Public Document Pack

NOTICE

OF

MEETING

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

will meet on

TUESDAY, 8TH JUNE, 2021

At 6.15 pm

by

VIRTUAL MEETING - ONLINE ACCESS, ON RBWM YOUTUBE

TO: <u>MEMBERS OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL</u>

COUNCILLORS SAYONARA LUXTON, JON DAVEY, CHRISTINE BATESON, PHIL HASELER AND GURCH SINGH

<u>SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS</u>

COUNCILLORS JOHN BALDWIN, NEIL KNOWLES, JOHN BOWDEN, SHAMSUL SHELIM AND GURPREET BHANGRA

Karen Shepherd – Head of Governance - Issued: 28/05/21

Members of the Press and Public are welcome to attend Part I of this meeting. The agenda is available on the Council's web site at www.rbwm.gov.uk or contact the Panel Administrator **If you have any questions about this meeting, including any opportunity for public participation, please contact Fatima Rehman (Phone: 01628 796251 fatima.rehman@rbwm.gov.uk)**

Recording of Meetings – In line with the council's commitment to transparency the Part I (public) section of the virtual meeting will be streamed live and recorded via Zoom. By participating in the meeting by audio and/or video, you are giving consent to being recorded and acknowledge that the recording will be in the public domain. If you have any questions regarding the council's policy, please speak to Democratic Services or Legal representative at the meeting.

AGENDA

PART I

ITEM	SUBJECT	PAGE NO
1.	APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN To appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2021/22.	-
2.	WELCOME FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN A welcome to the Panel from the Chairman.	-
3.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive any apologies for absence.	-
4.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any Declarations of Interest.	3 - 4
5.	MINUTES To confirm the Minutes of the previous meeting.	5 - 12
6.	Q4 PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT To consider the report.	13 - 40
7.	BUS ROUTES UPDATE To consider the report.	41 - 166
8.	WORK PROGRAMME To consider the Panel's Work Programme for the remainder of the municipal year. To include consideration of items scheduled on the Cabinet Forward Plan.	167 - 170

MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS IN MEETINGS

Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a DPI or Prejudicial Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

A member with a DPI or Prejudicial Interest **may make representations at the start of the item but must not take part in the discussion or vote at a meeting.** The speaking time allocated for Members to make representations is at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting. In order to avoid any accusations of taking part in the discussion or vote, after speaking, Members should move away from the panel table to a public area or, if they wish, leave the room. If the interest declared has not been entered on to a Members' Register of Interests, they must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing within the next 28 days following the meeting.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) (relating to the Member or their partner) include:

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit made in respect of any expenses occurred in carrying out member duties or election expenses.
- Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.
- Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the relevant authority.
- Any licence to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where the landlord is the relevant authority, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:
  a) that body has a piece of business or land in the area of the relevant authority, and
  b) either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body **or** (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

A Member with a DPI should state in the meeting*: 'I declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'*

Or, if making representations on the item: **'I declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will make representations, then I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'**

Prejudicial Interests

Any interest which a reasonable, fair minded and informed member of the public would reasonably believe is so significant that it harms or impairs the Member's ability to judge the public interest in the item, i.e. a Member's decision making is influenced by their interest so that they are not able to impartially consider relevant issues.

A Member with a Prejudicial interest should state in the meeting*: 'I declare a Prejudicial Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'*

Or, if making representations in the item: '**I declare a Prejudicial Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will make representations, then I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'**

Personal interests

Any other connection or association which a member of the public may reasonably think may influence a Member when making a decision on council matters.

Members with a Personal Interest should state at the meeting: **'I wish to declare a Personal Interest in item x because xxx'. As this is a Personal Interest only, I will take part in the discussion and vote on the matter.**

This page is intentionally left blank

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 6 APRIL 2021

PRESENT**:** Councillors Sayonara Luxton (Chairman), Jon Davey (Vice-Chairman), Christine Bateson, Phil Haseler and John Baldwin

Also in attendance: Councillor Neil Knowles, Councillor John Bowden, Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra, Councillor Gurch Singh, Councillor David Hilton, Councillor Andrew Johnson, Councillor Gerry Clark, Councillor David Cannon, Councillor David Coppinger, Councillor Ewan Larcombe and Councillor Donna Stimson

Officers: Fatima Rehman, Simon Dale, Sue Fox and Joseph Hitchman

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021 and 18 March 2021 be approved, subject to the following change to the former minutes:
- **ACTION: Chairman and Vice Chairman to review the Work Programme, with the Panel Members input.**

The Vice Chairman asked what led to a suggestion to be an action or noted, and the clerk advised if the officer agreed to review a suggestion, it was noted as an action.

Q3 PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT

Simon Dale, interim Head of Highways, introduced the item and said there was a slightly improved situation since the last quarter. Six of the seven service performance indicators were succeeding or achieved, with the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation being a non-targeted measure.

The Vice Chairman asked who the Community Information Champions were and how the process worked. David Scott, Head of Communities, said the Champions were volunteers who offered to cascade regular messages from the COVID-19 response team to the wider community they were in regular contact with, or were approached by the borough due to their community connections. The Vice Chairman asked how funding was best used for emergency orders, which had reduced to less than 60%, and Simon Dale said improvements on planned and responsive work were being made. The Vice Chairman suggested the Crucial Conversations training that was given to staff to be rolled out for Councillors to aid in having open conversations. He asked the estimated number of evictions likely to be made.

ACTION: The Vice Chairman to be informed of the estimated number of evictions likely to be made, and the Crucial Conversations training for Councillors to be explored offline.

Councillor Bateson asked why footfall was not collated for Ascot and Sunningdale, and David Scott said the footfall counting mechanisms were installed in the two main towns to derive footfall estimates ion the shopping centres and high streets.

ACTION: Town Managers to provide future reports of activities in outlier shopping centres and high streets, such as Ascot and Eton.

Councillor Baldwin asked if there were updates on restoring the Maidenhead and Winsor Planning Panels, and Councillor Haseler said the working group was exploring the options, with no current decisive decision made. Sian Saadeh, Development Management Service Manager, would provide recommendations in future.

The Panel noted the item.

LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY

Simon Dale introduced the item, which was a summary of the boroughs duties and responsibilities as a lead local flood authority (LLFA). The borough worked with Project Centre, which helped in the strategic approach to responsibilities, and changes in the team would increase proactivity in discharging its responsibilities. Sue Fox, Principal Commissioning Officer, was moving into a full-time role focusing on flooding and drainage, supported by Joseph Hitchman, Senior Risk Engineer at Project Centre and VolkerHighways.

Sue Fox and Joseph Hitchman presented slides, which addressed that the Pitt Review was undertaken after widespread floods in summer 2007, in which over 50,000 households were affected, and damages exceeded £4billion, which resulted in 92 recommendations. They were based on Local Authorities playing a major role in the management of local flood risk. The Environmental Agency (EA) was brought in as a statutory consultee on major planning applications in areas at risk of flooding from rivers and/or the sea.

The presentation highlighted the role and responsibilities of the LLFA, the EA, Thames Water, and the borough as the Risk Management Authority (RMA). As the RMA, the borough discharged its responsibilities to VolkerHighways to maintain highways, including ensuring highway drainage systems were clear. This was done through a routine maintenance programme for maintaining gullies, drains and soakaways predominantly in Maidenhead. Most ditches were the responsibility of landowners. The borough was responsible for maintaining the pumping station, protecting the highway from flooding and adjoining properties from the runoff of the highways. The borough delivered improvement schemes annually that dealt with wet spots on the road, broken gullies, and broken connections.

The borough's flood risk activities included a strategic role and liaison with professional partners; Sustainable Drainage Systems consultee; highway maintenance; annual capital programme, with a budget of £500,000 for the municipal year; land drainage consenting and compliance; emergency planning; RBWM Flood Liaison Group, which met quarterly with parish councils, the EA and Thames Water to

discuss matter of local and strategic flood interest; and, Berkshire 5 Strategic Group, an officer group to discuss regional matters and share best practice.

The work programme for 2021-22 included a number of items, including a refresh of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan, which would be taken to Cabinet in July 2021; the joint project with the EA for the Datchet, Horton, Wraysbury, Old Windsor flood alleviation project; the capital programme delivery including soakaway improvements, including 10% replacement of covers and clear silt in Maidenhead; flood prevention in Horton, Wraysbury and Datchet; ditch clearance and run-off over verges; and, Highway Drainage schemes, focussing on the backlog, such as Priest Hill, Old Windsor, and delivering 40 minor drainage schemes.

Councillor Baldwin asked for the source of figures regarding the Pitts Review and how it contrasted to the borough's lack of investment, and the Panel was informed that the data was collated from the review report and the investment was the council's decision based on unaffordability. Therefore, other flood alleviations methods were being reviewed.

Councillor Baldwin asked if the Project Centre was fit to deliver timely information, and the Panel was informed that other than a dip during COVID-19, the Project Centre was meeting its performance target to deliver responses to planning applications within 21 days. Councillor Baldwin said outsourcing a contract should lead to greater resilience than the internal service during pressured times and improvements could be made. He said drawings for the second phase of the Active Transport scheme were six months behind schedule, and Sue Fox said this would be responded by Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth.

ACTION: Chris Joyce to advise Councillor Baldwin of the timeliness of Project Centre offline.

Councillor Larcombe said there was a corporate loss of memory and asked who authorised the variations of the Wraysbury drain and why nothing was done regarding unauthorised works on the drain. Simon Dale said it was acknowledged that the borough was not as responsive in the past and that was being corrected, and due to staff turnover, there was a loss of corporate memory. Officers arranged a meeting with Councillor Lacombe to begin discussions on resolving the matter, and any other Councillors were welcome. The Vice Chairman said Councillor Lacombe's requests were not addressed in the past due to lack of finances and was pleased with the progression.

ACTION: Councillor Baldwin to be included in the Wraysbury Drain meeting.

The Panel noted the item.

CCTV SYSTEM REVIEW

David Scott introduced the item and said a capital project that started in 2017 as part of the Delivering Services Differently programme to transition from the old analogue system to more advanced digital technology in 2019. Specialist consultants identified options for hardware and software solutions, and the proposal went back to market under a competitive tendering exercise. The contract was awarded to CDS Systems Limited following the tender process, and the system was replaced on a phased basis, including cameras, connectivity, and display screen equipment for 2018/19 year. The

first phase was completed in March 2019, and minor improvement were completed in 2019/20. There was a mixture of hardwired and wi-fi wireless connections between cameras to reduce annual operating costs and increase resilience. Camera locations and lighting levels were improved for better images.

During COVID-19, the services continued to operate around the clock, with some amendments made to sustain the operation when team members were affected by the virus. Operators held a Security Industry Authority license for public space surveillance, and the borough was applying for a third-party accreditation scheme to demonstrate compliance. The team size was reduced to a Service Leader and eight full-time operatives that covered 24/7 monitoring and emergency out of hours services. The operators worked closely with Thames Valley Police (TVP) and supported crime prevention. Images recorded were held for 31 days and then deleted and overwritten. The funding came from the borough, future further investment could come from developers through Section 106 agreements, housing and residents' associations, and parish councils, to provide for additional coverage.

Lessons learnt included further staffing reductions being unachievable and restoring fibre connections where needed, as it had greater capacity and resilience. Complete reliance on a wi-fi system was not possible as the technology was ineffective around high-rise buildings and cranes. Camera installation were subject to Operational Requirement and Data Privacy Impact Assessment, which were kept under review. Next steps included continuing to build resilience and ensure the system was used to its maximum effect; to provide public reassurance and prevent and detect crime with TVP; and, to work collaboratively with partners at large events such as happened for the royal wedding in 2018.

Councillor Baldwin asked how CCTV was a deterrent in crime, as the footage helped TVP convict the criminal after the event. David Scott said although footage was used retrospectively as evidence for unknown crimes committed at real time, staff were trained to recognise crime in real time and assisted TVP, Community Wardens and other teams. The system was used to track individuals shoplifting and monitor emerging crimes.

Councillor Cannon, Lead Member Public Protection and Parking, said the existence of CCTV and signage was a deterrent of crime and assisted in preventing crime. CCTV was monitored in real-time to assist in not just crime but public safety, such as in the night-time economy and aiding vulnerable people to safety. Councillor Baldwin said there was a reference to intimate knowledge of what was recorded on CCTV and asked how Councillor Cannon was aware of information of live events of vulnerable people. David Scott said the Lead Member was appraised of incidents in retrospect and not in real-time, and he may have been speaking from his experience as a police officer and knowledge of CCTV systems. Councillor Baldwin queried where the boundary of access of information was for the Lead Member. Councillor Bowden said it was inappropriate to discuss the details of the information shared between the control room and TVP in public. CCTV aided in intelligence gathering for alleged criminals and in reaction to offenses.

Councillor Haseler asked if Automatic Number Plate Recognition was installed, and the Panel was informed they were. Councillor Baldwin asked for reassurance that the resource would be maintained, and David Scott said the current budget was built based on the resource needs.

The Vice Chairman asked which parish council requested extra CCTV coverage, and the Panel was informed this was Wraysbury parish council. The Vice Chairman asked about the reliability of wireless connections, and the Panel was informed that a restricted frequency can be used where necessary to increase reliability. The Vice Chairman asked how much of the budget was used, and the Panel was informed that almost all the budget had been spent for the developments made. The Vice Chairman asked if trees were being cut down to allow wireless connection, and David Scott said they were being trimmed only, to help allow reliable transmission in some specific locations.

The Panel noted the item.

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CONTRACT - OPTIONS FOR FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY

Barry Giggins, member of public, submitted a statement for the Panel to consider:

"The Volker Highways contract is due for renewal next year and, due to the complexity of this contract by combining the consultant and contractor roles, I request the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel to recommend seeking an audit by a suitably fully qualified person to establish whether the current contract is value-for-money and conforms fully with the Council's financial standing orders. The value-for-money element should include the actual cost of implementing works compared to other authorities."

Simon Dale said he had spoken to Mr Giggins regarding the contract's value for money aspect, which was subjective, and could be calculated by cost per square metre of tarmac, for example, but this was not necessarily a good measure of VfM. The contract did conform to the council's financial standing orders. Simon Dale said the service area did not have much comparative information compared to other authorities due to the lack of benchmarking information; however, the borough was comparable to tarmac and the supplies VolkerHighways used when it came to materials costs.

Simon Dale introduced the presentation and said the initial contract term was due for expiry in 2022. An audit had been made on the service and a Task and Finish Group had looked at the service provided by Project Centre. It was incumbent on the council to indicate to VolkerHighways its intention for the contract, and the council was able to extend the contract for up to two years.

Cabinet approved the five-year term contract with VolkerHighways at Cabinet in June 2016 and the contract was awarded in January 2017. The commissioned service contained seven services; street cleansing was sub-contracted to Urbaser and scheme design and delivery was sub-contracted to Project Centre. The use of Project Centre increased resilience, as the council in previous years did not always have specialist engineers to call upon for specific issues, but now there was a repository available. VolkerHighways was monitored mainly through key performance indicators, and the borough had a duty under Best Value to continuously improve the services provided, and the team had been looking at new ways of working on highway maintenance work to increase effectiveness.

(Councillor Baldwin left the meeting.)

9

An asset management approach was used for maintaining the highway, and as a highway authority, the borough had to report on its performance, including reporting on the way the annual allocation for potholes was invested. VolkerHighways was performing well against its key performance indicators, with all but one of the key performance indictors in green. If the contract was agreed to be extended, the team hoped to set more challenging targets to be met.

Over the four-year period that VH have been maintaining the highways, there was an improvement in road condition due to the level of investment with many roads moved from the red, to amber to green RAG rating. Good road networks were important to develop tourism, regeneration, and inward investment. Road investment increased since 2015-2016 due to the Incentive Fund and the Department for Transport (DfT) grant regime. Investment tailed off in 2021-2022 as the grant has been cut by government and the council was unable to invest its own money within the Capital Programme in this municipal year and there was a reliance on the DfT grant. There was a correlation between investment and improved road conditions.

Resident satisfaction was based on National Highways and Transport survey where a random sample of residents were asked questions. The borough was, overall, above the national average, with a couple of areas the borough was just below the national average.

The future options available for the contract were reviewed and partnering opportunities with neighbouring boroughs highway service provisions illustrated, including many outsources provisions and a few in house teams. Service improvement proposals that could take place included optimisation of gulley routes, mapping of drainage assets, first time permanent pothole repairs, use electric vehicles, use of lower temperature asphalt, permitting and rationalise inspections and customer services team.

The Vice Chairman said he was supportive of the option to extend the contract with service improvements and was agreeable of first-time permanent pothole repairs. He asked if the DfT grant could only be spent on potholes, or if it could be spent elsewhere. Simon Dale said the capital grant from DfT could be used for other capital schemes, if the council deemed this appropriate, but this would undo all the work on the highways quality and undermine regeneration and inward investment. The pothole fund had to spent on pothole repair or broader patching but should be targeted at general repairs because of any service if the council wished

Councillor Hilton said similar information to this should be made available annually and helped answer queries about the cost and effectiveness of Project Centre and VolkerHighways.

The Panel noted the item, and the Chairman said the Panel should support the two-year contract extension and Councillor Bateson expressed her agreement.

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT (FINAL VERSION FOR APPROVAL AND SUBMISSION TO FULL COUNCIL)

The Chairman introduced the item and said the final version was awaiting approval. The Vice Chairman said the report was not a fair representation of the year's events. As Vice Chairman, he hoped to have a 5G Task and Finish Group and said the 5G discussion was diluted. He felt a discussion on 5G was required, following the pre-

application to increase the height of an existing mast in Oakley Green by five metres. Matters to raise could be the potential health concerns. Despite the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection stating there was little health impacts from 5G, Public Health England solicitors suggested local councils to undertake their own research. He was pleased to see the 5G item on the agenda.

The District Environment Crime Officer's item came to the Panel on 17 September 2020 and then sent to Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 10 November 2020, which should be addressed in the report. The Active Travel Measures item was brought to the Panel on 19 February 2021 after pressure from the public and should be added in Section 5 of the report.

Regarding improving working methods, the Vice Chairman posed the following questions; how the relevance of suggested agenda items was decided for scrutiny, whether they were aligned to the Corporate Plan, and if the Chairman and Vice Chairman planned the Work Programme. It was favourable to have a scrutiny officer, however resource was not available.

The Chairman said an offline meeting was organised to discuss the report beforehand which the Vice Chairman did not attend, and the Vice Chairman said the meeting was created at short notice. The Chairman said the concerns could have been discussed prior to the meeting, and the Vice Chairman said the Panel was the appropriate place to raise concerns.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Scrutiny Report be approved.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman invited Panel Members to suggest any items for the upcoming meetings. The Panel agreed to have the Street Lighting Review and Bus Routes item scheduled for the next meeting.

The meeting, which began at 6.15 pm, finished at 8.45 pm

CHAIRMAN……………………………….

DATE……………………………..........

This page is intentionally left blank

Report Title:	2020/21 End of Year Data & Performance Report	
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I	
Cabinet Member:		
Meeting and Date:	Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 8 June 2021	
Responsible Officer(s):	Andrew Durrant, Executive Director of Place	
Wards affected:	All	

www.rbwm.gov.uk

Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead

REPORT SUMMARY

1. *The Council Plan 2017-21 and associated strategic priorities remained current up to 30 July 2020 when Cabinet approved an Interim Council Strategy 2020/21 for immediate adoption on the basis that the Covid-19 pandemic had significantly altered the context in which the council is currently operating.*

2. *The Interim Council Strategy clarifies the three revised priorities to which the council is responding. The End of Year Data & Performance Report for Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel provides insights into the Interim Council Strategy's delivery as fully as possible, see Appendix A. Performance of measures previously reported to the Panel under the Council Plan 2017-2021 are included on the basis that these measures provide insights into current service delivery.*

1.   DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and:

i)   **Notes the 2020/21 Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel End of Year Data & Performance Report in Appendix A.**

ii)   **Requests relevant Cabinet Members, Directors and Heads of Service to maintain focus on improving performance.**

2.   REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Accept the recommendations in this report. **This is the recommended option**	This will allow continuing insight into the delivery of the council's agreed priorities in order to aid decision-making and maintain focus on continuous improvement.
Not accept the recommendations in the report.	The failure to use relevant performance information to understand delivery against

Option	Comments
	the council's agreed priorities impedes the council's ability to make informed decisions and seek continuous improvement.

2.1 The Council Plan 2017-21 remained current up to 30 July 2020 when Cabinet approved an Interim Council Strategy 2020/21 for immediate adoption on the basis that the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly altered the context in which the council is currently operating. The Interim Council Strategy clarifies the three revised priorities to which the council is responding, acknowledging that any instances where previous objectives can still be delivered without affecting delivery of interim objectives is a good thing and will be supported.

2.2 Appendix A provides insights into the Interim Council Strategy's three priorities and how they are progressing. It details the council's ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic and also key updates in relation to major workstreams such as the Transformation Strategy, Environment and Climate Strategy, alongside corporate developments relating to the People Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

2.3 The global pandemic was a situation that no one envisaged and would ever have wished for. It did, however, galvanise the community into action to work together to support those that were clinically extremely vulnerable and others who needed support. Within weeks of the outbreak, RBWM was home to some 76 community-based initiatives, with localised community hubs comprised of public sector partners (e.g. Local authority, GPs, Social Prescribers), faith groups, charities, businesses, Elected Members and local neighbours, all working in unison to support local need. Supported by a new centralised call-centre, set up within just 10 days, over 20,000 calls were made to vulnerable residents and the council facilitated – both practically and financially – the running of localised hubs with the power for decision-making largely decentralised amongst these groups.

