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Title	Initial Review of Passenger Transport Policy & Strategy Documents
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Technical Note has been prepared at the request of Leicestershire County Council, who commissioned ITP to '*assess the appropriateness of LCC's Passenger Transport Policy & Strategy (PTPS) in response to*' the development of the Leicestershire Bus Service Improvement Plan and the establishment of an Enhanced Partnership, '*considering whether it remains fit for purpose and, if so, what revisions might be needed*'. The technical note sets out the results of an initial review of the Passenger Transport Policy and Passenger Transport Strategy documents that define the Passenger Transport Policy & Strategy (PTPS). It presents conclusions based on that review.

## 2. Context

- 2.1 Leicestershire County Council developed and adopted (following public consultation) a Passenger Transport Policy and an associated Passenger Transport Strategy in 2018. These documents were intended to recognise the important role that passenger transport services have to play in keeping people and places connected, and in reducing congestion and limiting emissions. They also set a framework for the role that the council has to play alongside commercial operators, local communities and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector operators, taking account of a challenging funding situation.
- 2.2 In March 2021, a new national bus strategy for England (Bus Back Better) was published by Government. This set out the Government's vision and its view of opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through reform of how services are planned and delivered. Following this, all local transport authorities in England were instructed by the Department for Transport to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) within a very short timescale (by October 31<sup>st</sup> 2021) for their area, and to either move towards franchising arrangements or to enter

- into an Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators by the end of March 2022<sup>1</sup>. It was made clear that future Department for Transport funding for both the local authority and the bus operators was contingent on these instructions being met.
- 2.3 Leicestershire County Council, with support from ITP and with input from public engagement exercises, worked with local bus operators to develop and publish an ambitious BSIP within the specified timeframe. The council and Leicestershire bus operators also completed the process of establishing an Enhanced Partnership, which was 'made' by the council at the end of March 2022 and came into operation on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.
- 2.4 The Department of Transport made its announcements of funding allocated to local authorities for implementation of their BSIPs at the start of April 2022. Unfortunately, Leicestershire County Council was one of 48 local transport authorities (out of 79) that received no funding, except for a promise of a further capacity support grant to employ a dedicated bus Enhanced Partnership Officer for three years.
- 2.5 Notwithstanding the lack of funding, the Leicestershire BSIP does set out an ambitious aspirational plan, some of which may be delivered if future funding bids are successful. Equally, the Enhanced Partnership (with its published EP Plan and Scheme documents) has some modest commitments within it for both operators and the council, and provides a new collaborative working arrangement for trying to deliver the best possible passenger transport services in Leicestershire. As such, the development of the BSIP and the formation of the EP have changed the delivery landscape for passenger transport services in Leicestershire. It is therefore important that the Passenger Transport Policy and Passenger Transport Strategy documents were reviewed to ensure that they are compatible with these new arrangements.

### 3. Commentary on Passenger Transport Policy

- 3.1 Annex A to this technical note comprises an annotated version of the Leicestershire Passenger Transport Policy document. Key comments from the document review are set out below.

#### *Passenger Transport Framework diagram*

- 3.2 The Passenger Transport Framework diagram (Figure 1.1) that is included at the start of the Policy document shows 'influencing of commercial & 3rd sector providers' within the 'planning' function box. Although partnership working is not explicitly mentioned (as there was no partnership in place at the time the policy was formulated) the

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<sup>1</sup> The 31<sup>st</sup> March deadline was subsequently dropped by the Department for Transport in early 2022.

existing wording appears compatible with the Enhanced Partnership approach. Adding some wording to explicitly reflect the Enhanced Partnership's existence could be desirable, but not essential.

### *Document Framework diagram*

- 3.3 The Document Framework diagram (Figure 2.1) could potentially be modified to include the BSIP alongside the operational handbook, as an aspirational plan in line with the strategy. However, this is not an essential modification (other related documents such as the Local Transport Plan are also not shown).

### *Section 3 - Purpose*

- 3.4 Section 3 could potentially be expanded with an additional bullet point to add information on the creation of the Leicestershire Enhanced Partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan, linked to the national bus strategy ('Bus Back Better'). This would bring it up to date and make it more current, but again is viewed as desirable rather than essential.

### *Section 5 - The Passenger Transport Policy and Supporting Principles*

- 3.5 The Leicestershire BSIP currently includes an ambition to pilot supported DRT services into the evening, which would presumably primarily serve a leisure market as well as any evening/shift workers. To make the Policy document compatible with this ambition a potential tweak to the wording of PTP5 could be considered, saying LCC 'will *generally* only consider intervening....' to give some flexibility for piloting evening DRT. However, given the lack of funding from DfT for delivering the BSIP, if funding of evening DRT services is viewed as a lower priority than some of the other BSIP measures (and possibly therefore unrealistic for the foreseeable future), the wording could be left 'as is' and the BSIP modified in due course to remove the evening DRT ambition.

