of LTAs in the development and delivery of passenger transport services is significantly altered by its publication, with the expectation that they will provide greater local leadership and work far more collaboratively with bus operators and local communities to plan and deliver a fully integrated service with simple, multi-modal tickets, more bus priority measures, the same high quality information for all passengers in more places, and better turn-up-and-go frequencies that keep running into the evenings and at weekends.
77. The Government describes BSIPs as being how LTAs, working closely with their local bus operators and local communities, set out a vision for delivering the step-change in bus services that is required by the NBS. Government expects BSIPs to be comprehensive, living documents that will evolve over time. All relevant LTAs are required to prepare a BSIP.
78. Development of the Leicestershire BSIP has been informed by discussions with operators and by the outcomes of an engagement survey, but also mindful too of the continuing impacts of the pandemic both on patronage levels (both current and going forward) and on the public finances and private sector investment confidence; the rural nature of Leicestershire; and that as non-Mayoral or City area, the Authority has not enjoyed the benefits of such things as (direct award) Region Sustainable Transport Settlements or qualified for Transforming Cities Funding.
79. This report sets out the immediate financial implications to the Authority arising from implementing the NBS in line with DfT requirements. Over the longer-term, delivery of the Leicestershire BSIP is dependent on the award by Government of further NBS delivery funds to the Authority. The process for the further award of funding amounts, in effect, to a bidding process with no guarantee as to its outcome.
80. Notwithstanding financial considerations, improving local bus services has a key role to play in seeking to reduce carbon emissions from transport; providing for equality of opportunity for those who don't have access to a private car; and supporting recovery from the pandemic.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

81. The Equality Act 2010 requires the Authority to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between different protected groups.
82. An initial Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening exercise was undertaken at the stage the Council submitted a statutory notice

of intent to enter into an Enhanced Partnership. The initial impact was considered to be positive and so a full EHRIA was not needed at that time.

83. A further EHRIA screening exercise will be undertaken following the consultation.

Environmental Implications

84. Delivery of improved bus services should help to deliver mode shift away from the private car and would therefore be anticipated to deliver air quality and carbon reduction benefits.

Legal Implications

85. The Director of Law and Governance confirms that the recommendations in this report accord with the statutory requirements of the Bus Services Act 2017.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 16 October 2018, 'Draft Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy'

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5184&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 20 November 2020, 'Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Transport Priorities':

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5999&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 22 June 2021, 'National Bus Strategy'

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6444&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix A: National Bus Strategy Bus Service Improvement Plan Public Engagement Survey Findings August 2021

Appendix B: Draft Leicestershire BSIP September 2021

Appendix C: BSIP Funding Requirements Template

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