2.4 This "grass roots" model of localised support has not only allowed the needs of the vulnerable to be adequately supported during the pandemic but has stimulated an increase in local resilience and connectivity in a way that traditional "command and control" responses are unable to. In total, the support for residents covered 374 days and was delivered by more than 150 council staff, backed up by more than 1,000 volunteers, 150 community information champions and 70 community groups.

2.5 The impact of Covid-19 on the community and the economy has been felt in a number of areas of the council's operations, and this has been reflected in the council's key performance indicators throughout the year. For example, the increased volumes of households in temporary accommodation as a result of the "everybody in" campaign from central government, and the unavoidable fall in town centre footfall figures as a result of lockdown restrictions. Encouragingly, performance in relation to the volume of households where prevention duty has been ended successfully been very successful as officers continuously look at ways to prevent homelessness and support households into accommodation options.

2.6   Table 2 summarises the position of all reported key performance indicators as at the close of Q4 and shows that all targeted measures are on or near target. Appendix A sets out performance trends and related commentary for each indicator. All indicators continue to be monitored and reported to relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panels on a quarterly basis as part of an ongoing performance dialogue.

Table 2: Summary KPI End of Year position

	Green (Succeeding or achieved)	Amber (Near target)	Red (Needs improvement)	Non-targeted measure
Percentage emergency 2 hr orders responded on time (Highways)	X			
No. homeless households in temporary accommodation				X
No. households where prevention duty has been ended successfully	X			
Monthly Footfall: Maidenhead Town Centre	X			
Monthly Footfall: Windsor Town Centre	X			
Percentage of Major Planning Applications processed in time	X			
Percentage of Minor Planning Applications processed in time	X			
Percentage of "Other" Planning Applications processed in time		X		
TOTAL (8)	**6**	**1**	**0**	**1**

3.   KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1   The key implications of this report are set out in table 3.

Table 3: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
The council is on target to deliver its strategic priorities	< 100% priorities on target	100% priorities on target			31 March 2021

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The risks and their control are set out in table 4.

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risk	Level of uncontrolled risk	Controls	Level of controlled risk
Poor performance management practices resulting in lack of progress towards the council's agreed strategic priorities and objectives.	HIGH	Robust performance management within services to embed a performance management culture and effective and timely reporting.	LOW

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 There are no Equality Impact Assessments or Data Protection Impact Assessments required for this report. There are no climate change or data protection impacts as a result of this report.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Performance against the strategic priorities is regularly reported to the council's four Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Comments from the Panels are reported to

Cabinet Members, Directors and Heads of Service as part of an ongoing performance dialogue.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 The full implementation stages are set out in table 5.

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
Ongoing	Comments from the Panel will be reviewed by Cabinet Members, Directors and Heads of Service.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 This report is supported by one appendix:
- Appendix A: Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel End of Year Data & Performance Report.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 This report is supported by one background document:
- Interim Council Strategy 2020/21: https://rbwm.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=7763&Ver=4

12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	17.05.21	27.05.21
Hilary Hall	Executive Director of Adults, Health and Housing	17.05.21	21.05.21
Chris Joyce	Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	17.05.21	26.05.21
Tracy Hendren	Head of Housing and Environmental Health Service	17.05.21	
Adrien Waite	Head of Planning	17.05.21	
Simon Dale	Interim Head of Highways	17.05.21	17.05.21

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Non-key decision	No	No

Report Author: Report Author: Rachel Kinniburgh, Strategy and Performance Team Leader, 01628 796370

This page is intentionally left blank

Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel

2020-21 End of Year Data and Performance Report

April 2020 – March 2021

Contents

1. Executive Summary

1.1   The Council Plan 2017-21 remained current up to 30 July 2020 when Cabinet approved an Interim Council Strategy 2020/21 for immediate adoption on the basis that the Covid-19 pandemic has significantly altered the context in which the council is currently operating.

1.2   In the interests of good governance and transparency, the Interim Council Strategy gives clarity to the three revised priorities to which the council is responding, acknowledging that any instances where previous objectives can still be delivered without affecting delivery of interim objectives is a good thing and will be supported. The three revised priorities for 2020/21 are:

- **Covid-19 objectives**: focusing on the immediate response, long-term recovery, and new service requirements.
- **Interim Focus Objectives 2020-21**: focusing on revised service operating plans, development of the Transformation Strategy, Climate Strategy, Governance, and People Plan.
- **Revised Medium Term Financial Strategy**: focusing on the impact of Covid-19, economic downturn, and government policy.

1.3   With the introduction of the Interim Council Strategy, performance reports for 2020/21 have necessarily been refocused to respond to this strategy as fulsomely as possible at the current time. This report is therefore structured to provide insight into the three priorities and how they are progressing (section 2).

1.4   Performance of measures previously reported to the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel are also included (section 3) on the basis that these measures provide some insights into service delivery (priority 2). These measures are grouped in this report by the lead service.

20

2. Interim Council Strategy: Delivery of priorities

2.1 This section provides a brief overview of key activities and milestones achieved by the council in 2020/21.

PRIORITY:	COVID-19 OBJECTIVES
Item	**Achievements and key milestones**
Response (immediate)	**Community response and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) Residents:** Official shielding was lifted for more than 8,000 residents – some 6% of the population – in April 2021. This brought to an end an innovative community partnership protecting our CEV residents from Covid-19. From the outset of the first lockdown in March 2020 a coordinated team of staff, drawn from all services in the council, maintained regular contact with residents who were shielding and took any appropriate action to ensure that these individuals' needs were met. A public-facing online directory of Covid-19 Support Groups was quickly developed to direct residents to community-based support options for particular needs, and a series of financial grants were provided to community groups for their ongoing projects of collecting prescriptions, running shopping services and befriending schemes. A new, flexible digital telephony solution was set up from April 2020 to support redeployed staff's long-term contact with CEV residents and over 20,000 calls were made. A new database (Lyon) was developed to manage interactions with CEV residents and anyone seeking help and support in the community. Lyon also enabled registration of individuals wishing to volunteer their time to the community effort and enabled the council to make required data returns to central government. Local community hubs of public sector partners (including GPs and social prescribers), faith groups, charities, businesses, Elected Members, and local neighbours were established and worked in unison to support local need. We gave these local hubs practical and financial help to get up and running, and the power to make decisions themselves as they were better suited to know exactly what their communities needed. In total, the support covered 374 days and was delivered by more than 150 council staff, backed up by more than 1,000 volunteers, 150 community information champions and 70 community groups. The Winter Support scheme provided £45,000 to seven local groups to support vulnerable families and individuals through the worst of the cold weather. A further £230,000 was distributed through food vouchers to families registered for free school meals to cover Christmas, winter half-term and Easter holiday times. These vouchers supported 2,037 unique children in the borough.
Response (immediate)	**Outbreak Control Plan and Local Outbreak Engagement Board:** The Outbreak Control Plan Summary was published on the RBWM website on 30 June 2020 in line with national instruction from the Department of Health and Social Care. The plan was produced in collaboration with the NHS and Public Health to guide our response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, to put in place measures to identify and contain outbreaks and to protect the public's health. The first public meeting of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board was held on 18 January 2021. The Engagement Board convenes monthly and is a subgroup of the Health

21

	and Wellbeing Board, established to provide public-facing engagement and communication for outbreak response.
Response (immediate)	**Community Influencers and Community Information Champions:** In October 2020 a new "community influencers" group was established with representatives from across various RBWM departments, including Achieving for Children, Libraries and Environmental Health. The group's aim is to communicate key Covid-19 messages to the wider community, whilst targeting messaging to specific demographic groups based on analysis of key data-sets. The group launched its "Community Information Champion" scheme in November 2020, through which members of the community can volunteer themselves to receive regular information from the council regarding Covid-19 and then share this information with their family, friends and other contacts. This approach ensures greater transmission of key Covid-19 messages across the community where other council communication methods may not have reached. Champions can also feedback to the council any questions or requests for clarity from the community. This two-way relationship helps the council to refine its Covid-19 messages and to also dispel any myths that may be circulating regarding the virus. To date, a network of 150 Champions has been established.
Recovery (long-term)	The council has worked in partnership with organisations across the Thames Valley to develop a recovery framework across the region. A set of actions for Berkshire is being developed to enable sharing of best practice and coordination of activity where it is most appropriately undertaken at a county-level. **RBWM Recovery Strategy:** On 24 September 2020 Cabinet approved the RBWM Recovery Strategy (targeted at borough-level) to move into delivery phase. The strategy sets out the council's approach to supporting residents and businesses, empowering communities to thrive and building lasting partnerships with businesses
Recovery (long-term)	**Local Contact Tracing Service:** The council set up a local contact tracing service which started operating in November 2020 to complement the national NHS Test and Trace service. Operating 7 days a week, the service reaches out to residents who have tested positive for Covid-19 but who have not been successfully contacted by the national NHS Test and Trace system. The purpose of LCT is to ensure they get in touch with as many positive cases as possible, to aid them in their isolation and in order to obtain details of their contacts and specific high-risk locations that they visited, therefore potentially reducing further transmission within the community and the spread of covid-19. As of the end of March 2021 there were 847 cases in total which had been contacted by the LCT team, which amounted to 1,290 calls.
Recovery (long-term)	**Lateral flow tests:** From 8 February 2021 rapid Covid-19 test centres opened in Braywick Leisure Centre and Windsor Leisure Centre, offering 30-minute lateral flow tests (LFDTs) initially to people working in public-facing roles who do not have Covid-19 symptoms. The purpose of the tests is to identify asymptomatic carriers of the virus. In the first week of operation 1,210 people were tested across both sites. Following an announcement by the Prime Minister in April 2021, anyone is now able access the LFDT at the centres, or to pick up a home-testing kit or get a rapid Covid-19 test at Braywick or Windsor Leisure Centre as

22

	lockdown restrictions are eased. A mobile unit now provides for the public to collect home-testing kits is also operating from the Ascot Racecourse carpark on Mondays and Wednesdays, 8-12pm. The arrangements for the LFDT centres at Braywick and Windsor Leisure Centres is provisionally set until 30th June , however this is kept under review as progress along the government Roadmap is tracked and restrictions are eased. It is expected that home testing kits will continue to be available after this date, but the details of the arrangements for the various strands of community-based testing are continuing to evolve.

PRIORITY:	INTERIM FOCUS OBJECTIVES 2020-21
Item	**Achievements and key milestones**
Revised Service Operating Plans	As part of the organisational recovery strategy, service-level step-up plans were implemented, as were changes to existing operating models to allow services to continue in a socially-distanced and safe way. One example has been our new alternative operation in the library service to be able to provide a Covid-safe environment. We introduced a phased opening up of services, focussing on a "click and collect" and "click and deliver" service initially alongside a resumption of home-delivery services. There has been a further opening up of services in two main sites including bookable access to PCs and browsing for books to ensure there is a balance between accessing services whilst protecting the health and wellbeing of our residents and staff. A key concern of the last 12 months has been the disruption to household waste and recycling collections. The impact on residents has had a knock-on effect on the volume of calls to the customer contact centre and the online "report it" function. The council continues to work with its contractor to improve the service and bring in strategies to help with climate change.
Transformation Strategy	The Transformation Strategy 2020-2025 was unanimously approved by the Cabinet Transformation Sub-Committee on 22 September 2020. The strategy's development responds to key challenges surrounding the council's financial position and builds upon the strong foundations of innovation and community-empowerment that quickly developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Strategy aims to deliver radical changes to the way in which the council operates and identifies 6 key areas for transformation (culture, environment, prevention, digital, process redesign and finance). Action plans by which to deliver the Strategy are presently being developed. Whilst Covid-19 has impacted progress, a number of projects have been implemented, proving that design and innovation can be done quickly and in an agile fashion. Asset Based Community Development methods have been used to deliver the Embedding Community Response project in Clewer and Dedworth. This project has created a blueprint for the council to work with communities to co-produce and co-design ways of delivering community projects. As the year progresses this will be rolled out in all areas of the borough. The Transformation Team is also engaging with other strategies to inform and understand how the framework can help with delivery of corporate plans.

Environment and Climate Strategy	Following a public consultation, the updated Environment and Climate Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 17 December 2020. We are now working across different council services and with stakeholders to deliver the actions set out within the strategy's 5-year delivery plan. We have already been successful in securing over £1.2m in grants to support delivery of the strategy.
Governance	A new full-time Monitoring Officer and Deputy Director of Law and Strategy joined the council in February 2021 to lead a new Governance, Law and Strategy Directorate and to bolster the council's governance capability. The Directorate is currently leading the development of the council's new Corporate Plan. A Statutory Officers Group has been formed and meets on a regular basis to action issues of concern and promote a strong governance and decision-making culture at the authority. This Group reviews the effectiveness of current arrangements and champions best practice whilst feeding into the Annual Governance Statement.
	Following the CIPFA financial governance reviews and detailed action plans that were developed during the year in relation to finance and pension fund governance, detailed action plans have been developed, monitored and reviewed throughout the year. All actions for the finance governance review have been started and almost all actions completed in year. For the pensions action plan, these are reported to the Pensions Fund Committee and over half have already been completed and the rest are expected to be completed to the timelines agreed.
People Plan	A key foundation of the council's future People Strategy is the agreement of organisational values to govern how we work and behave everyday. Following extensive staff consultation, a suite of new values was launched on 19 June 2020, each underpinned by illustrative positive behaviours. The new values are: • Invest in strong foundations • Empowered to improve • One team and vision • Respect and openness. An activity plan will incorporate all of the initiatives that are developed to deliver against our People Strategy. This will be a dynamic tracker and will include the outcomes and/or outputs of initiatives such as those to implement the values. For example, "Crucial Conversations" training on how to challenge behaviours contrary to our values was rolled out for all staff between November 2020 and January 2021. The staff survey was conducted in November 2020, and the results analysed. A further staff survey was launched by the staff-led Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Network in March 21 to gain specific insights into perceptions of equality, diversity and inclusion in the council. The results are presently being analysed. Both sets of results will feed into the activity plan underpinning the People Strategy as appropriate.

PRIORITY:	REVISED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY
Item	**Achievements and key milestones**
Revised Medium Term	An extraordinary Council meeting was held on the 14 October 2020 to discuss a refreshed Medium Term Financial Strategy. The actual strategy

24

Financial Strategy	had not been changed (other than to update any factual changes around dates and technical updates) but the financial modelling was updated to reflect the latest information as we currently know it, changes in assumptions around central government funding, inflation assumptions and other emerging issues. This formed the start of the budget-setting process for 2021/22 and the supporting Medium term financial plan. The draft budget for 2021/22 was discussed at Cabinet on 17 December 2020 and subsequently published on 22 December 2020 for consultation. This draft budget was also considered by all Overview and Scrutiny Panels in January 2021 and approved at Full Council on 23 February 2021.

3. Service Performance Summary Report (YTD)

3.1 Performance of measures previously reported to the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Panel are set out here on the basis that these measures provide some insights into service delivery (priority 2).

	Green (Succeeding or achieved)	Amber (Near target)	Red (Needs improvement)	Non Targeted measure
Percentage emergency 2 hr orders responded on time (Highways)	X			
No. homeless households in temporary accommodation				X
No. households where prevention duty has been ended successfully	X			
Monthly Footfall: Maidenhead Town Centre	X			
Monthly Footfall: Windsor Town Centre	X			
Percentage of Major Planning Applications processed in time	X			
Percentage of Minor Planning Applications processed in time	X			
Percentage of "Other" Planning Applications processed in time		X		
TOTAL (8)	**6**	**1**	**0**	**1**

25

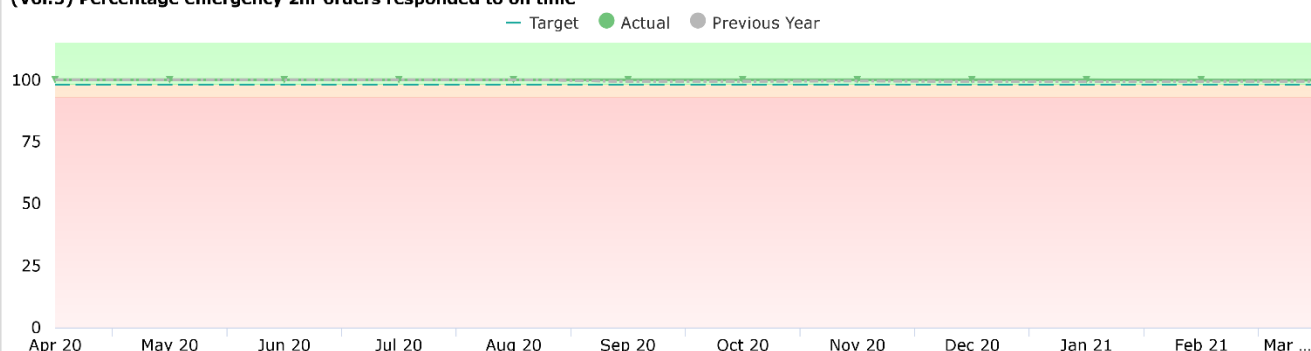## 4. Commissioning – Infrastructure: Performance Trends

4.1. Highways

(Vol:5) No. 2hr orders completed in time (Annual YTD)
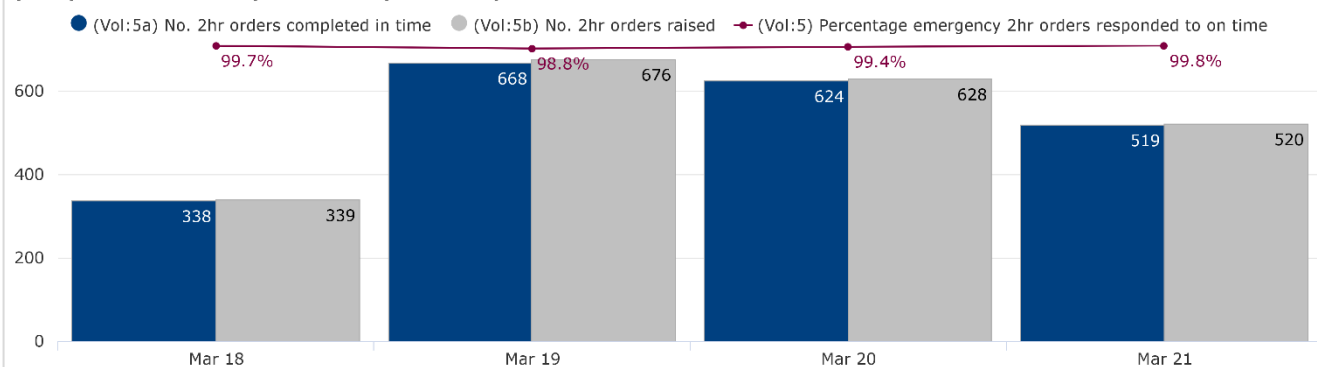
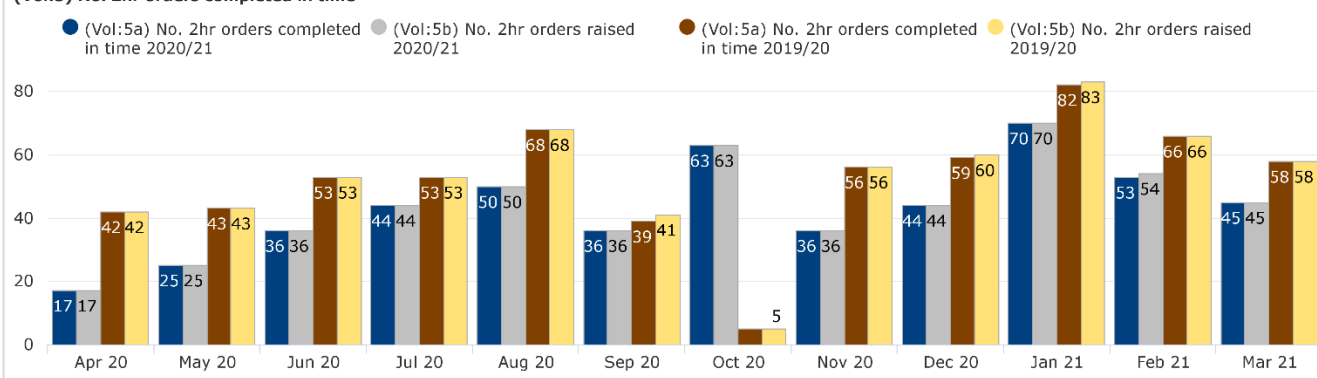● (Vol:5a) No. 2hr orders completed in time   ● (Vol:5b) No. 2hr orders raised   ◆ (Vol:5) Percentage emergency 2hr orders responded to on time

	Mar 18	Mar 19	Mar 20	Mar 21
Percentage	99.7%	98.8%	99.4%	99.8%
Completed	338	668	624	519
Raised	339	676	628	520

(Vol:5) Percentage emergency 2hr orders responded to on time

— Target   ● Actual   ● Previous Year

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Target	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%
Period	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	98.1%	100.0%
YTD	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.8%	99.8%

(Vol:5) No. 2hr orders completed in time

● (Vol:5a) No. 2hr orders completed in time 2020/21   ● (Vol:5b) No. 2hr orders raised 2020/21   ● (Vol:5a) No. 2hr orders completed in time 2019/20   ● (Vol:5b) No. 2hr orders raised 2019/20