### *Section 6 - How this Policy Supports the County Council's Strategic Aims*

- 3.6 If a decision is taken to make modifications to the PTPS documents in the light of the BSIP and EP formation, it would be worth reviewing whether this section is up-to-date in the light of the council's Strategic Plan expiring at the end of 2022.

### *Section 7 - Supporting Environment & Transport's Commissioning Strategy*

- 3.7 As for section 6, if a decision is taken to make modifications to the PTPS documents in the light of the BSIP and EP formation, references to LTP3 at the end of this section could be updated to refer to the latest Local Transport Plan.

### *Section 8 – Policy Review*

- 3.8 It is noted that the Policy document is due for review 'within 5 years'. Our current review in the context of BSIP and EP formation and any resulting modifications could be rolled into any wider formal review of the document if it is felt that wording modifications are warranted.

## 4. Commentary on Passenger Transport Strategy

- 4.1 Annex B to this technical note comprises an annotated version of the Leicestershire Passenger Transport Strategy document. Key comments from the document review are set out below.

### *Passenger Transport Framework diagram*

- 4.2 As in section 3 of this note, adding some wording to explicitly reflect the Enhanced Partnership's existence could be desirable, but not essential.

### *Document Framework diagram*

- 4.3 Also as in section 3 of this note, the Document Framework diagram (Figure 2.1) could potentially be modified to include the BSIP alongside the operational handbook, as an aspirational plan in line with the strategy – although this is not seen as an essential modification.

### *Section 4 – Priorities*

- 4.4 As noted for PTP5 within section 5 of the Policy document, the wording of paragraphs 4.5 and 4.7 is not completely compatible with the BSIP ambition to pilot evening DRT services, which would primarily serve leisure purposes. As with PTP5, the wording could be tweaked to allow some flexibility for supporting evening and leisure services or (if it is felt that, in the light of the DfT funding decision, piloting of evening DRT services is no longer realistic and/or a low priority) the wording of the BSIP could be modified in due course to remove the evening DRT ambition.

### *Section 6 – Commercial Passenger Transport Services*

- 4.5 Paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3 are somewhat outdated due to the formation of the EP, and should ideally be updated to reflect this.

### *Section 8 - Financially Supported Passenger Transport Services*

- 4.6 The wording of paragraph 8.2 is again not completely compatible with the BSIP ambition to pilot evening DRT services. As per previous comments, the wording could be tweaked to allow some flexibility for supporting evening and leisure services or (if it

is felt that, in the light of the DfT funding decision, piloting of evening DRT services is no longer realistic and/or a low priority) the wording of the BSIP could be modified in due course to remove the evening DRT ambition.

- 4.7 In Table 8-2, the 'case for support' score thresholds could potentially have been modified if DfT funding had been exceptionally generous. However, with no DfT funding being awarded, these should stay the same.

### *Section 10 – Passenger Information*

- 4.8 Paragraph 10.2 could potentially be updated to make specific reference to the Leicestershire EP. This is seen as desirable, rather than essential or urgent.

### *Section 12 – Fares and Ticketing*

- 4.9 Paragraphs 12.1 and 12.6 could potentially be updated to make specific reference to the Leicestershire EP. This is seen as desirable, rather than essential or urgent.

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The wording of both Passenger Transport Policy and Strategy documents is generally compatible with the Leicestershire BSIP content and the formation of an Enhanced Partnership. The documents still provide a valuable statement of where the council sees its role in helping deliver passenger transport services, what its broad priorities are in doing so, and how it will deliver on those priorities working in collaboration with other parties. There are wording modifications, as indicated in sections 3 and 4 of this Technical Note, that could be introduced to explicitly recognise the BSIP and EP – but these are regarded as desirable rather than essential or urgent. These could potentially be rolled into a wider review of the document that is scheduled to take place by 2023 in any case, and which would reflect, for example, updates to the Local Transport Plan and the council's Strategic Plan.
- 5.2 The exception to this general compatibility relates to the inclusion of an ambition in the BSIP to pilot supported DRT services into the evening. To achieve compatibility between the Policy and Strategy documents and the BSIP, either the Policy and Strategy documents will require a number of minor wording changes, as indicated in the preceding sections, or the evening DRT ambition will need to be removed from the BSIP in due course. The latter course of action may be appropriate if supporting such services is viewed as a relatively low priority for Leicestershire among the long list of proposed BSIP interventions that have been left unfunded by the DfT funding decision.

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