Q4 Commentary

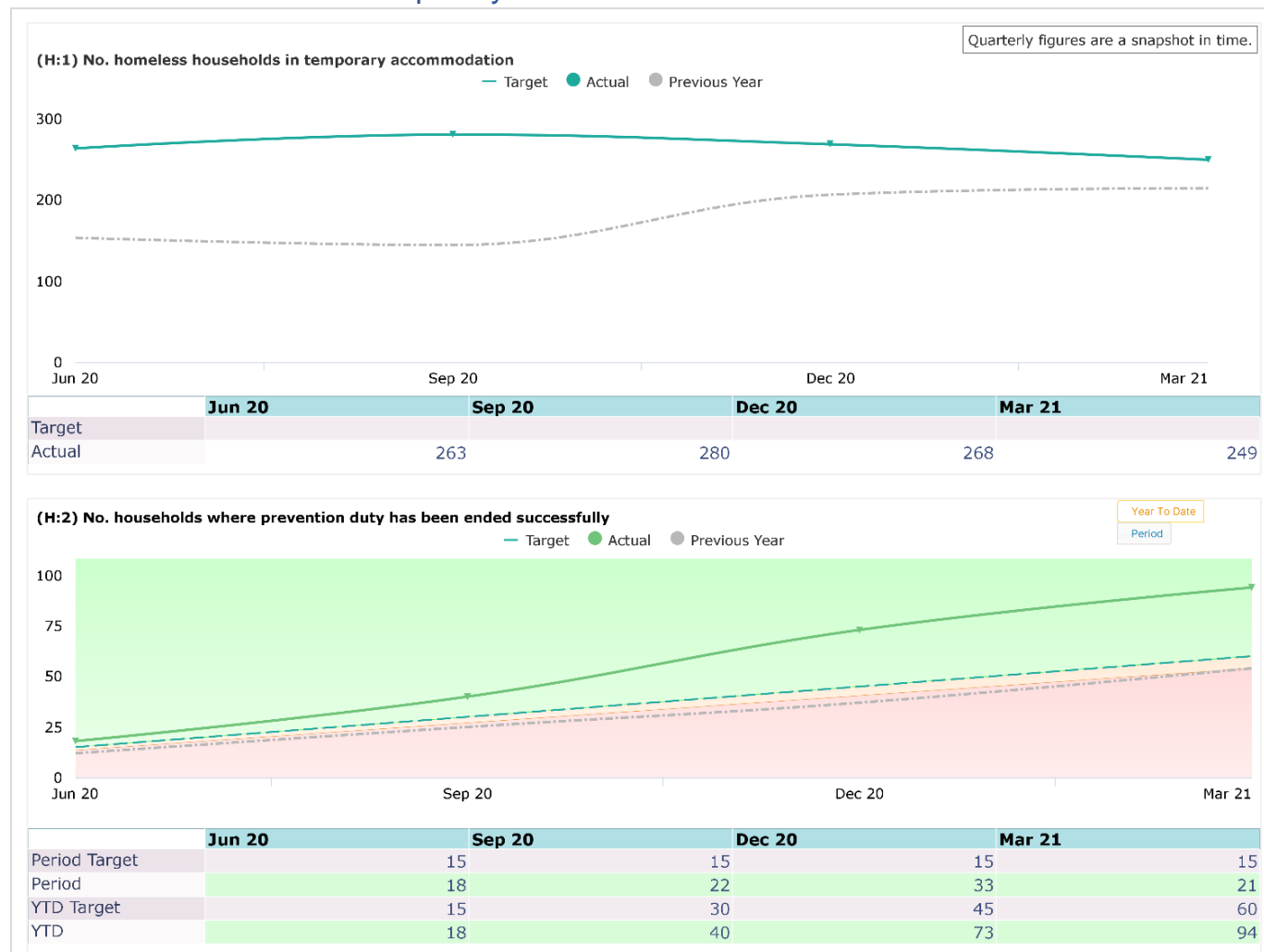*The target for this measure is 98% with red flag raised if performance is equal to/below 93%.*

The aim of this indicator is to ensure the maintenance of a safe highway network for all road-users by monitoring the contractor's responsiveness to urgent safety hazards. The end of year position is 99.8% (519/520), above target by 1.8, and the highest annual performance of the last 4-year period.

26

5. Housing: Performance Trends

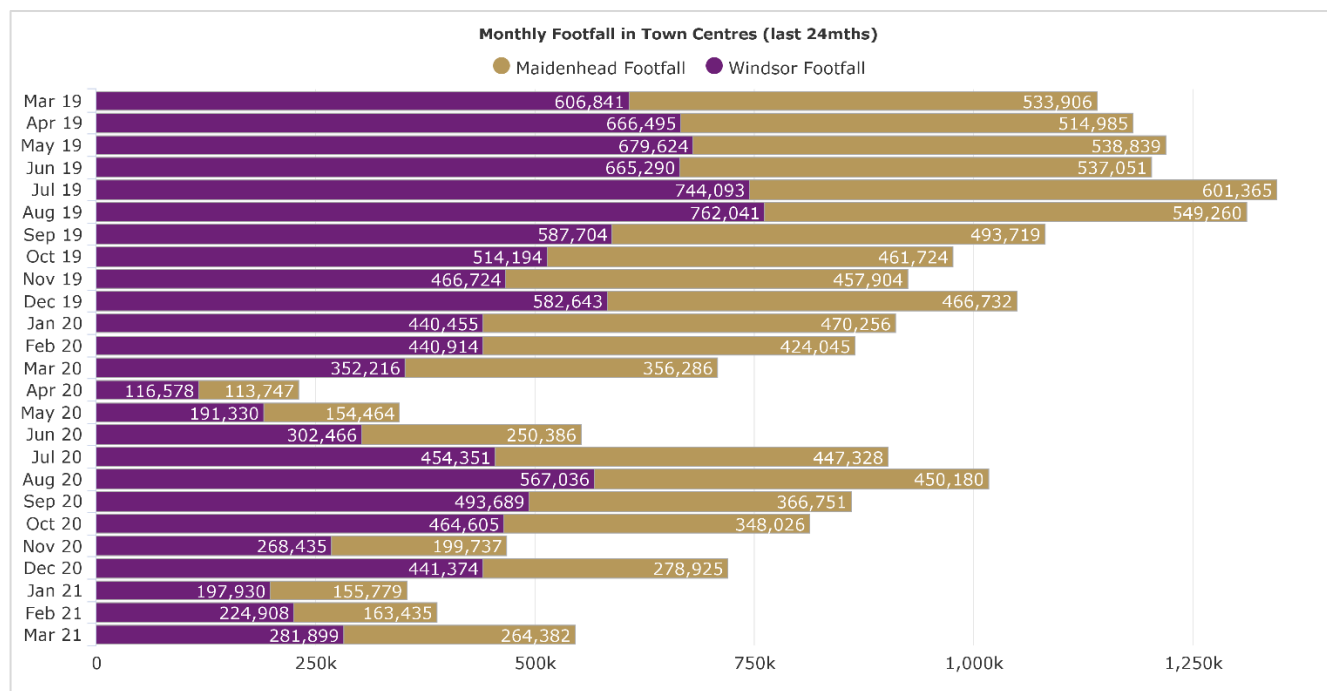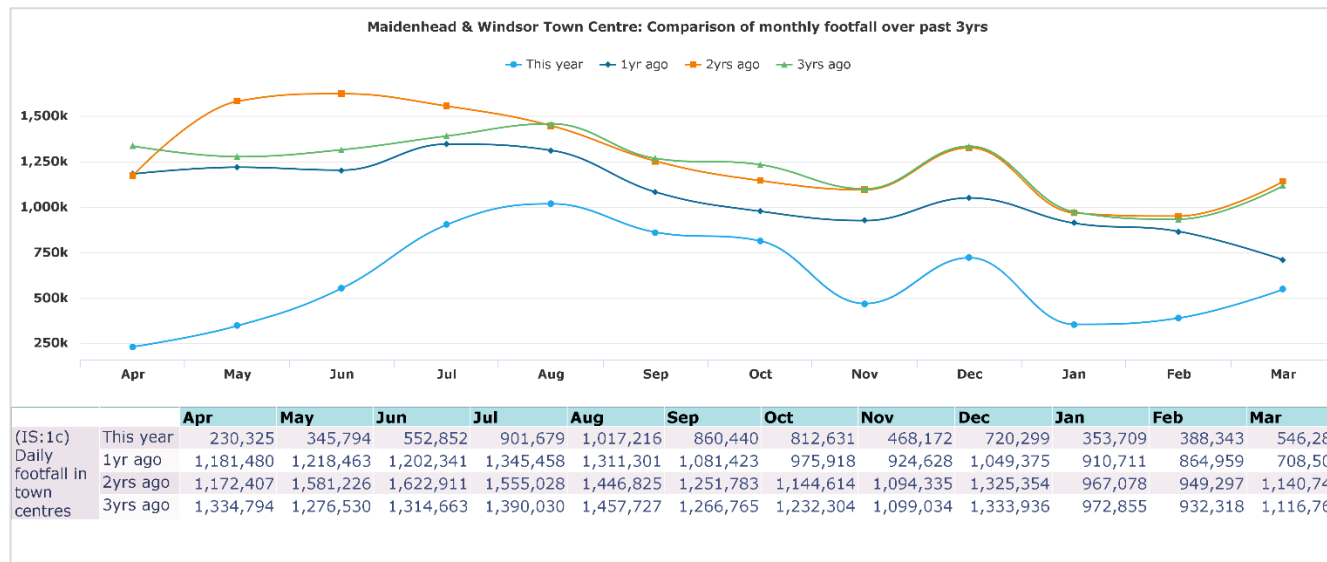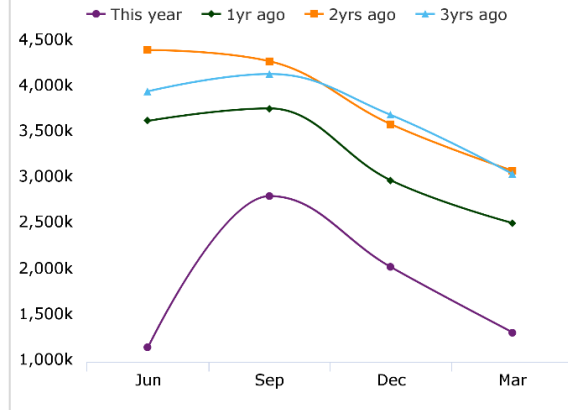## 5.1. Homelessness and temporary accommodation

Quarterly figures are a snapshot in time.

(H:1) No. homeless households in temporary accommodation

— Target ● Actual ● Previous Year

	Jun 20	Sep 20	Dec 20	Mar 21
Target				
Actual	263	280	268	249

(H:2) No. households where prevention duty has been ended successfully

Year To Date / Period

— Target ● Actual ● Previous Year

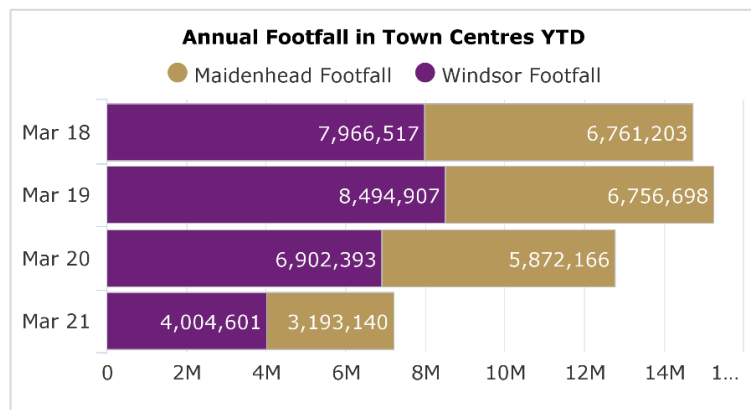|	Jun 20	Sep 20	Dec 20	Mar 21
Period Target	15	15	15	15
Period	18	22	33	21
YTD Target	15	30	45	60
YTD	18	40	73	94

Q4 Commentary

(H:1) No. homeless households in temporary accommodation: (249) Temporary accommodation is provided to households when they have approached the local authority and are deemed to be homeless with no other housing options. Local authorities will monitor numbers of households (and types) in temporary accommodation with a view to reducing numbers quarter by quarter. Due to central government's request that all households accommodated during the Covid-19 *Everyone in* campaign remain in accommodation until a longer-term accommodation solution is found temporary accommodation numbers are high and targets cannot currently be set. However, it is encouraging to note that the figures are steadily decreasing since September 2020.Target-setting will be reviewed in the next financial year.

(H:2) No. households where prevention duty has been ended successfully (94) *The year-end target for this measure is 60 and profiled monthly. A red flag is raised if volumes are at/fall below 10% of the target. The target and tolerance thresholds are unchanged from 2019/20. Please Note: The Q1 figures have been changed from 15 to 18 (both exceeding targets).* As part of the housing options role, officers are constantly looking at ways to prevent homelessness and support households into accommodation options. Prevention duty has been very successful and above target for the entire year.

27

6. Infrastructure, Sustainability and Growth: Performance Trends

6.1. Footfall in Town Centres (combined)

Annual Footfall in Town Centres YTD

Maidenhead Footfall Windsor Footfall

	Windsor	Maidenhead
Mar 18	7,966,517	6,761,203
Mar 19	8,494,907	6,756,698
Mar 20	6,902,393	5,872,166
Mar 21	4,004,601	3,193,140

This year · 1yr ago · 2yrs ago · 3yrs ago

Maidenhead & Windsor Town Centre: Comparison of monthly footfall over past 3yrs

This year · 1yr ago · 2yrs ago · 3yrs ago

		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
(IS:1c) Daily footfall in town centres	This year	230,325	345,794	552,852	901,679	1,017,216	860,440	812,631	468,172	720,299	353,709	388,343	546,281
	1yr ago	1,181,480	1,218,463	1,202,341	1,345,458	1,311,301	1,081,423	975,918	924,628	1,049,375	910,711	864,959	708,502
	2yrs ago	1,172,407	1,581,226	1,622,911	1,555,028	1,446,825	1,251,783	1,144,614	1,094,335	1,325,354	967,078	949,297	1,140,747
	3yrs ago	1,334,794	1,276,530	1,314,663	1,390,030	1,457,727	1,266,765	1,232,304	1,099,034	1,333,936	972,855	932,318	1,116,764

Monthly Footfall in Town Centres (last 24mths)

Maidenhead Footfall Windsor Footfall

|	Windsor	Maidenhead
Mar 19	606,841	533,906
Apr 19	666,495	514,985
May 19	679,624	538,839
Jun 19	665,290	537,051
Jul 19	744,093	601,365
Aug 19	762,041	549,260
Sep 19	587,704	493,719
Oct 19	514,194	461,724
Nov 19	466,724	457,904
Dec 19	582,643	466,732
Jan 20	440,455	470,256
Feb 20	440,914	424,045
Mar 20	352,216	356,286
Apr 20	116,578	113,747
May 20	191,330	154,464
Jun 20	302,466	250,386
Jul 20	454,351	447,328
Aug 20	567,036	450,180
Sep 20	493,689	366,751
Oct 20	464,605	348,026
Nov 20	268,435	199,737
Dec 20	441,374	278,925
Jan 21	197,930	155,779
Feb 21	224,908	163,435
Mar 21	281,899	264,382

Q4 Commentary

28

Throughout 2020/21 lockdown restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have substantially impacted footfall in town centres (Windsor and Maidenhead) and the combined footfall (7,197,741) constitutes 56.3% of total footfall in 2019/20 (12,774,559). Peak footfall occurred in August 2020 (1,017,216 combined) which coincided with the central government initiative "Eat out to help out", targeted to support the hospitality industry's recovery.

There is a clear evidence-base emerging that, prior to Covid-19, consumer spending patterns are continuing to move away from physical goods (more inclined to online shopping) and towards leisure experiences, including eating and drinking. Consumer behaviours are likely to change further after this pandemic which will likely have an overall impact on footfall figures. On 24 September 2020 Cabinet approved the RBWM Recovery Strategy (targeted at borough-level) to move into delivery phase. The strategy sets out the council's approach to supporting residents and businesses, promoting the commercial centres of the borough as a safe place to visit and focussing on retaining local spend whilst there may still be reticence to go further afield.

6.2. Maidenhead Town Centre footfall

(IS:1a) Footfall in Maidenhead Town Centre
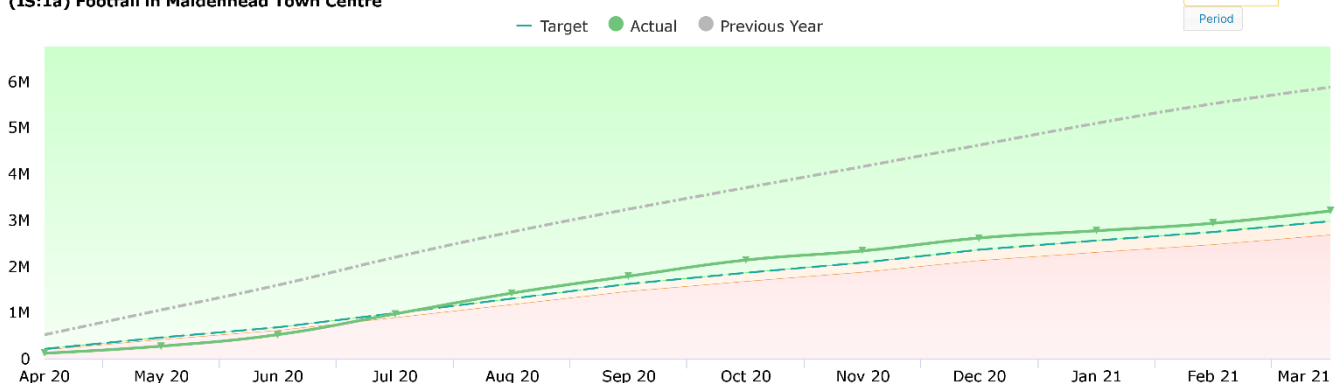
	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Period target	208,000	248,000	220,500	306,000	315,000	318,000	240,000	220,500	280,000	198,000	184,500	234,000
Period actual	113,747	154,464	250,386	447,328	450,180	366,751	348,026	199,737	278,925	155,779	163,435	264,382
YTD target	208,000	456,000	676,500	982,500	1,297,500	1,615,500	1,855,500	2,076,000	2,356,000	2,554,000	2,738,500	2,972,500
YTD actual	113,747	268,211	518,597	965,925	1,416,105	1,782,856	2,130,882	2,330,619	2,609,544	2,765,323	2,928,758	3,193,140

Maidenhead Town Centre: Comparison of monthly footfall over the past 3 years
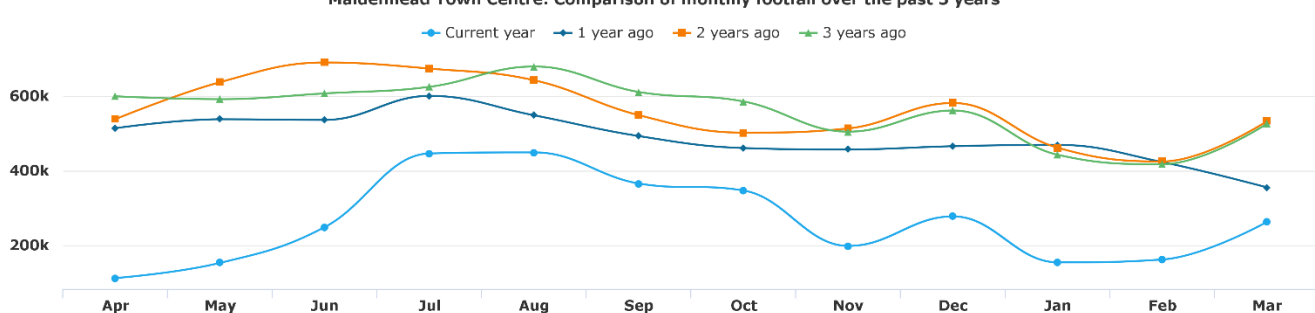
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Current year	113,747	154,464	250,386	447,328	450,180	366,751	348,026	199,737	278,925	155,779	163,435	264,382
1 year ago	514,985	538,839	537,051	601,365	549,260	493,719	461,724	457,904	466,732	470,256	424,045	356,286
2 years ago	539,311	638,096	690,625	674,335	643,083	549,609	502,923	514,309	582,236	462,470	425,795	533,906
3 years ago	600,130	592,527	607,997	625,630	679,928	611,714	586,339	505,577	562,215	443,606	418,529	527,011

Q4 Commentary

From the outset of the pandemic monthly footfall targets were re-profiled to reflect the economic climate and the lockdown restrictions in place from 23 March 2020. The year-end target for Maidenhead was set at 2,972,500, a 49.4% reduction on the 2019/20 outturn of 5,872,166, and with a 10% tolerance. This target has always been acknowledged as a reasonable expectation
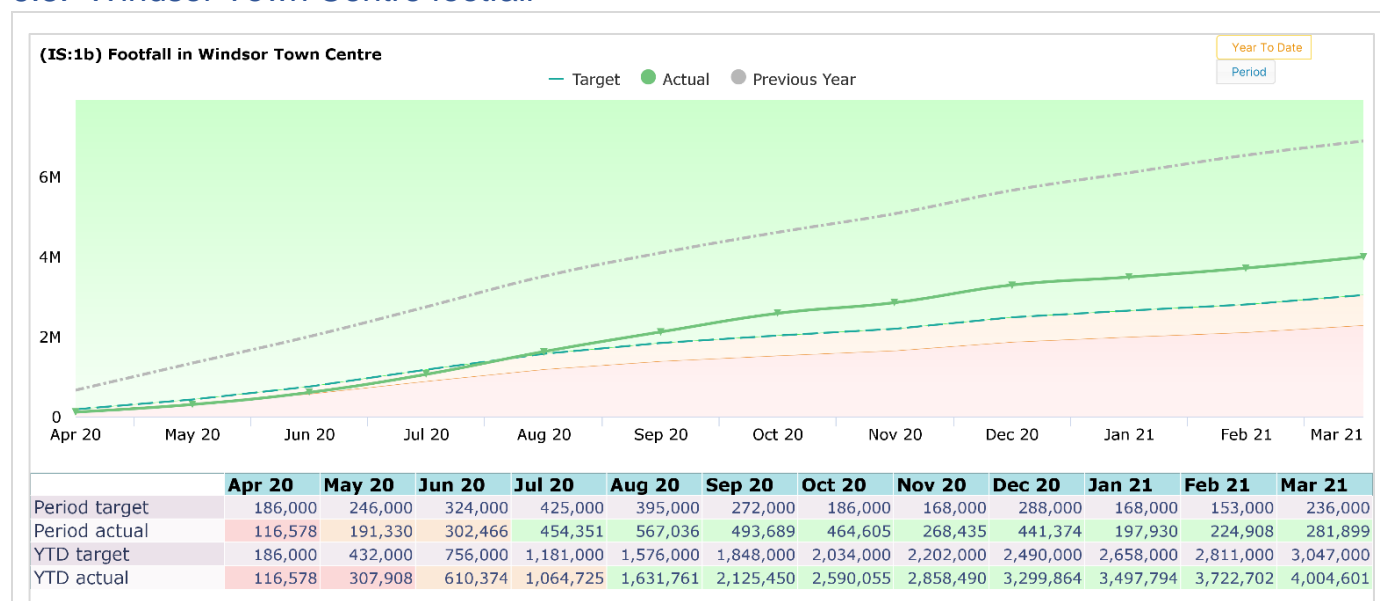
29

against which to track emerging trends rather than a definitive statement of success/failure owing to the uncertainty of the pandemic's progression.
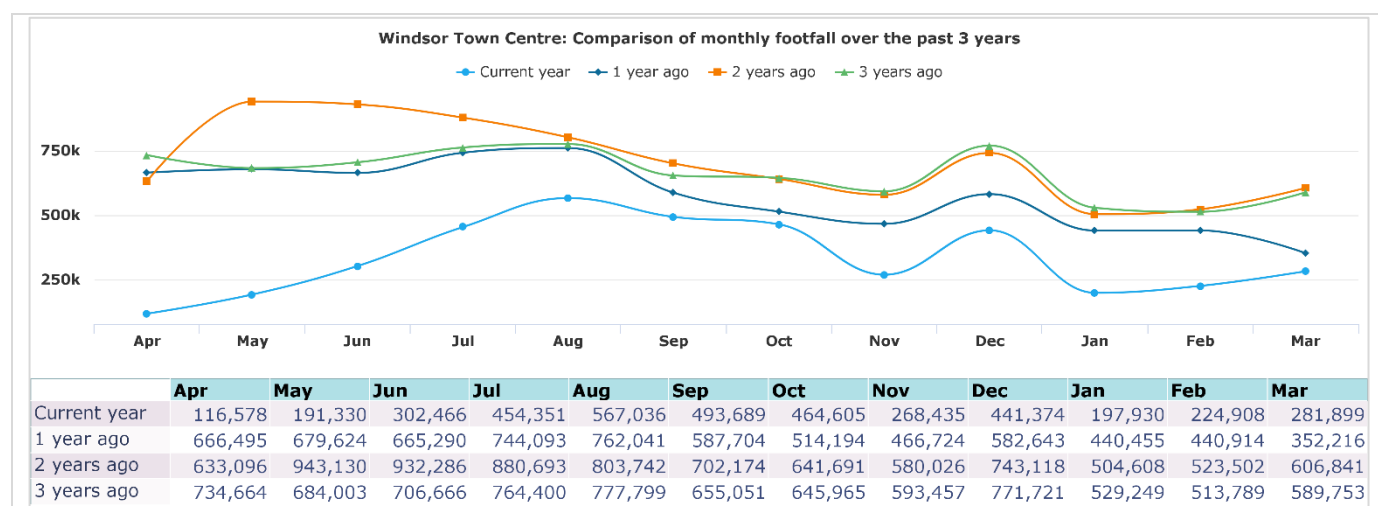
At the close of 2020/21 total footfall for Maidenhead in 2020/21 was 3,193,140, above target by 220,640, but constituting 54.4% of 2019/20 total footfall (5,872,166). Maidenhead footfall figures are particularly influenced by volumes of office-workers. With home-working options now a likely ongoing feature of businesses across the country, the reliance on online shopping generated by lockdown restrictions, and both actual and perceived disruption to Maidenhead town centre as a result of regeneration schemes, the challenges to the local economy and town centre are acute.

It is encouraging however that Maidenhead's monthly footfall trends broadly follow those of previous years, albeit at lower volumes. A strong "shop local" sentiment has emerged throughout the pandemic, supported at a local level by a range of online campaigns including "Shop Local, Support Local", "Independents Day" and "Rediscover Your Royal Borough". Whilst the local programme of Christmas events was not possible, a borough-wide Christmas brochure was produced to encourage residents to support local businesses and to promote events and activities that were still able to take place. Free parking options were also introduced in July and December 2020 to help stimulate the local economy. As town centre regeneration plans continue there will be a further loss of retail units in the short term with an expected further corresponding reduction in footfall. Despite the disruption to the town as a result of the regeneration schemes either already underway or planned, the end result will be a redeveloped town centre where people will want to be, and this will help to restore overall footfall for the town.

This is a challenging time for the economy generally and town centres particularly, as businesses work to meet covid-secure requirements within a global mood of caution about the virus' potential transmission. The RBWM Recovery Strategy promotes the commercial centres of the borough as a safe place to visit, focussing on retaining local spend whilst there may still be reticence to go further afield. The local business community is being offered toolkits and training via My Royal Borough and a programme of digital training will be launched to upskill local businesses and create opportunities for businesses to succeed.

6.3. Windsor Town Centre footfall

(IS:1b) Footfall in Windsor Town Centre

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Period target	186,000	246,000	324,000	425,000	395,000	272,000	186,000	168,000	288,000	168,000	153,000	236,000
Period actual	116,578	191,330	302,466	454,351	567,036	493,689	464,605	268,435	441,374	197,930	224,908	281,899
YTD target	186,000	432,000	756,000	1,181,000	1,576,000	1,848,000	2,034,000	2,202,000	2,490,000	2,658,000	2,811,000	3,047,000
YTD actual	116,578	307,908	610,374	1,064,725	1,631,761	2,125,450	2,590,055	2,858,490	3,299,864	3,497,794	3,722,702	4,004,601

30

Windsor Town Centre: Comparison of monthly footfall over the past 3 years

	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Current year	116,578	191,330	302,466	454,351	567,036	493,689	464,605	268,435	441,374	197,930	224,908	281,899
1 year ago	666,495	679,624	665,290	744,093	762,041	587,704	514,194	466,724	582,643	440,455	440,914	352,216
2 years ago	633,096	943,130	932,286	880,693	803,742	702,174	641,691	580,026	743,118	504,608	523,502	606,841
3 years ago	734,664	684,003	706,666	764,400	777,799	655,051	645,965	593,457	771,721	529,249	513,789	589,753

Q4 Commentary

From the outset of the pandemic monthly footfall targets were re-profiled to reflect the economic climate and the lockdown restrictions in place from 23 March 2020. The year-end target for Windsor was set at 3,047,000, a 55.9% reduction on the 2019/20 outturn of 6,902,393, and with a 25% tolerance to take account of the pandemic's impact on the tourist industry and related restrictions on international travel. This target has always been acknowledged as a reasonable expectation against which to track emerging trends rather than a definitive statement of success/failure owing to the uncertainty of the pandemic's progression.

At the close of 2020/21 total footfall for Windsor in 2020/21 was 4,004,601, above target by 957,601, but constituting 58% of 2019/20 total footfall (6,902,393). Whilst also subject to the challenges presented by increased home-working options and online shopping, Windsor's footfall is heavily influenced by the tourist trade, which itself has been severely impacted by the pandemic through the closure of visitor attractions. International travel (supporting approximately 30% of footfall) and the business conference offer from hotels in the town (supporting approximately 33% of footfall) have also been hit hard by the pandemic The volume of coach park users in 2020/21 has only been 165 in comparison to 19,597 in 2019/20; a reduction by 99%.

This is a challenging time for the economy generally and town centres particularly, as businesses work to meet covid-secure requirements within a global mood of caution about the virus' potential transmission. It is encouraging, however, that Windsor's monthly footfall trends broadly follow those of previous years, albeit at lower volumes, and October footfall particularly (464,605) reached close to October monthly footfall for the previous year (514,194). As outlined at 6.2 of this report, the promotion of the "shop local" message, free parking options and the offer of a "toolkit" and training for local businesses have been delivered throughout the year to stimulate the local economy and create opportunities for local businesses to succeed. The RBWM Recovery Strategy continues to promote the commercial centres of the borough as a safe place to visit and focusing on retaining local spend.

Ascot Town Centre

There are currently no footfall counters in Ascot high street and the surrounding commercial centres. The return of racing at Ascot Racecourse will have a strong impact on footfall into the high street and the associated increase in spend. The vacancy rate for Ascot in general is low (between 3–7%) when compared to the main town centres of the borough (Windsor, 13%). When the remaining unlocking phases of the National road-map have been delivered it will provide the recovery team with better evidence as to who has survived and plan accordingly.
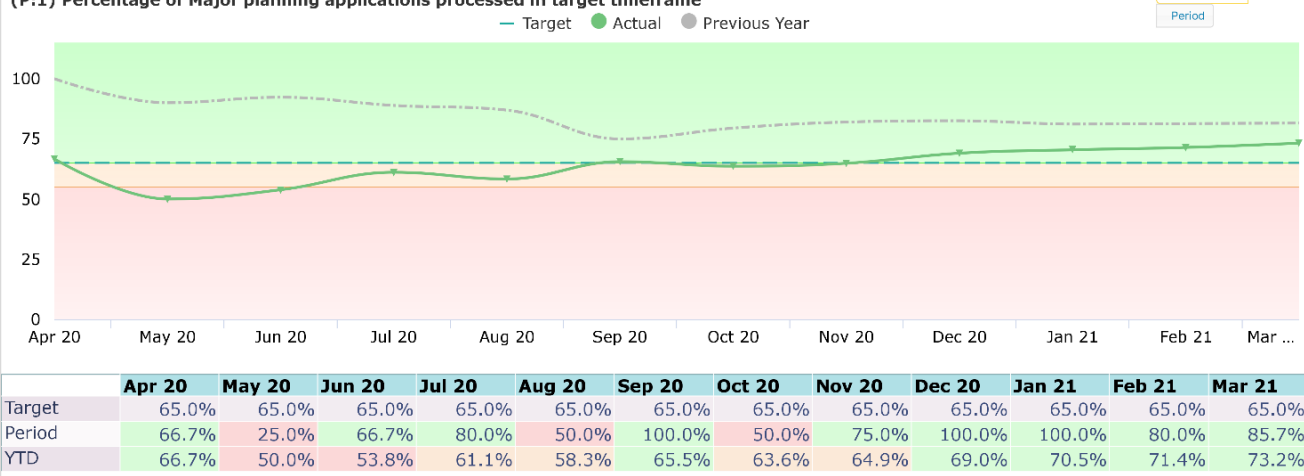
31

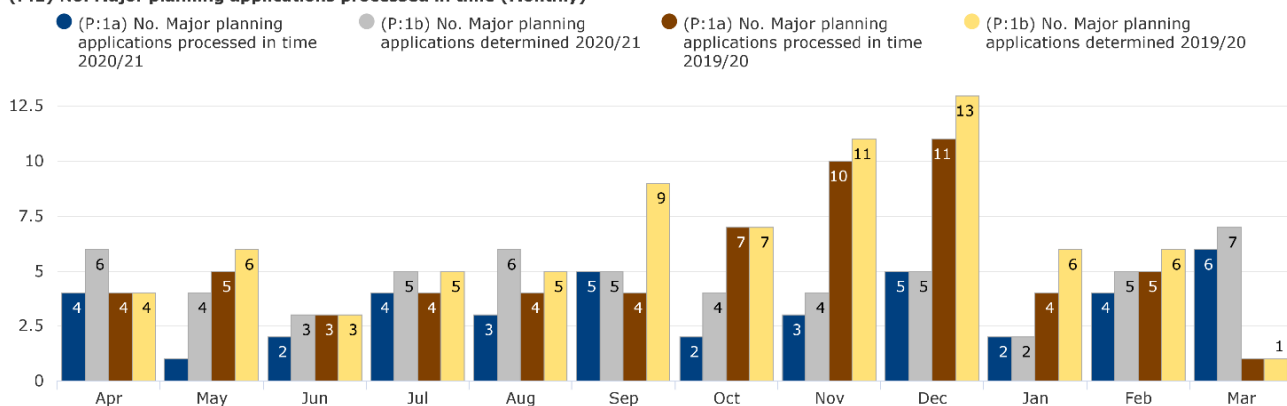# 7.   Planning: Performance Trends

7.1. Planning Applications: Major

(P:1) No. Major planning applications processed in time (Annual Totals)
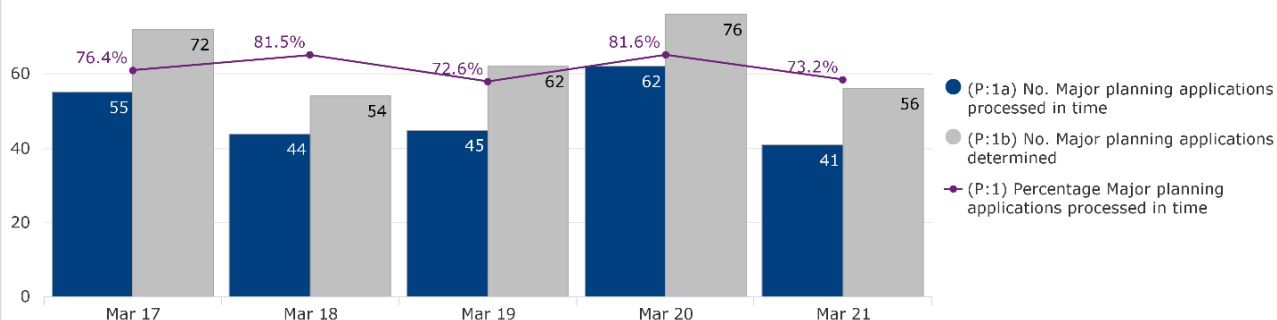
- (P:1a) No. Major planning applications processed in time
- (P:1b) No. Major planning applications determined
- (P:1) Percentage Major planning applications processed in time

(P:1) Percentage of Major planning applications processed in target timeframe

— Target ● Actual ● Previous Year

Year To Date | Period

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Target	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Period	66.7%	25.0%	66.7%	80.0%	50.0%	100.0%	50.0%	75.0%	100.0%	100.0%	80.0%	85.7%
YTD	66.7%	50.0%	53.8%	61.1%	58.3%	65.5%	63.6%	64.9%	69.0%	70.5%	71.4%	73.2%

(P:1) No. Major planning applications processed in time (Monthly)

- (P:1a) No. Major planning applications processed in time 2020/21
- (P:1b) No. Major planning applications determined 2020/21
- (P:1a) No. Major planning applications processed in time 2019/20
- (P:1b) No. Major planning applications determined 2019/20

32

Benchmarking: Quarterly Figures (P:1) Percentage of Major planning applications processed in target timeframe
Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics
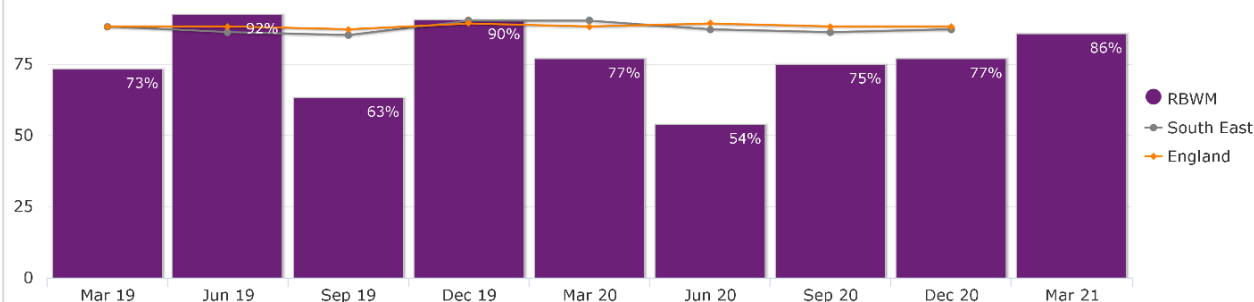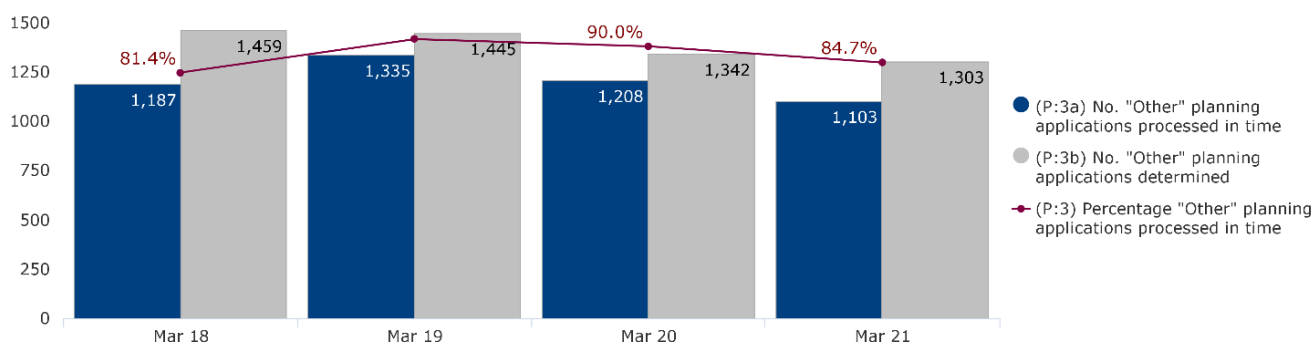

	Mar 19	Jun 19	Sep 19	Dec 19	Mar 20	Jun 20	Sep 20	Dec 20	Mar 21
RBWM	73%	92%	63%	90%	77%	54%	75%	77%	86%
South East	88%	86%	85%	90%	90%	87%	86%	87%	
England	88%	88%	87%	89%	88%	89%	88%	88%	

Q4 Commentary

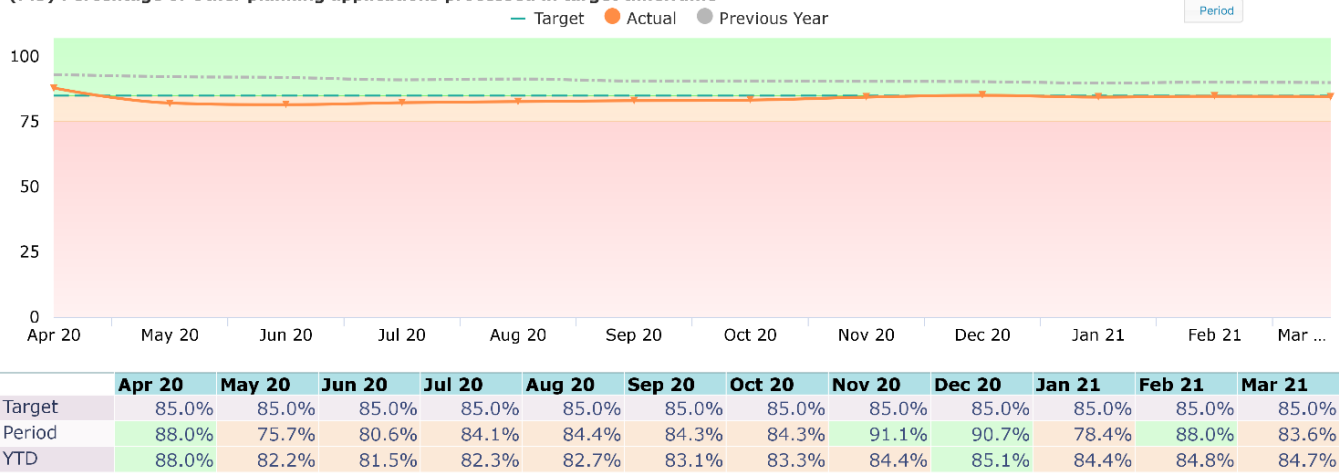*The target for this measure is 65% with red flag raised if performance is equal to or below 55%.*

As at the end of Q4 year-to-date performance stands at 73.2% (41/56), above target by 8.2 but lower than year-to-date performance in 2019/20 (81.6%, 62/76). YTD performance has been mostly impacted by Q1 (Apr-Jun) when performance fell below target and outside of tolerance (53.8%, 7/13). This is partly attributed to a change in working arrangements as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as a number of applications being determined for which it was not possible to agree extensions to the deadline. The total number of applications determined in 2020/21(56) is fewer than 2019/20 (76) and could be attributed to the uncertainties of Covid-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions. Benchmarking data available up to the end of Q3 2020/21 shows council's performance steadily improving from the Q1 position narrowing the gap between council and South East and England performance.

33

7.2. Planning Applications: Minor

(P:2) No. Minor planning applications processed in time (Annual Totals)
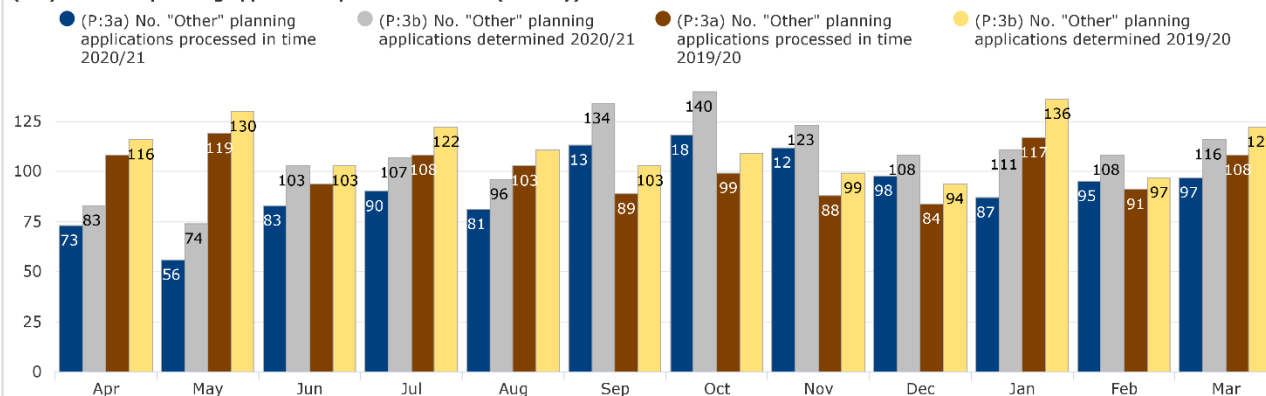

Legend:
- ● (P:2a) No. Minor planning applications processed in time
- ● (P:2b) No. Minor planning applications determined
- ● (P:2) Percentage of Minor planning applications processed in time

(P:2) Percentage of Minor planning applications processed in target timeframe

— Target ● Actual ● Previous Year

Year To Date / Period
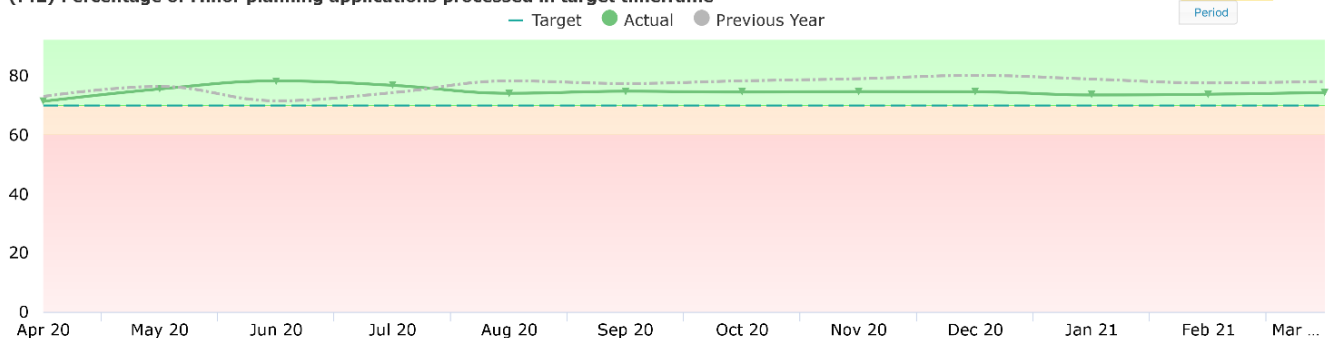
	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Target	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%
Period	71.4%	80.0%	84.2%	74.3%	61.9%	76.9%	72.7%	75.9%	73.7%	61.9%	75.9%	81.8%
YTD	71.4%	75.6%	78.3%	76.8%	74.1%	74.8%	74.6%	74.8%	74.7%	73.6%	73.8%	74.4%

(P:2) No. Minor planning applications processed in time (Monthly)
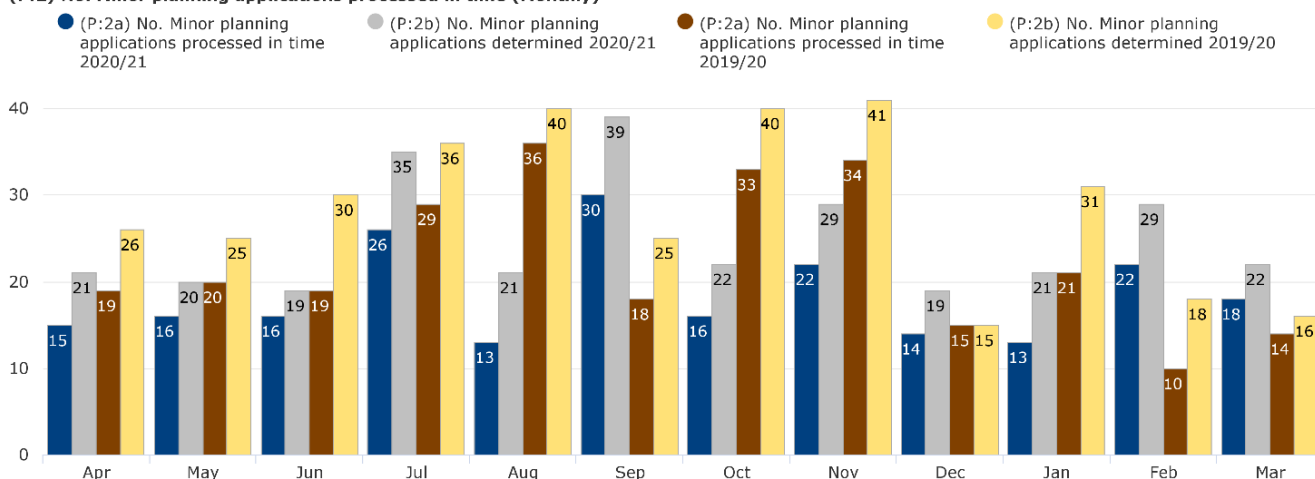
- ● (P:2a) No. Minor planning applications processed in time 2020/21
- ● (P:2b) No. Minor planning applications determined 2020/21
- ● (P:2a) No. Minor planning applications processed in time 2019/20
- ● (P:2b) No. Minor planning applications determined 2019/20

34

Benchmarking: Quarterly Figures (P:2) Percentage of Minor planning applications processed in target timeframe
Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics

	Mar 19	Jun 19	Sep 19	Dec 19	Mar 20	Jun 20	Sep 20	Dec 20	Mar 21
RBWM	81%	72%	82%	85%	69%	78%	73%	74%	74%
South East	85%	85%	83%	84%	85%	86%	83%	83%	
England	84%	85%	84%	85%	85%	85%	84%	84%	
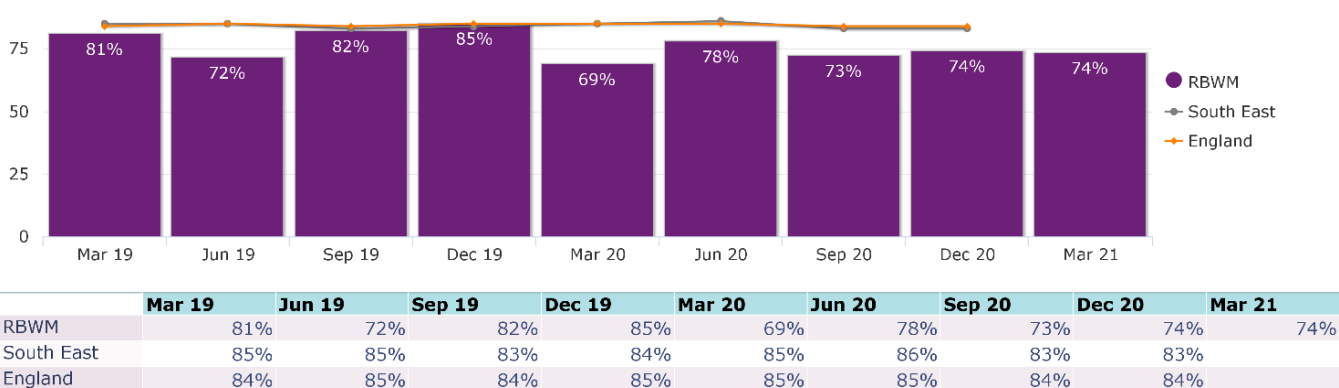
Q4 Commentary

The target for this measure is 70% with red flag raised if performance is equal to or below 60%.

As at the end of Q4 year-to-date performance stands at 74.4% (221/297), above target by 4.4 only slightly lower than year-to-date performance in 2019/20 (78.1%, 268/343). Monthly performance has remained above target for most of the year (10/12 months) showing no major concerns. Comparison of volumes of minor applications being determined in the last three years shows a general decline in number. Benchmarking data available up to the end of Q3 shows that quarterly performance is below South East and England performance for 2020/21.
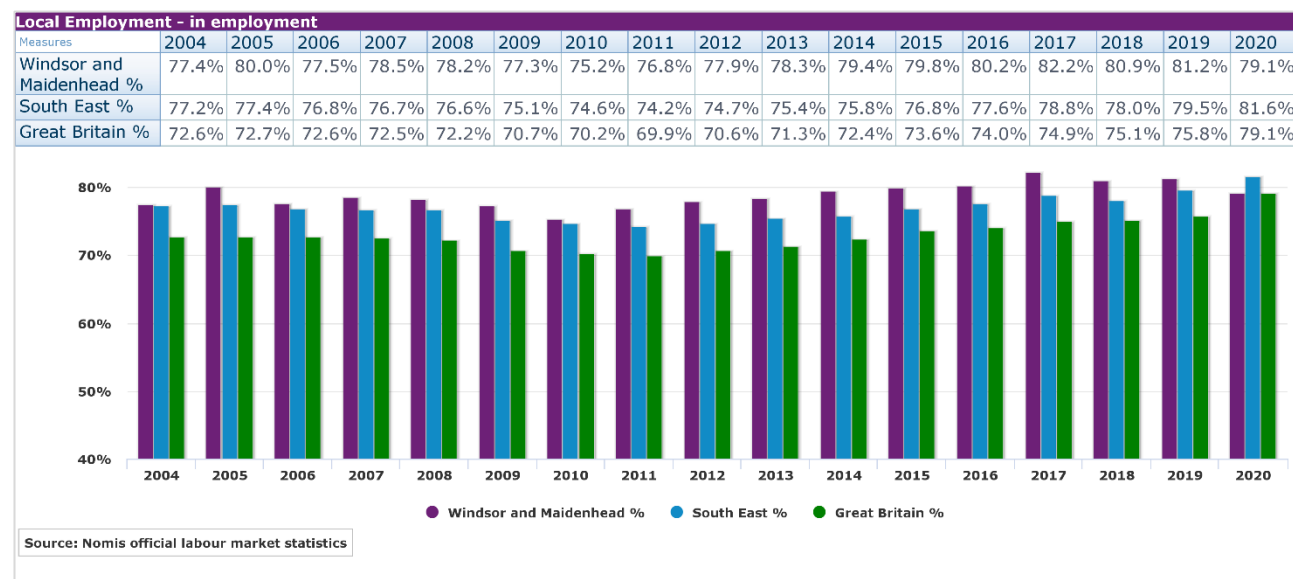
7.3. Planning Applications: Other

(P:3) No. Other planning applications processed in time (Annual)

(P:3) Percentage of Other planning applications processed in target timeframe

	Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20	Jul 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21
Target	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%
Period	88.0%	75.7%	80.6%	84.1%	84.4%	84.3%	84.3%	91.1%	90.7%	78.4%	88.0%	83.6%
YTD	88.0%	82.2%	81.5%	82.3%	82.7%	83.1%	83.3%	84.4%	85.1%	84.4%	84.8%	84.7%

35

(P:3) No. Other planning applications processed in time (Monthly)

- (P:3a) No. "Other" planning applications processed in time 2020/21
- (P:3b) No. "Other" planning applications determined 2020/21
- (P:3a) No. "Other" planning applications processed in time 2019/20
- (P:3b) No. "Other" planning applications determined 2019/20

Benchmarking: Quarterly Figures (P:3) Percentage of Other planning applications processed in target timeframe
Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics
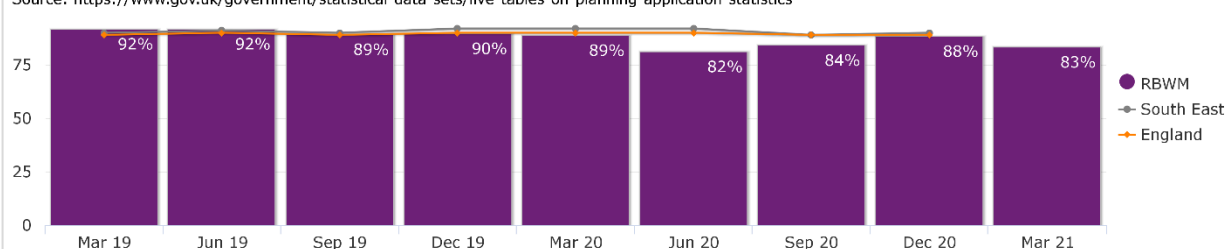
	Mar 19	Jun 19	Sep 19	Dec 19	Mar 20	Jun 20	Sep 20	Dec 20	Mar 21
RBWM	92%	92%	89%	90%	89%	82%	84%	88%	83%
South East	90%	91%	90%	92%	92%	92%	89%	90%	
England	89%	90%	89%	90%	90%	90%	89%	89%	

Q4 Commentary

The target for this measure is 85% with red flag raised if performance is equal to or below 75%.

As at the end of Q4 year-to-date performance stands at 84.7% (1,103/1,303), slightly lower than target by 0.3 though within tolerance for this measure and lower than year-to-date performance in 2019/20 (90%, 1,208/1,342). This is due to vacancies which have arisen during the year and for which successful recruitment has recently been completed to support performance improvement in 2021/22. The volume of incoming applications is broadly consistent with 2019/20 volumes. Benchmarking data is available up to the end of Q3 2020/21 shows that quarterly performance is broadly in line with South East and England performance.

36

8.   Business Intelligence: Local employment trends

8.1   This section includes the most recent Local Employment data available from the Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics.

Economically active

Local Employment – Economically Active																
Measures	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Windsor and Maidenhead %	80.3%	81.8%	80.9%	81.3%	81.2%	80.8%	80.5%	80.1%	81.0%	80.8%	82.4%	83.2%	83.2%	84.2%	83.1%	83.3%	81.4%
South East %	80.2%	80.4%	80.4%	80.1%	80.2%	79.9%	79.4%	79.1%	79.6%	80.0%	79.7%	80.3%	81.0%	81.4%	80.8%	82.0%	81.6%
Great Britain %	76.3%	76.5%	76.7%	76.6%	76.7%	76.7%	76.1%	76.1%	76.8%	77.2%	77.3%	77.8%	77.8%	78.4%	78.5%	78.9%	79.1%

Source: Nomis official labour market statistics

In employment

Local Employment – in employment																
Measures	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Windsor and Maidenhead %	77.4%	80.0%	77.5%	78.5%	78.2%	77.3%	75.2%	76.8%	77.9%	78.3%	79.4%	79.8%	80.2%	82.2%	80.9%	81.2%	79.1%
South East %	77.2%	77.4%	76.8%	76.7%	76.6%	75.1%	74.6%	74.2%	74.7%	75.4%	75.8%	76.8%	77.6%	78.8%	78.0%	79.5%	81.6%
Great Britain %	72.6%	72.7%	72.6%	72.5%	72.2%	70.7%	70.2%	69.9%	70.6%	71.3%	72.4%	73.6%	74.0%	74.9%	75.1%	75.8%	79.1%

Source: Nomis official labour market statistics

37

Unemployed

Local Employment – Unemployed																	
Measures	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Windsor and Maidenhead %	3.5%	2.9%	4.0%	3.3%	3.6%	5.1%	5.5%	4.5%	4.5%	4.1%	3.6%	3.5%	3.4%	2.5%	2.7%	2.4%	3.3%
South East %	3.7%	3.7%	4.5%	4.2%	4.4%	5.9%	6.0%	5.9%	6.0%	5.7%	4.8%	4.2%	4.0%	3.2%	3.4%	3.0%	3.9%
Great Britain %	4.8%	4.9%	5.4%	5.2%	5.7%	7.7%	7.6%	8.0%	7.9%	7.5%	6.2%	5.2%	4.8%	4.4%	4.2%	3.9%	4.6%

Source: Nomis official labour market statisitcs

Gross weekly pay

Local Employment – Gross Weekly Pay																		
Measures	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Female – Windsor and Maidenhead (£)	£461	£494	£472	£481	£516	£518	£502	£566	£539	£550	£563	£499	£533	£594	£581	£539	£610	£634	£663
Male – Windsor and Maidenhead (£)	£600	£665	£630	£690	£671	£696	£757	£690	£743	£772	£765	£822	£796	£827	£874	£867	£855	£902	£912
All – Windsor and Maidenhead (£)	£524	£585	£575	£610	£610	£637	£685	£674	£670	£695	£723	£685	£669	£694	£703	£700	£719	£782	£782

Source: Nomis official labour statistics

38

Qualifications

Qualifications			
Qualification levels	Windsor and Maidenhead (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
1. NVQ4 and above	58%	45%	43%
2. NVQ3 and above	73%	64%	61%
3. NVQ2 and above	86%	81%	78%
4. NVQ1 and above	92%	90%	88%
5. Other qualifications	5%	5%	6%
6. No qualifications	3%	5%	6%

Source: Nomis official labour statistics
Data: Jan 2020 - Dec 2020

Employment by occupation and industry

Employment by Occupation	
Standard Occupational Classification	Windsor and Maidenhead (%)
Soc 2010 major group 1-3	69.0%
1 Managers, directors and senior officials	18.8%
2 Professional occupations	29.4%
3 Associate professional & technical	20.7%
Soc 2010 major group 4-5	15.8%
4 Administrative & secretarial	9.5%
5 Skilled trades occupations	6.3%
Soc 2010 major group 6-7	8.4%
6 Caring, leisure and Other Service occupations	3.9%
7 Sales and customer service occs	4.5%
Soc 2010 major group 8-9	6.7%
8 Process plant & machine operatives	1.6%
9 Elementary occupations	5.1%

Source: Nomis official labour market statistics
Data: Jan 2020-Dec 2020

39

Windsor and Maidenhead: Employee jobs (2019) with percentage breakdown of full/part time

Part-time 33%

Full-time 68%

Windsor and Maidenhead (%)

Source: Nomis official labour market statistics

Local Employment – employee jobs by Industry			
Measure	Windsor and Maidenhead (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
B : Mining and quarrying	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
C : Manufacturing	3.0%	6.6%	8.0%
D : Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%
E : Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0.5%	0.8%	0.7%
F : Construction	7.2%	5.3%	4.9%
G : Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	15.7%	16.4%	15.0%
H : Transportation and storage	1.5%	4.5%	4.9%
I : Accommodation and food service activities	9.6%	7.7%	7.7%
J : Information and communication	10.8%	5.7%	4.3%
K : Financial and insurance activities	1.8%	2.7%	3.5%
L : Real estate activities	1.8%	1.4%	1.7%
M : Professional, scientific and technical activities	13.3%	9.1%	8.8%
N : Administrative and support service activities	6.0%	8.4%	8.9%
O : Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	1.5%	3.2%	4.4%
P : Education	9.6%	10.0%	8.7%
Q : Human health and social work activities	8.4%	12.9%	13.1%
R : Arts, entertainment and recreation	5.4%	2.3%	2.5%
S : Other service activities	3.0%	2.4%	2.0%

40

Subject:	Bus Services in RBWM	www.rbwm.gov.uk
Reason for briefing note:	To inform the Infrastructure O&S Panel of the current situation with bus routes in the Royal Borough and the implications of the recently published National Bus Strategy.	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Responsible officer(s):	Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	
Senior leader sponsor:	Chris Joyce, Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth	
Date:	8th June 2021	

SUMMARY

Bus services were deregulated through the Transport Act 1985. Therefore, private bus companies are able to operate on a commercial basis, setting routes, timetables and fares. The Council is able through the powers set out in the Act secure provision of any further public transport services it considers necessary through contracts for supported services. These supported services receive funding from the Council.

In March 2021, the Government announced a new national bus strategy 'Bus Back Better'. This was followed by guidance on Bus Service Improvement Plans in May 2021. The strategy and guidance require Local Transport Authorities across the country to commit to a new model for operating bus services by June 2021 and to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan by October 2021.

---

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide a background on the bus industry and how it operates. It describes the bus services that currently operate within the Royal Borough, how they are funded, and the implications of the recent National Bus Strategy published by the Government in March 2021.

1.2 Bus services outside of London have been deregulated since the Transport Act 1985 came into force in 1986. This led to private bus companies being able to set routes, timetables and fares for services they wish to operate on a commercial basis. The council is able to contract bus services it believes are necessary to meet public transport need, that would otherwise not be provided on a commercial basis.

1.3 Bus use has generally been in decline across England for the last 10 years, with some small pockets of success where figures have been stable or growing. Bus demand within the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is one of the lowest of any Local Authority Area in the country. This is in part due to the geography of the Borough with multiple towns and centres of demand, fairly low levels of density and rural areas that are all difficult to serve with traditional bus services.

1.4 The pandemic has impacted the bus industry significantly. Demand fell as low as 10% of pre-pandemic levels and it is still at 62% of normal levels. The demand for transport has fallen with the impact of lockdowns and increased working from home, but this has more significantly impacted public transport.

1.5 Government guidance was to avoid public transport in the early stages of the pandemic, confidence has been reduced and social distancing was substantially impacting capacity. Government has provided different forms of support to Local Authorities, bus and rail companies during the pandemic, recognising the key roles they play.

1.6 The Government has produced a National Bus Strategy, published in March 2021. This sets out ambitions to return bus demand to pre-pandemic demand and beyond. This will be by adopting new approaches to delivery, either enhanced partnerships or through a franchise model. Guidance was released in May 2021, that provides further guidance for local authorities and bus operators to support the delivery of these new models and the development of Bus Service Improvement Plans across the country.

1.7 This fits with the wider policy agenda of the Council. Through the Environment and Climate Strategy, there is a commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2050 at the latest, with rapid decarbonisation over the next ten years. Given that transport represents about a third of carbon emissions within the borough, public transport has a key role in delivering the outcomes of the strategy.

2 KEY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The National Bus Strategy will require the council to commit to either enhanced partnerships or a franchise model, to continue to receive ongoing funding from central Government. We will also need to prepare a Bus Service Improvement Plan by October 2021.

2.2 To support this, the council has received £100k of funding support to support its work. This will be used to support additional capacity within the transport team to deliver on the requirements. This will allow funding for technical support to be provided as well as additional resource with the Council transport team to support development of the strategy.

3 DETAILS

Existing routes in the borough

3.1 There are currently 25 bus routes operating within the Borough, of which 11 are commercial and 14 are supported services. These are provided by seven different operators and are summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Bus services in RBWM

Operator	Route	Basis	Area served
Arriva	37	Commercial	High Wycombe - Maidenhead
Bear Buses	305	Supported	Staines - Colnbrook
First	8	Commercial	Slough - Heathrow T5
	4	Commercial	Maidenhead - Heathrow T5
Reading	702	Commercial	Legoland - London
	703	Commercial	Bracknell - Heathrow T5
Red Eagle	63/68	Commercial	Slough - Maidenhead
Thames Valley	3	Supported	Maidenhead
	2	Commercial	Slough to Dedworth
	7	Commercial	Maidenhead
	8	Supported	Maidenhead
	5	Commercial	Slough
	9	Supported	Maidenhead
	15	Supported	Maidenhead - Windsor – Slough
	16	Supported	Maidenhead - Windsor
	53	Supported	Bracknell - Maidenhead - Wexham Park
	127	Commercial	Maidenhead – Reading
	234/5	Commercial	Maidenhead
	238	Supported	Maidenhead
	239	Supported	Maidenhead
White Bus	P1	Supported	Windsor park and ride
	W1	Supported	Windsor – Dedworth
	1	Supported	Windsor – Ascot

3.2   The supported services are funded through 10 contracts with different operators. The Council partly or wholly funds these services, equating to a total annual cost to the Council of approximately £870,000 in subsidies.

National Bus Strategy: 'Bus back better'

3.3   The Government has set out ambitious plans for bus services across the country. The ambition is to return demand to pre-pandemic levels and beyond through lower and simpler fares, 'turn up and go' services, more evening and weekend services ad better integration between routes and different forms of travel.

3.4   Local Authorities and operators will be required to enter into statutory enhanced partnerships or franchising agreements if they wish to receive new funding to deliver improvements. This presents an opportunity for the Council to work with bus operators on ticketing, fares, timetables, routes and infrastructure. At this stage, no further detail has been provided on what funding will be provided other than top-level funding figures. A copy of the strategy document is included as Appendix A.

Enhanced partnerships

3.5   By the end of June 2021, government expects all Local Transport Authorities to commit to establishing Enhanced Partnerships across their entire areas under the Bus Services Act, and all operators to co-operate with the LTA throughout the process. An Enhanced Partnership is a statutory arrangement under the 2017 Bus Services Act which can specify, for example, timetables and multi-operator ticketing, and allows the LTA to take over the role of registering bus services from the Traffic Commissioners.

3.6   From July 2021, only LTAs who meet these requirements will continue to receive the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) or any new sources of bus funding from the Government's £3bn budget

3.7   Actual delivery of these partnerships expected by April 2022. From then, the new discretionary forms of bus funding from Government will only be available to services operated, or measures taken, under an enhanced partnership. Also, only services operated under these statutory agreements will be eligible for the reformed Bus Service Operators Grant.

Bus service improvement plans

3.8   By the end of October 2021, Government expects all LTAs to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan. Guidance has been recently been released by Government on the preparation of BSIP for both local authorities and operators. The guidance is currently being reviewed to make sure that the Council is able to meet its obligations to develop the plan. A copy of the guidance is included as Appendix B.

4   NEXT STEPS

4.1   An urgent paper will be taken to Cabinet to formally sign off the commitment to enter into enhanced partnerships with operators. Initial meetings are currently being held with all of the operators in the Borough to discuss the potential for enhanced partnerships.

4.2   A programmed for the preparation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan is being developed. This will form part of the wider review of the Council's Transport Strategy, as set out in the Borough's Environment and Climate Strategy, adopted in December 2020.

Department
for Transport

Bus
Back
Better

100% Electric. 0% Emissions.

City Centre Park & Ride

National
BUS
Strategy
for England

Contents

Prime Minister's Foreword

I love buses, and I have never quite understood why so few governments before mine have felt the same way. A couple of years ago, I unintentionally broke the internet with the widely-mocked, but true, statement that one of my hobbies is making models of buses. As mayor of London, I was proud to evict from the capital that mobile roadblock, the bendy bus, and to replace it with a thousand sleek, green, street-gracing New Routemasters.

Buses are the country's favourite mode of public transport too – used for twice as many journeys as trains, from thousands more stopping-places across the country. They get teenagers to college. They drive pensioners to see their friends. They connect people to jobs they couldn't otherwise take. They sustain town centres, they strengthen communities and they protect the environment. They are lifelines and they are liberators.

Some people ask what levelling-up means in practice, and what difference it will really make to people's lives. This is part of what it means. As we build back from the pandemic, better buses will be one of our major acts of levelling-up.

As successive mayors showed in London, buses are the easiest, cheapest and quickest way to improve transport. In only a few years, policies started by my Labour predecessor and which I built on transformed the service. With frequent buses, low fares, and priority lanes to glide past traffic, we made London's bus network a natural choice for everyone, not just those without cars. Usage rose by more than half.

Outside London, with a few exceptions, that lesson has not been learned. For governments of all colours before this one, the bus has been last in the queue, with a fraction of the investment and political attention given to other, shinier things. Traffic has increased, but bus priority has stagnated, and some councils are actually taking bus lanes out. As services get slower, they become more expensive to run and less attractive to passengers. It is a classic vicious circle, which we intend to break.
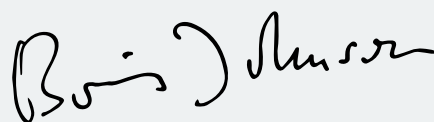
Last year, we announced £3bn of new funding to level up buses across England towards London standards. This strategy describes how we will use that money. Just as we already have in the capital, we want main road services in cities and towns to run so often that you don't need a timetable. We want better services in the evenings and weekends, to reflect people's 24-hour lives and to provide safe, reliable transport for key workers. In places unserved or barely served by conventional buses, such as rural villages and out-of-town business parks, we want more demand responsive services with smaller vehicles.

We want simple, cheap flat fares that you can pay with a contactless card, with daily and weekly price capping across operators, rail and tram too. We want a network that feels like a network, with easy-to-understand services, consistent high standards and comprehensive information at the touch of a phone. We want 4,000 new green buses, and many others, running faster and more reliably in special lanes. As in London, all that will need councils, who control the roads, and bus operators to work together.

Our job has changed because of Covid. In some ways it is harder. Bus use has dropped, though by less than on the railways. In some ways it is easier. The industry has had almost £1bn in emergency funding, and will need significant public support for some time to come. The deal for operators is that we will give you that support, and the measures to unstick traffic that you have wanted for years – but in return, we need your cooperation and partnership to deliver the policies in this strategy.

In every way, the pandemic has made our job more urgent. We must build back greener, minimising pollution and tackling the congestion that clogs up our towns and cities. But as the country recovers, this strategy looks to the long term.

49

Introduction

Our vision for the future of buses

51

Buses are at the centre of the public transport network, making 4.07 billion journeys in England in 2019/20[1], more than twice as many as the railways.

They bring people to jobs, study and local services; they liberate people who are old, young, disabled and isolated; they save millions of tonnes of carbon and pollution, and thousands of miles of traffic jams. The double-decker bus is a symbol of Britain.

Yet for decades, buses have been largely ignored by policymakers. Unlike rail, road aviation, cycling or walking, there was not – until now – a national strategy for buses. And unlike rail or road, buses have never – until now – had long-term funding commitments. Almost uniquely in the developed world, bus operators themselves, outside London, decide where most services are run and what to charge.

Services can be confusing, split between different companies who do not accept each other's tickets or, in some cases, acknowledge each other's existence. Traffic congestion has made buses slower, less reliable and costlier to run. Public subsidy has fallen. The industry faces new structural challenges which it cannot meet alone, such as the rise of ride-hailing. Usage in most places keeps falling.

And then came COVID-19. Bus use has held up more strongly than rail in the pandemic, but as with the railways it has accelerated the challenges to an operating model that was already in trouble. Few services could now survive without emergency state support. If we are not to abandon entire communities, services cannot be planned purely on a commercial basis.

COVID-19 has caused a significant shift from public transport to the private car. To avoid the worst effects of a car-led recovery – cities and towns grinding to a halt; pollution, road injuries, respiratory illness and carbon emissions all rising – we need to shift back quickly, by making radical improvements to local public transport as normal life returns. Buses are the quickest, easiest and cheapest way to do that.

Even before the pandemic started, the Government had committed £3bn of new money during the current Parliament to improve buses outside London. Armed with that transformational funding, this National Bus Strategy will build back better. Its central aim is to get more people travelling by bus – first, to get overall patronage back to its pre-COVID-19 level, and then to exceed it. We will only achieve this if we can make buses a practical and attractive alternative to the car for more people.

To achieve our goal, this strategy will make buses more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper: in other words, more like London's, where these type of improvements dramatically increased passenger numbers, reduced congestion, carbon and pollution, helped the disadvantaged and got motorists out of their cars.

We want the same fully integrated service, the same simple, multi-modal tickets, the same increases in bus priority measures, the same high-quality information for passengers and, in larger places, the same turn-up-and-go frequencies. We want services that keep running into the evenings and at weekends.

52

We want buses to be both tools of inclusion and the transport of choice. We want to demystify buses for non-users, tackle misconceptions about bus travel and address the negative perceptions some still hold about it.

But London is only a partial role model. Its population density is greater than elsewhere; costs and subsidy remain stubbornly high; and its success is eroding as its bus ridership has been falling.

Wherever and whenever bus patronage grows, there are likely to be bus operators and local government working together to deliver improvements for passengers.

Buses in London, unlike the rest of England, are franchised. Transport for London determines the network of services which are provided, under contracts for specific routes, by private sector operators. Franchising does not necessarily have to replicate this route-by route tendering. Less onerously, contracts can be let for different parts of a city or to a single operator for a whole network, with significant co-design opportunities for that operator. This is the model of the successful LibertyBus franchise in Jersey. Franchising powers are only available automatically to Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) but can be provided to other Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) through secondary legislation. We will support any LTA which wishes to access franchising powers, and which has the capability and intention to use them at pace to deliver improvements for passengers.

But franchising is not the only route to better and more locally accountable bus services. An Enhanced Partnership is a statutory arrangement under the 2017 Bus Services Act which can specify, for example, timetables and multi-operator ticketing, and allows the LTA to take over the role of registering bus services from the Traffic Commissioners. The main difference versus franchising is that operators in an Enhanced Partnership have a much greater role, working with LTAs to both develop and deliver improvements for passengers and having a real say on how bus services should be improved. Enhanced Partnerships also offer significantly more flexibility than franchising.

By the end of June 2021, we expect all LTAs, except MCAs which have started the statutory process of franchising bus services, to commit to establishing Enhanced Partnerships across their entire areas under the Bus Services Act, and all operators to co-operate with the LTA throughout the process. LTAs which also wish to pursue franchising may do so – but they should commit to implementing Enhanced Partnerships in the meantime until the franchising process, which can be lengthy, is complete. LTAs which are not mayoral combined authorities and wish to pursue franchising will need to satisfy the Secretary of State that they have the capability and resources to do so, and that it will better deliver service improvements for passengers.

From 1 July 2021, only LTAs and operators who meet these requirements will continue to receive the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) or any new sources of bus funding from the Government's £3bn budget. The terms and conditions of CBSSG already make clear that it is discretionary. The new funding will also be discretionary. As part of wider reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant – see below – we will consult on linking payment of that reformed grant to these commitments. By the end of October 2021, we expect all LTAs to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan, detailing how they propose to use their powers to improve services. We expect actual delivery of Enhanced Partnerships by April 2022. From that date, the new discretionary forms of bus funding from Government will only be available to services operated, or measures taken, under an Enhanced Partnership or where a franchising scheme has been made. In addition, only services operated under these statutory agreements will be eligible for the reformed Bus Service Operators Grant, subject to consultation. The Secretary of State may disapply these rules or the deadline of April 2022 in individual cases, on an exceptional basis; we will also ensure that no operator is disadvantaged through any failure to establish an Enhanced Partnership due to actions beyond their control.

We expect that the majority of LTAs will choose these Enhanced Partnerships rather than franchising as their end state, though others will proceed to franchising. We value the crucial role that bus operators have and believe that partnerships will allow LTAs to harness their knowledge and entrepreneurial skills. As we describe later, partnerships will work best if they deliver benefits and incentives to both sides. We will publish updated guidance on Enhanced Partnerships in the coming weeks.

Just as important as new operating models, are other measures to drive quality and efficiency. We want to create a virtuous circle: increasing usage, but also reducing operating costs so better services can be sustained without permanently higher subsidy. In cities and other congested places, the key intervention will be significantly more ambitious bus priority schemes, making services faster, more reliable, more attractive to passengers and cheaper to run.

To benefit from the funding in this strategy, LTAs in such places will be expected to implement ambitious bus priority schemes and draw up ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plans. Statutory traffic management guidance will be updated to make promoting bus reliability an integral part of highway authorities' Network Management Duty. As we have already announced, the remaining elements of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 – which allow local authorities to enforce moving traffic offences – will be commenced this year and we will consult shortly on increasing MCAs' powers over key roads in their areas, where they are not already the highway authority.

To further our commitments in the Government's green ten-point plan, we will support the purchase of at least 4,000 new zero emission buses, more than a tenth of the fleet[2]. We will also set a date for ending the sale of new diesel buses in the UK. This, too, will reduce costs, since an electric bus is much cheaper to operate than a conventional one.

And in lower-density, often rural areas, not served or barely served by conventional buses, we will support new forms of provision, such as demand responsive travel in smaller vehicles. These innovations in service may be how we improve evening and Sunday services in places which currently lack them, integrated with conventional buses during the day.

As well as spending more money, we will fundamentally reform how it is spent. The main current funding stream, the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), is a fossil fuel subsidy. The new funding regime will take a holistic approach targeted at the delivery of the policies in this strategy and other specific benefits: growing patronage, increasing efficiency, improving the environment and securing modal shift from the private car.

Much of the work to improve services and manage the new funding streams will be done by local authorities, whose capacity varies significantly. We will therefore provide £25 million in 2021/22 to support partnership and franchising development, including a Bus Centre of Excellence.

Just as buses are central to the public transport network, bus reform is central to this Government's objectives. We are acting not just because buses are the easiest, cheapest and quickest way of improving transport – but because the bus is key to two of our wider priorities: net zero and levelling up.

During a challenging time for public transport, it might seem strange to predict a prosperous future for the bus. From crisis, however, comes opportunity.

57

1

Chapter 1

The opportunity

Buses are the easiest, cheapest and quickest way to improve transport. Building a new railway or road takes years, if not decades. Better bus services can be delivered in months. Experience shows that relatively small sums of money, by the standards of transport spending, can deliver significant benefits.

60

kact fare
please

ange vouchers
given.
Contactless/app
preferred.

welcome
aboard

Brighton&Hove

-Ticket users
ur smartcard
he reader

ticket
less?
r your ticket
ur card

ork and
ent
ks.
erent.

tion
evere

e's

o.uk

WELCOME
ABOARD

61

Since COVID-19, the need has become more urgent. In many places, roads already operated at or close to capacity before the pandemic. There is a risk that when full economic life returns, the move away from public transport during the crisis will cause unmanageable levels of car traffic, slowing some areas to a crawl, holding back the economic recovery and creating a severe risk to health. Bus services can be improved relatively quickly to draw people back to public transport. They can also be reconfigured more easily than railways to meet any post-COVID change in travel patterns, such as a greater number of suburban, local and orbital journeys in cities.

The bus sector includes many examples of success and innovation. Despite years of decline, the quantity of bus services in many places remains quite good, at least during the working day. But because buses have been neglected, their future is fragile and there remains substantial scope for improvement. Our task is both to unlock the substantial untapped potential in the existing service, by making it easier to understand and use; and to improve it, making it more reliable, more frequent and cheaper, and making more use of new forms of provision such as demand responsive transport.

Buses are key to delivering wider government priorities

Buses can play a greater role in enabling access to work or more productive work. 44% of bus trips are for work or education, compared with 27% of solo car journeys[3]. Buses can help drive better employment outcomes for disabled people, and in cities outside London, 77% of jobseekers do not have regular access to a car, van or motorbike. Having found employment, affordable bus travel helps ensure that work pays and can be sustained for everyone[4]. But local bus fares have risen by 1.4% a year in real terms since 2010[5].

Buses can improve productivity more widely, for instance by reducing congestion which affects all road users and costs urban economies at least £11bn a year[6].

Buses can be key to levelling-up; users are disproportionately from less advantaged social groups and places. Improved services will strengthen communities, sustain town centres and connect disabled and isolated people. But buses should not be seen, or promoted, only as transport for those without an alternative. There is clear evidence that they can be made attractive enough to draw people away from their cars.

For this reason, buses are vital to ensuring the economy meets Net Zero carbon emissions and driving the green transformation. In congested areas, substantial modal shift away from the car will soon be needed if clean air targets and the Government's broader climate goals are to be met. The only mode capable of sufficient expansion in the time available is the bus. We need more people to choose the bus for their journeys; we need to reverse the declines of the past.

Bus spending works and is high value for money

A Department for Transport (DfT) analysis of 33 major bus schemes found an average benefit-cost ratio of 4.2; in other words, they delivered benefits worth more than four times their cost[7]. Buses generate a significant proportion of benefits which accrue to other road users and to society at large.

62

The challenge: a cycle of decline

Our system isn't working. With some encouraging exceptions, bus services have been in decline for a long time, as we have become an increasingly car-focused society. In many areas, we are stuck in a vicious cycle where ever-increasing congestion slows down buses and makes them less attractive, pushing people further towards the car and compounding the problem.

The way the bus industry works, with few incentives for operators and local authorities to work together, has made it harder to cope with these trends, or to act strategically. Since 1986, almost uniquely in the developed world, buses in Britain (outside London) have been organised on a predominantly commercial basis, with operators themselves deciding where to run and what to charge.

Following that change, profitable routes and times of day were flooded with buses at the expense of other routes and times; services became unstable and confusing; the quality of vehicles fell and fares in many places rose sharply. Services which could not be run commercially, previously cross-subsidised from the profits of busier routes, now had to be supported by the taxpayer. The money available for this fell substantially over the last ten years, causing severe cuts to supported services; some councils now spend nothing at all. The worst excesses of the "bus wars," which saw streets choked with rival vehicles, are long over, but the legacy remains.

63

Examples of some barriers to delivering better bus services

Limited cooperation

In a busy seaside resort, there are two sizeable **rival bus networks** that **don't acknowledge each other's existence**. They:

- publish **separate city maps**, showing only their own services, giving potential users including visitors the impression that **some areas of the city are completely unserved**;

- they use the **same route numbers for entirely different routes**; and

- on the busiest routes, served by both operators, there can be **overcapacity at certain times of the day**.

There is a multi-operator ticket, but it is **more expensive** and **hard** to find out about.

On numerous routes across the country, evening and daytime services are operated by different bus companies, many of which **do not acknowledge each other's existence** or even accept each other's tickets. Some operator timetables **don't display each other's services**, which gives the impression there are **no services** at different times of the day.

Lack of evening services

Large areas of even major cities have **only one or two buses an hour in the evenings**, even though late-night and shift-working are becoming commonplace. Lots of bus services in **rural areas cease as early as 5 or 6pm**.
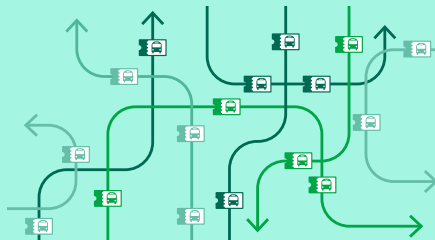
Complex ticketing

In a major northern city, bus passengers are faced with the choice of **many different weekly or monthly tickets**, which have different names and conditions attached to them. This can be **confusing** and makes it **difficult for passengers to choose** the best option for them. There are six different weekly tickets but none that gives travel on all the city's public transport networks.
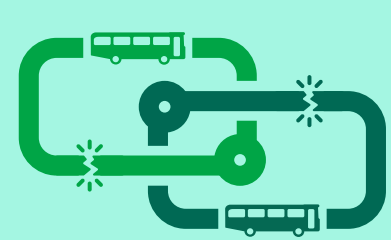
Poor integration

In one Home Counties town with generally excellent bus services, **misguided landscaping and redevelopment** around the railway station **moved bus stops further away**.

64

Bus Use and Car Ownership 1982–2019[8]

England outside London Local Bus journeys

GB Private Cars

Bus Deregulation

London Local Bus journeys

GLA Act

Journeys (millions): 4000, 3500, 3000, 2500, 2000, 1500, 1000, 500, 0

Licensed Private Cars (thousands): 35,000, 30,000, 25,000, 20,000, 15,000, 10,000, 5,000, 0

1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017
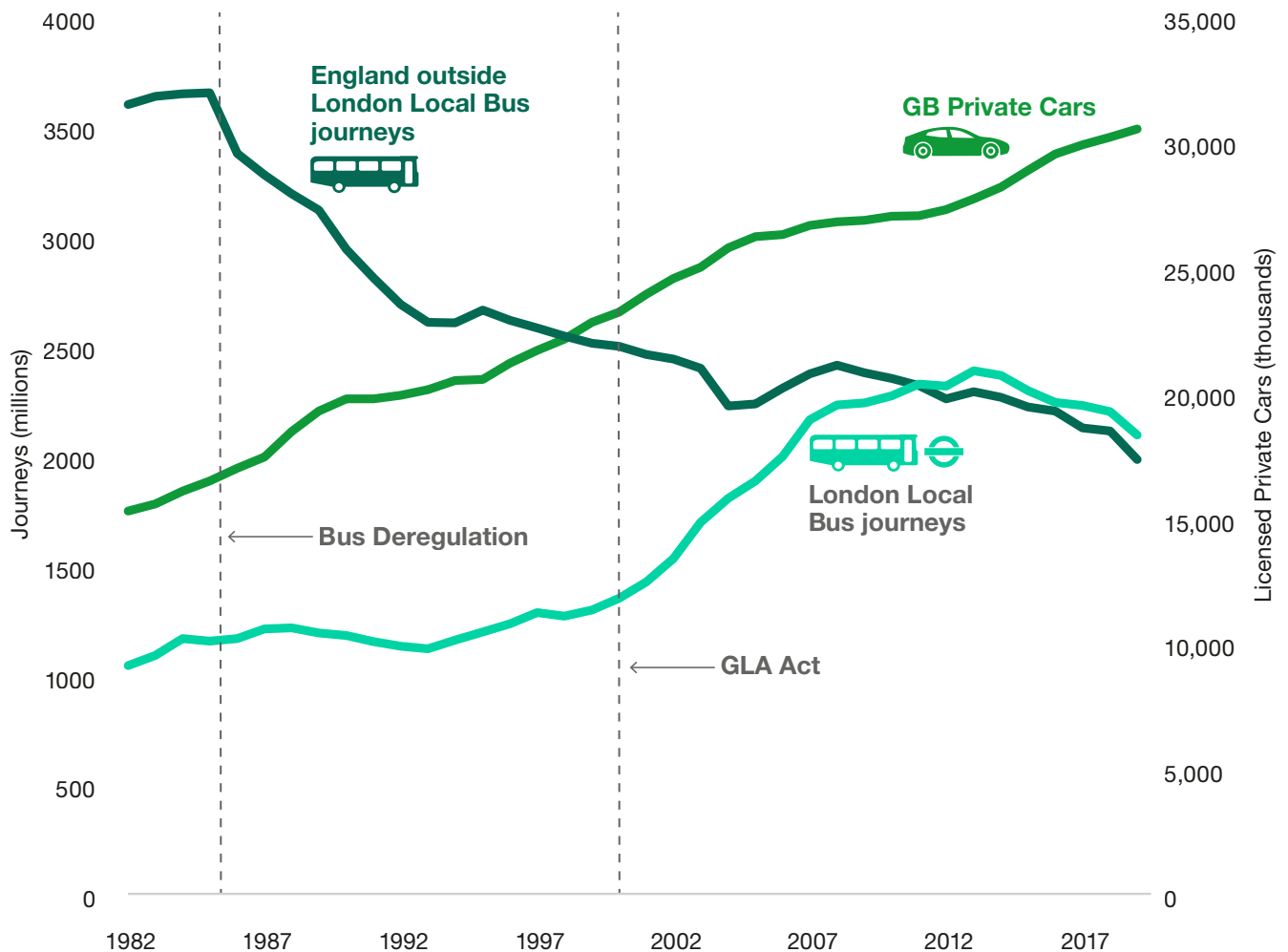
GLA (Greater London Authority) Act 1999 established authority for the Greater London Authority, the Mayor of London and the London Assembly to make provision about transport and road traffic in and around Greater London.

In rural areas, more dispersed, lower density populations make it challenging to deliver widespread timetabled services run by traditional buses. Services often take long and indirect routes, to serve as many people as possible, but they become an unattractive alternative for passengers with access to a car. Services invariably need funding from LTAs and, when money is tight, funding for bus services is deprioritised. Services get cut, and people are even more likely to buy a car, reducing the potential demand for buses even further.

If we are to meet our legal obligation to deliver Net Zero carbon emissions and have thriving communities, we have to reverse these cycles.

This is made more challenging by the impact of COVID-19 on the bus sector. With over £1bn of financial support provided by the Government during the pandemic so far, the sector has provided the essential services for people who have needed to keep using public transport, including key workers. But the lasting impact on bus use remains unknown, with passenger numbers expected to fall from pre-COVID levels – at least initially.

65

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on bus use in 2020

During the first lockdown passenger boardings fell to approximately 10% of those on the same day in the third week of January. As restrictions were eased passenger boardings increased[9].

Passenger boardings in Great Britain, excluding London: compared to the same day in the third week of January (100=no change)
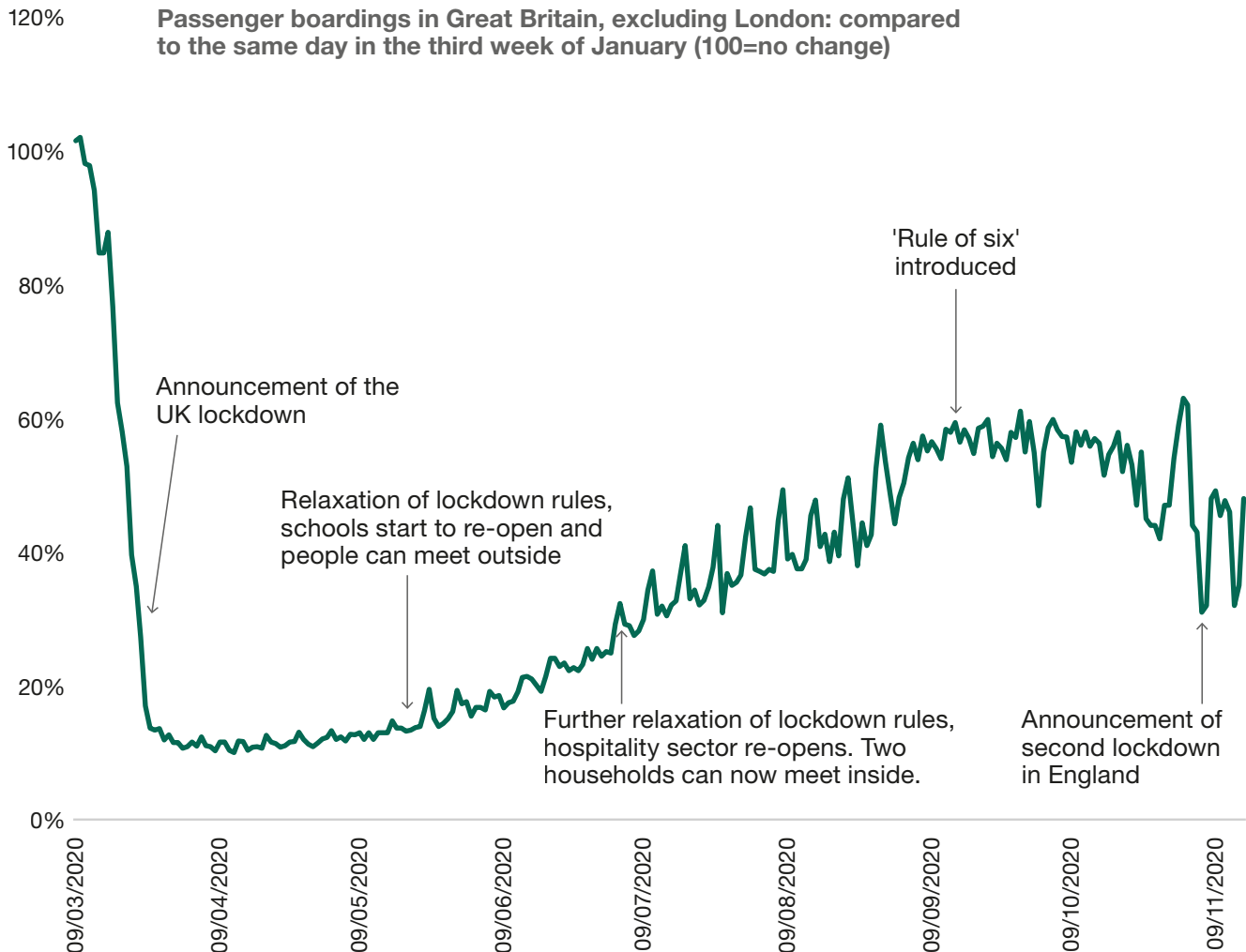
The impact of COVID-19 is both a significant risk and an opportunity. It has meant much greater co-operation between many LTAs and bus operators which we cannot afford to lose. While relationships and capacity still need to be built and improved, there can simply be no return to the situation, seen in too many parts of England, where services were planned on a purely commercial basis with little or no engagement with, or support from, LTAs.

The next year provides a unique chance to change the way in which local authorities and operators work together and deliver significant improvements for passengers. That is why we are seeking urgent action.

66

Examples of success

Across England there are pockets of hope – places where significant growth has been seen despite the national trends. We know what can work and how the cycle can be broken. It needs LTAs and bus operators to work together to put passengers first. Where operators understand their passengers, offer great customer service and have clean, modern fleets; and LTAs invest to give buses priority on busy roads and junctions, and put buses at the heart of their local transport planning.

Brighton & Hove

Partnership working between Brighton and Hove Council and local operators is cited as a key reason why the area has the highest bus use per head in England outside of London, with 167 journeys per person made between 2019–2020[10]. It has created a platform for co-operation and innovation, and shared initiatives on greening fleets and modernising the passenger experience.

Within the partnership, the council has focused on bus priority measures, improved passenger waiting areas and real-time information displays. The operators have focused on improving service frequencies, creating value for money fares and tickets, investing in new buses and improving customer training and marketing.

Picture:
Brighton and Hove Buses

23

Picture: The Harrogate Bus Company

The Harrogate Bus Company

The 36, a premium bus route linking Ripon and Harrogate with the City of Leeds, offers a sophisticated and comfortable service which has transformed the passenger experience and encouraged people to make the switch to bus. Achieving consistent growth, the number of passengers using the 36 has nearly doubled over 15 years.

Along with a high frequency timetable, the spacious and comfortable buses, which include USB power outlets, superfast WiFi and a glazed panoramic roof, have earned the route 36 service a customer satisfaction score of 97% and more than 50% of customers, who have a car available, choose to use the 36 instead[11].

Picture: Bristol's Metrobus

Bristol's Metrobus

The metrobus network was built with an investment of £235m – including £113m from the Department for Transport. Metrobus is a bus rapid transit system comprising three limited-stop routes in the Bristol urban area that use bus lanes and segregated busways.

There are 90 metrobus stops with new high-profile shelters and 'iPoints' that provide real-time information and sell tickets. The network uses new low-emission biomethane buses in a bespoke livery, and all ticket sales take place off-bus to ensure quick boarding. Minimum frequencies and maximum fares are specified.

68

Projects which have grown patronage

The West Midlands is a good recent example of how revenue and capital subsidy by operators and government can arrest general decline. Bus use has been stabilised by a series of corridor and route enhancement schemes:

- 2.5km of bus lanes on B425 Lode Lane, Solihull, was an investment of £4.5m and delivered a 11% boost to patronage.

- £800k of route enhancements on Harborne Road delivered a 4% rise in patronage.

In addition, half-price travel for under-18s and low-fare zones for all, including cutting the price of a DaySaver ticket by c.25%, brought an extra 4,000 journeys a day[12].

In Crawley, West Sussex, the Fastway scheme – a series of bus priority measures along two core routes, linking Horley, Gatwick airport and Crawley, has delivered patronage growth of 160% over ten years as well as an increase to customer satisfaction and reduced journey times. Assessments estimate a benefit-cost ratio of at least 4.67[13].

So the cornerstone of this strategy is a roll out of this model for success – bringing together LTAs and their bus operators in every part of England to set out plans to improve local bus services and break the vicious cycle of decline.

Our plan is backed by transformative, long-term funding. The £3bn for buses in England outside London, which was announced by the Prime Minister in February 2020, will initially be invested in:

- Supporting new and increased services – with at least £300m of funding to support the sector recover from the pandemic in 2021/22.

- Giving LTAs the skills and people they need to deliver this strategy – with £25m of the £300m allocated in 2021/22.

- Bus priority schemes to speed up journeys – with the first schemes delivered in 2021/22.

- Accelerating the delivery of zero emission buses with £120m in 2021/22.

The bulk of the £3bn transformation funding will be paid after the transformational changes begin in April 2022.

69

Chapter 2

The buses
we want

Our goal is to get bus use back to what it was before the pandemic. Then we want to increase patronage and raise buses' mode share. We can only do these things by ensuring that buses are an attractive alternative to the car for far more people.

72

73

That means making them:

- **More frequent:** Turn up and go services, where passengers don't need a timetable, should be provided on major urban routes. Feeder services, using conventional buses or smaller vehicles, can boost the frequency of connections from places away from main roads, connecting to the major routes with integrated ticketing. In low-density areas and at low-demand times of day, demand responsive vehicles can provide much higher levels of service than conventional fixed bus routes.

- **Faster and more reliable:** Buses must have greater priority on urban roads. LTAs will be given new powers to enforce traffic regulations. They will be expected to promote bus reliability, and to implement ambitious bus priority schemes, to receive new funding. These must be planned to complement walking and cycling schemes. We will consult shortly on increasing Metro Mayors' powers over key roads in their areas, where they are not already the highway authority.

- **Cheaper:** We want to see more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.

- **More comprehensive:** Overprovision on a few urban corridors with dozens of competing buses every hour should be reduced to boost under provision elsewhere. More services should operate in the evenings, weekends, and at night, and to smaller towns and villages, sometimes using new forms of demand responsive transport.

- **Easier to understand:** All public transport across England – bus, light rail and conventional rail – should be easy to access via journey planning websites and apps, with everything passengers need to know at their fingertips, including times, accessibility information, fares and live running. The data is already available; we want to see it used. Additionally:

  - Bus stops should show accurate information about the services stopping there. Every town, city and rural area should have easy to access, up to date maps, showing all local bus services.

  - Each local area should have a common numbering system, to avoid two routes with the same number in the same place, and bus stops should be named consistently by operators running the same bus routes.

  - Local branding that reflects the community and not the operator should be adopted, though successful existing brands such as Harrogate's 36 should not be sacrificed.

  - Routes should, as far as possible, be the same in the evenings and weekends as they are in the daytime.

  - Routes should be as easy as possible to understand, with simple, high-frequency trunk services rather than lots of low-frequency services combining together.

  - All operators which run the same route should accept the same tickets, use the same route number and be shown on the same timetable.

  - Timetable changes should be minimised and co-ordinated across operators, so they happen at the same time.

  - There should be heavy promotion and marketing to familiarise non-users with their local buses, to demystify the service for non-users, and introductory offers to promote the service to them.

74

75

- **Easier to use:** Common tickets, passes and daily capping should be available on all services irrespective of operator, at little or no premium to single-operator fares. All buses should accept contactless payment. Tickets and fares should be simple; flat fares should increasingly be standard in urban areas. Bus stations should be protected from closure and redevelopment and improved.

- **Better to ride in:** Comfortable, high-spec, modern buses will help make using the bus more appealing. Passengers should feel safe on board. Buses should offer end to end accessibility and provide ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to the wheelchair space, so that everybody can travel with confidence. They should also offer audible and visible information, in addition to WIFI and charging as standard – allowing people to work and interact online whilst they travel, and make better use of their time. In holiday and scenic areas, much more should be done to promote buses to visitors, with the views from the top deck an attraction in themselves.

- **Better integrated with other modes and each other:** More bus routes should serve railway stations, as is standard in most European countries, and integrate with cycling and walking routes and networks. Additionally:

  - Railway stations should be hubs for connecting services with high quality stops close to station entrances. Schemes that move buses further away from stations should not be allowed.

  - Passengers should not have to buy a new ticket when changing buses. Easy through ticketing should be available between bus operators and other transport modes.

  - Our ambition is for an integrated ticketing approach to allow you to buy a through journey for local bus, rail and metro with a single tap on your smartphone.

  - Full information on local bus services should be posted in railway stations, and the rail industry should promote bus links.

  - Park-and-ride schemes should be expanded, and more rural bus services should carry bikes.

- **Greener:** We will support the introduction of at least 4,000 more zero emission buses.

- **Accessible and inclusive by design:** Disabled people must be able to use bus services as easily as other passengers. Making buses more accessible (not just the vehicles themselves, but also bus stops, bus stations, and by providing excellent customer service) will benefit other passengers too. Next stop announcements, for example, will help everyone know where the bus is going and when they've reached their stop.

- **Innovative:** We want to harness the entrepreneurial skills of the best operators to constantly strive for innovation in the market.

- **Seen as a safe mode of transport:** The sector must strive for the highest safety standards, upheld by the Traffic Commissioners. Marketing should emphasise the features that support personal safety, for example CCTV onboard and at bus stops and data that allows passengers to know when a bus is arriving so they do not have to wait in the street. This should be supported by more demand responsive services in the evenings and late at night.

We want bus services that mean fewer journeys are needed by private car. We want buses across the country to become the transport of choice for people with other options, as they already are in some places. Our changes therefore need to tackle negative perceptions by non-users. We will have failed if we do not address the perceptions which deter people from buses:

76

Passenger Satisfaction

The latest Transport Focus 'Annual Bus Passenger Survey' gives headline satisfaction figures of between 76% and 95% for local bus services in England outside London[14].

We know that people's top priorities for improvement – from among people who both do and don't use buses – include:

Buses that run more often

Better value for money

More buses that arrive, and stay, on time

Buses to more places

Stops that are close to home, and the destination

Source: Transport Focus, Bus Passengers' priorities for improvement survey, published September 2020.

We want to see any negative views and misconceptions surrounding bus use, which include the examples below, addressed by up to date and easy to access information about local bus services.

Won't the bus journey take a long time?

How do I safely take my children with me?

I don't understand where my local routes go.

Is there a service I can use to get home late evening and at weekends?

Where do I go to find the time of my next bus service?

How do the fares work and can I use contactless to pay?

How do I know if my bus service is accessible?

I'm worried about my personal safety.

I'm worried I may get stuck somewhere.

77

3

Chapter 3

Delivering better bus services

Strong bus networks connect our communities, getting people to jobs and services, giving them opportunities, and boosting economic growth and inclusion. This chapter sets out the collaborative approach that will give us stronger, better planned networks, and how Government will support local transport authorities and operators to deliver.

80

81

Today's bus sector

Since 1986, the bus market in England outside London has been deregulated. Prior to COVID-19, around 87% of local bus service mileage outside London was run on a commercial basis by hundreds of private sector bus operators[15]. These operators decide where and when to run commercial services, invest in the buses and facilities, and set their own fares, with only a very limited role for LTAs*.

Before the pandemic, the 20% of services which were not run commercially were 'tendered' for and subsidised by LTAs if they considered them 'socially necessary'. Prior to COVID-19, the sector received funding from central Government through concessionary fares funding, the Bus Service Operators Grant, community transport grants and support to subsidise socially necessary services.

This model doesn't always work for passengers. There is often no incentive for integrated ticketing, or for operators to run services that are not profitable outside of peak hours. LTAs may not have the budget to provide additional or replacement services, or the skills and resources to understand where they are needed. And there is little or no visibility for the public of the role that LTAs play in supporting buses or data by which the local electorate can hold their councillors or Mayor to account for their part in improving bus services.

LTAs can do something about this. Over the past 20 years they have been given increasing powers to work with bus operators to improve services and ensure that they work for passengers and local communities. Most recently the Bus Services Act 2017 gave LTAs the potential for much greater influence over bus services in their area –underpinned by new types of statutory partnerships with operators and the ability to franchise services. Franchising powers are automatically available to Mayors of Combined Authorities and can be made available to other types of local authority, where needed, through secondary legislation.

COVID-19 has meant greater co-operation between LTAs and bus operators and a more transparent approach to the costs and revenues of running bus services. We want to build on this close working to drive the recovery of the bus sector.

Building back better – recovering from the pandemic

The Government has provided an unprecedented amount of support for the bus sector during the pandemic. Through the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) and the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), the Government had announced over £1 billion of support by the end of 2020. CBSSG will remain in place as long as it is needed. We are clear that we will continue to support the sector to run the services needed to get our economy back on track.

CBSSG is discretionary, as will be future bus funding from the £3bn. From 1 July 2021, CBSSG and any successor funding to it; funding to transform services as outlined in this Strategy; and potentially, subject to consultation on wider reform, the reformed Bus Service Operators Grant, will only be available to LTAs, outside of London, who have committed to entering into Enhanced Partnerships or started the statutory process of franchising services, and to operators who co-operate with the process. Since franchising can take several years, we expect those LTAs who want to start down that road to commit to establishing an Enhanced Partnership in the meantime, unless they have begun the process of implementing franchising already (as in Greater Manchester, for instance).

---

* Upper tier local authorities (usually combined authorities and county councils) and unitary authorities. Combined authorities are local government entities set up by two or more neighbouring councils wishing to co-ordinate responsibilities and powers over services, including aspects of transport, housing and social care. If the authority has a directly elected Mayor it is a Mayoral Combined Authority.

We want to see the commitment to these partnerships realised, so from April 2022 only LTAs with an Enhanced Partnership or who have begun following the statutory process to decide whether to implement franchising, will be able to access the new discretionary streams of Government bus funding. From that date, the new discretionary forms of bus funding from Government will only be available to services operated, or measures taken, under an Enhanced Partnership or where a franchising scheme has been made. In addition, only services operated under these statutory agreements will be eligible for the reformed Bus Service Operators Grant, subject to consultation. The Secretary of State may disapply these rules or the deadline of April 2022 in individual cases, on an exceptional basis; we will also ensure that no operator is disadvantaged through any failure to establish an Enhanced Partnership due to actions beyond their control. We will also take into account an LTA's performance with respect to the policies set out in this strategy when considering funding allocations for wider, non-bus local transport schemes.

By the end of October 2021, we expect all LTAs to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan. These new plans must set out how they will use their Enhanced Partnership or franchising scheme to deliver an ambitious vision for travel by bus, meeting the goals and expectations in this strategy and driven by what passengers and would-be passengers want in their area.

Hertfordshire's Enhanced Partnership

Hertfordshire County Council introduced 'intalink', England's first Enhanced Partnership agreement in April 2020.

The partnership's objectives include prioritising bus services in traffic, closer integration of the bus network including upgrading bus infrastructure; improving the image of bus travel and using data and information.

These objectives aim to keep passengers informed about available services, increase service frequencies and improve reliability and co-ordination with other modes to encourage residents to make bus their first choice to get around their local area.

83

Plans must be developed in collaboration with local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people. They will be living, transparent documents, with targets. LTAs will need to routinely publish six-monthly progress reports against these targets. Plans will demonstrate how bus services are integrated with other types of transport in their area such as connectivity to train stations, making journeys simple and stress-free for customers. They must take account of cycling and walking schemes, complementing these forms of travel and not competing with them. We will publish detailed guidance on preparing a Bus Service Improvement Plan shortly, and update our existing guidance on Enhanced Partnerships and franchising.

LTAs may also join together to produce joint plans and partnership or franchising arrangements and should be looking to do so where local economies and travel to work areas overlap significantly. We would expect to see shared arrangements across any areas wishing to become new or expanded Mayoral Combined Authorities in the future.

To support LTAs in forming partnerships and developing plans, we will make £25m available in financial year 2021–22.

Summary of what LTAs and bus operators must do to access CBSSG from 1 July and transformational funding from April 2022

- **By the end of June 2021** LTAs will need to commit to establishing Enhanced Partnerships under the Bus Services Act or the LTA should begin the statutory process of franchising services. Operators in those areas should cooperate with those processes.

- Those LTAs who do not have access to franchising powers at present, but consider that it is the best route to adopt in the interest of passengers and that they have the capability and resources to deliver it, should progress with the implementation of an Enhanced Partnership alongside applying to the Secretary of State for access to franchising powers.

- **By the end of October 2021** each LTA will need to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan. Each plan will need to be updated annually and reflected in the authority's Local Transport Plan[*] and in other relevant local plans such as Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

- **From April 2022**, LTAs will need to have an Enhanced Partnership in place, or be following the statutory process to decide whether to implement a franchising scheme, to access the new discretionary streams of bus funding. Only services operated or measures taken under an Enhanced Partnership or where a franchising scheme has been made will be eligible to receive the new funding streams.

Bus Service Improvement Plans will:

- Be developed by LTAs in collaboration with local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people.

- Cover the LTA's full area, all local bus services within it, and the differing needs of any parts of that area (e.g. urban and rural elements).

- Focus on delivering the bus network that LTAs (in consultation with operators) want to see, including how to address the under provision and overprovision of bus services and buses integrating with other modes.

- Set out how they will achieve the objectives in this strategy, including growing bus use, and include a detailed plan for delivery.

- Be updated annually and reflected in the authority's Local Transport Plan.

- Influence the share of the £3bn of transformation funding each LTA receives.

We expect Bus Service Improvement Plans to:

- Set targets for journey times and reliability improvements (for the LTA as a whole and in each of the largest cities and towns in its area) – to be reported against publicly at least every six months.

- Identify where bus priority measures are needed, including consideration of Bus Rapid Transit routes to transform key corridors and how traffic management can be improved to benefit buses.

- Set out pressures on the road network, air quality issues and carbon reduction targets which improved bus services could address, and set out actions working with operators to transform the local bus fleet to zero emission.

- Drive improvements for passengers by:

  - Setting targets for passenger growth and customer satisfaction (to be reported against publicly at least every six months).

  - Setting out plans and costs for fares, ticketing and modal integration. Initially, we expect LTAs and bus operators to develop plans to enable multi-operator ticketing, where plans do not exist. Over time we will expect LTAs to work across transport modes towards enabling a multi-modal ticketing scheme.

  - Considering the impact of roadside infrastructure (e.g. bus stops and shelters) on passenger safety, security and accessibility.

  - Considering how a coherent and integrated network should serve schools, health, social care, employment and other services.

  - Taking into account the views of local people.

  - Committing to a Bus Passenger Charter (BPC) that sets out what passengers can expect from bus operators delivering local bus services across their area. BPC's should include commitments on the accessibility of bus services.

---

* All local transport authorities in England are required to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) relating to transport to, from and within their area. It is a practical document which sets out in detail the authority's transport policies over a given period. This includes local objectives, strategy and an implementation plan highlighting what measures will be taken to achieve local plans.

Bus Service Improvement Plans will need to explain:

- How current services meet or fall short of the expectations listed above.

- How the improvements needed will be delivered through the Enhanced Partnership/franchising schemes and the LTA's and operators' investment plans.

- The financial support that the LTA is providing for subsidised public bus services, listing the numbers of routes and route mileage supported.

- How traffic management and investment are used to prioritise buses. In Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) this will include the extent of the MCA's role over a Key Route Network and how that is used to prioritise bus services.

Franchising

Franchising can be an effective way of correcting a market failure and we support its use where it is in the best interests of passengers. Used well, franchising can harness the knowledge and expertise of the private sector and improve service levels, customer satisfaction and overall patronage.

Franchising does not always require the scale of LTA resource and planning seen in London. There are also strong models of franchising in the Channel Islands and other countries which capitalise on the strengths of private sector route planning, marketing and investment as part of the tendering process whilst ensuring stronger local accountability and financial incentives to prioritise bus services for the local authority.

The franchising powers within the Bus Services Act can currently be used by MCAs at any time, but only by other LTAs with the Secretary of State's consent and new secondary legislation. We support the use of franchising and will allow any LTA which has the capability to do so to pursue franchising where it would not needlessly delay the provision of better services.

This will include demonstrating the capability in traffic management necessary to ensure buses are prioritised appropriately.

The Secretary of State will reserve the right to refuse an application for franchising if he believes a LTA does not, or will not, have the capability and resources to deliver the franchised model chosen; or that an Enhanced Partnership would deliver the improvements proposed more quickly and cost-effectively.

Those LTAs which do not have access to franchising powers at present, but consider that it is the best route to adopt in the interest of passengers and that they have the capability and resources to deliver it, should progress with the implementation of an Enhanced Partnership alongside applying to the Secretary of State for access to franchising powers. An LTA may move from an Enhanced Partnership to franchising later, subject to the conditions above.

We will also strengthen our statutory guidance on Enhanced Partnerships and franchising – making it easier for operators and LTAs to focus on what they want to achieve.

LibertyBus Franchise in Jersey

The Government of Jersey introduced a new bus franchising model in 2013 which was awarded to LibertyBus, a subsidiary of the HCT Group. LibertyBus is responsible for all routes, which call at approximately 800 stops around the island.

The franchise has created a long-term partnership which both parties can invest in, bringing together local authority and industry knowledge and skills with the aim of improving customer service to achieve better passenger satisfaction, which as of February 2020 scored 8.3 out of 10. Between 2012 and 2017 ridership has increased by 38% and the contract price has decreased by 11%[16].

87

Picture: HCT LibertyBus

The offer for bus operators and LTAs

Operators will gain things they have long sought: first, the certainty of continued support through what are likely to be several years of recovery; and second a commitment by councils and Government to tackle some of the biggest threats to the future of their operations, above all traffic congestion.

LTAs will have access to significant new Government funding streams and powers to make a difference in their areas, and significant assistance to build up their capabilities to exercise those powers. LTAs' performance in exercising these new responsibilities will be taken into account when allocating this and other DfT funding.

The Government intends to bring forward the English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper in due course, detailing how the UK government will partner with places across the UK to build a sustainable economic recovery.

We are clear that successful partnerships should work for both parties, with incentives and benefits for both, and that where new franchising proposals are developed, they should harness the commercial skills and expertise of bus operators, such as seen in Jersey.

We will use part of the £25m fund for supporting LTAs to establish England's first Bus Centre of Excellence (BCoE), enabling the delivery of a long-term programme of activities and support. The centre will be co-sponsored by the Department, and training will be managed and delivered by experts from across the bus sector. This will focus on: public transport service planning and network design, performance oversight, contract procurement and competitive tendering, design and development of bus priority measures, and wider traffic management measures to improve local bus performance.

We will tailor our approach to ensure that the needs of differing LTAs, their officers and elected members of local authorities, are sufficiently met, recognising that a single approach will not work everywhere. Our approach will be based on evidence: we will work with stakeholders in local government, the bus industry and professional institutions to ensure we understand the gaps in capacity and capabilities across the sector. We want to ensure that all parties are well placed to develop and deliver Enhanced Partnerships, franchising and Bus Service Improvement Plans and drive forward the productive partnerships needed to make a step change in bus services.

We will also support a peer network of senior leaders working to deliver bus transformation, to support the sharing of experience and solutions across the private and public sector.

Partnership guidance will also clarify how unexpected circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, should be handled – to minimise the additional work that LTAs need to take to reach a franchising decision.

88

Devolution

In line with previous devolution of bus funding to Transport for London and Transport for Greater Manchester, we will work to devolve Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), including once it has been reformed, to MCAs and other LTAs who request it. This will form part of wider work to reform BSOG (see page 48) and will not be in place for financial year 2021–22.

In return, we expect all LTAs to:

- agree Enhanced Partnerships or to be following the statutory process to decide whether to implement franchising;

- commit to significant improvements in traffic management, including bus priority measures, active travel measures and control of roadworks.

- drive forward other relevant Government policies such as air quality improvement and, where relevant, the implementation of Clean Air Zones; and

- in addition, MCAs should develop (along with their constituent member authorities) a Key Route Network, subject to consultation and legislation, to include development of bus priority measures and improved bus performance.

Delivering better bus services

This investment and changes to how the bus sector works will drive improvements for passengers. These are set out on the following pages.

Intensive services and investment on key corridors

In densely populated areas, Enhanced Partnerships and franchising agreements should ensure that key radial roads have buses so often – every few minutes – that passengers never need a timetable. Evening services on these roads should be at least every 15 minutes. On these routes, wherever physically possible, there should be significant investment in bus priority – bus lanes, at a minimum. See below for more about bus lanes and priority measures.

Bus Service Improvement Plans should also carefully consider network design – for example, whether local needs are best met through infrequent "branch" services of main routes which provide through journeys at the expense of frequency, or through high-frequency feeder routes connecting to the main line service instead, with through ticketing at no extra charge.

On a few corridors, the legacy of the 1980s "bus wars" is overprovision, with dozens of buses per hour, including with duplicate competing services which do not accept each other's tickets. This is wasteful, polluting and can paradoxically make services slower and less attractive. Planning should make sure that services are appropriately spread between corridors, avoiding significant over and under provision.

89

There must be significant increases in bus priority

The key to making buses more attractive is making them faster and more reliable.

In Bus Service Improvement Plans, we expect to see plans for bus lane on any roads where there is a frequent bus service, congestion, and physical space to install one. Bus lanes should be full-time and as continuous as possible. They should be part of a whole-corridor approach, including other physical measures such as:

• Traffic signal priority;

• Bus gates, which allow buses to enter a road that prohibits access to other traffic; and;

• Clear and consistent signage.

We will not support opening bus lanes to electric cars or vans, which would quickly erode their benefits to bus users. Intensive and granular focus on the precise conditions of each road can pay dividends, as some places have shown. Issues such as bus stop locations and spacing, residential parking policy, and removal of buildouts and pinchpoints should all be considered. Non-residential parking will not generally be an efficient use of roadspace on such routes.

Loading's impact on bus lanes must be minimised, and to achieve this hours should be restricted, or loading bays inset or re-provided close by, away from the main carriageway. LTAs should consider physical changes to roads' footprints to allow the provision of continuous bus lanes. Where there is insufficient space for a bus lane, LTAs should consider point closures of some main roads to private cars, allowing through traffic on other main roads nearby.

Robust enforcement of traffic restrictions can bring benefits for buses through less congestion. As we have already announced in Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Cycling and Walking, we will this year commence authorities' enforcement powers under the remaining elements of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. These powers will allow local authorities, rather than the police, to enforce against a range of moving traffic offences which can help ease congestion and help buses make progress more quickly. We will issue guidance to local authorities about the powers, including on the importance of ensuring citizens are properly informed about them, and the need for traffic signing to be properly designed and placed, so that it is clear to drivers what restrictions are in force. As we stated in Gear Change, we will consider issuing warnings for a limited period after introduction or for a first offence.

The Government will refresh its statutory guidance to local authorities on traffic management, to provide up to date and relevant advice. Statutory traffic management guidance will be updated to expect enhanced bus reliability as an integral part of highway authorities' Network Management Duty. We will also consider how to facilitate sharing of good practice and experience in delivering bus priority schemes.

As set out in "A Better Deal for Bus Users" in September 2019, all new road investments in England which receive central UK government funding are now required to either support bus priority measures or explain why doing so would not be necessary or appropriate in that instance. All funding bids now need to explicitly address this issue.

We will also support bus rapid transit and other such schemes which lie between conventional bus and light rail, aiming to bring the benefits and user experience of light rail to bus corridors at significantly lower cost. See page 66.

90

Key Route Networks

Most Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) now have a Key Route Network (KRN) of the most important local roads for which they share powers to operate and manage with Local Highways Authorities. The Government plans to consult on strengthening the KRN approach. Whilst some KRN designations exist at present, Mayors are limited in their powers, particularly over the allocation of road space.

Our intention is to increase their powers over their KRNs, similar to the powers that apply already in London and enable integrated highways and transport authority status at Combined Authority level for these roads, and we will consult on this. As with other local authorities, MCAs and their constituent members will be expected to implement ambitious bus priority programmes and other roadspace reallocation measures, using all relevant powers available to them. As explained earlier in the section about Bus Service Improvement Plans, future Government funding will recognise the level of ambition demonstrated by local authorities.

Superbus networks for "intermediate" areas – neither fully urbanised nor deeply rural

A Superbus network provides higher frequency, lower fare services; it can deliver the type of change we want to see. Places such as South Northumberland, County Durham, Lancashire, and the East Midlands, with their patchworks of small industrial towns and large villages, have not had the advantages of metropolitan transport authorities but are ideal bus territories that could really benefit from the Superbus concept. We particularly encourage ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plans in these types of places and remain committed to supporting the first, low fare Superbus network in Cornwall.

More comprehensive 'socially necessary' services

Currently, LTAs can step in to ensure that 'socially necessary' services are provided where there are gaps in the commercial network. But outside specific categories, there is no obligation on LTAs to fund these crucial services. Across England, there are significant differences in provision, from reasonably generous to almost nothing, but the trend is sharply downward. Many communities have lost their daily bus services altogether. Others have services for only a few hours a day, suitable perhaps for a short shopping trip but not for work or longer-distance journeys. Others might have relatively good services in the daytime but no service at all in the evenings. This has a serious impact on people's ability to find and travel for work.

Partnerships and franchising arrangements must deliver more comprehensive services, including those which are socially or economically necessary. This includes services to smaller and more isolated places, and more services in the evenings and at weekends. Without services at the times people want, people will not use the bus. Lack of a whole-day service reduces the number of passengers in the daytime too, preventing people from using the bus if they are unable to get back in the evening.

We will issue new guidance on the meaning and role of 'socially necessary' services, expanding the category to include 'economically necessary' services for the first time. This recognises the vital role that buses have in getting people to work at all times of the day and night. This guidance will set clear expectations of what we want to see. To drive forward the levelling-up agenda, this will include provision for economically disadvantaged areas. Making sure that people are connected to centres of employment, broadening their choice of work and education, is both socially and economically important.

91

Through Bus Service Improvement Plans we expect LTAs to work with operators to set the daytime, evening and Sunday service levels that different communities need. In some cases, these services could be provided by demand responsive transport, integrated with the conventional buses, where they exist. Places that are economically disadvantaged, including smaller industrial towns and isolated housing estates, should also be included in that thinking to connect them better to centres of employment, broadening opportunities and the choice of work, education and leisure for those who live there. We will also expect to see better services being provided to places of employment off existing main bus routes, such as out-of-town industrial estates and factories. Again, this could be done with integrated demand responsive transport geared to shift times. There is a role to play for employers in helping with this.

If this cannot be achieved by agreement, we will consider statutorily requiring the provision of socially necessary bus services, including those which improve people's access to employment.

We will modernise the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG)

Almost £260 million per year is paid in BSOG to operators of eligible bus services and community transport organisations. This includes a core element to recover some of their fuel costs, and incentive-related payments. It benefits passengers by helping operators keep fares down, and enabling operators to run services that might otherwise be unprofitable, particularly in rural areas. It is cost effective, delivering high value for money[17] with each £1 spent generating between £2.70 and £3.70 in benefits, including wider economic and social impacts.

However, the outcomes incentivised by a fuel-based subsidy are not right for the twenty-first century and the environmental challenges we face; and the BSOG incentive payments are outdated, focusing on delivering outcomes that should have become standard many years ago. We will reform BSOG to better meet Government priorities, which will support environmental objectives, levelling up the country, and provide better passenger journeys.

We will consult in 2021 on the details of a modernised BSOG. We will set out our detailed plans in that consultation, but we are considering:

- moving the main element of BSOG from fuel consumption to a distance rate which would address the current problem where base BSOG is not paid to electric vehicles (except for a small incentive payment);

- updating the low carbon incentive to better meet environmental objectives. The existing incentive started in 2009 so is based on comparisons to a Euro III bus;

- an additional amount for rural bus services;

- new incentives for demand responsive transport, which could encourage the delivery of services, and bus use, in rural areas;

- efficiencies from administrative changes such as payments in arrears; and

- ending payments for 'dead' mileage between depots and the start or finish of passenger services; and

- making the reformed BSOG available only to LTAs and operators in an Enhanced Partnership, or where franchising is being actively pursued.

92

We will make sure that future local transport is joined up

We are committed to reforming future local transport funding to better support local leaders deliver their priorities and achieve key objectives, such as levelling up and decarbonisation. We will better coordinate local transport funding by engaging local areas about their investment priorities in the round and their overall strategy for improving transport infrastructure. This will enable better strategic planning and more joined up infrastructure projects across local transport networks.

Local Transport Plans (LTPs) will become the focus of transport funding discussions between central and local government. LTPs should set out holistic place-based strategies for improving transport networks, proposed projects for investment and ultimately how key objectives will be achieved. In particular, LTPs should include clear plans for how interventions across local transport modes will drive decarbonisation in their area. To ensure investments achieve their intended aims, LTPs and business cases in future will need to demonstrate local commitment to deliver certain measures. For example, this strategy sets out what we require of Bus Service Improvement Plans and local commitment to bus franchises or Enhanced Partnerships. Bus Service Improvement Plans must be fully aligned with wider Local Transport Plans.

Reading Buses

Reading Buses is owned by Reading Borough Council and has been transporting passengers for over one hundred years. It has one of the youngest and most environmentally friendly fleets in the UK, and in the Autumn 2019 Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey, Reading Buses' passenger satisfaction score was 92%[18].

Bus usage has grown through consistent partnership working between the Council and bus company, resulting in Reading having the second highest bus use in England, outside London, per head of population in 2019/20 – with an average of 137.5 annual bus trips per person[19]. Total bus use in Reading borough had grown to over 22m journeys in 2018/19 before the pandemic, an increase of almost 40% in the last 6 years[20].

Picture: Reading Buses

93

49

The Government is committed to transforming local transport, and its recent publication "Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking" sets outs its plans to transform the role cycling and walking play in our transport system. "Gear Change" and this strategy complement each other. Cycling, walking and using the bus are all part of the Government's agenda to deliver a transport system that works for everyone, where walking cycling and taking the bus are a natural choice for shorter journeys.

As set out in Gear Change, we will carry bikes on more bus routes. Buses and cycles together can allow more journeys which are otherwise only possible by car, recognising that far more people live near a bus stop than a rail station. In many rural areas, where demand is lower, we will work with bus operators to allow a limited number of bikes on board, in addition to onboard wheelchair space, on appropriate routes, as a few rural bus routes already do. A handful of urban routes also allow bikes, using external racks. We will investigate extending this provision further. The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Investment Model also reveals that bus route enhancements also have an impact in generating additional walking trips.

We will review whether it remains right that local authorities cannot set up new bus companies

The Bus Services Act 2017 prevents further municipal (that is, local authority-owned) bus companies being set up from scratch. While this is not an absolute barrier, as Local Authorities can already purchase an existing bus or coach company, we believe this part of the legislation is ripe for review. There are only a handful of municipal bus companies at present, but there are some strongly performing examples among them.

Future-proofing our regulatory framework for more flexible services

The Future of Transport Regulatory Review aims to address the opportunities and challenges that technology is having on our traditional concepts of transport. The first Call for Evidence[21] of the Regulatory Review examined the legislative framework around on-demand, flexible bus services which currently pre-dates the advent of the smartphone. The key findings from this were published in December 2020, and many responses emphasised the need for regulation to be focused on the desired outcomes for the user rather than the service itself. Learnings from the bus sector must feed into the review.

94

The Law Commissions have been undertaking a review of Automated Vehicles (AVs),[22] looking at the regulatory framework for the safe deployment of automated vehicles in the UK. The second consultation of this review, the findings of which were published in May 2020, specifically considered how highly automated vehicles might be used for passenger transport. In their third consultation paper in December 2020, the Law Commissions proposed a system that unifies passenger and freight licensing to reflect the modular design of highly automated vehicles (with no human on-board). Passenger AVs would be subject to stricter requirements than freight AVs but both would be founded on the same requirements necessary for a vehicle with no responsible person on-board. We will review how legislation that separately covers buses, taxis, private hire vehicles and light rail may be brought together to reflect the blurring boundaries between these forms of travel, within the Future of Transport Regulatory Review. This will give service providers a clear, long-term, regulatory framework, which will allow new forms of service to be provided to passengers by removing obstacles to innovation and allowing greater flexibility.

We want to stimulate innovation and enable it to thrive. Regulation itself will change, as it always has. But our goals will not change. We want transport to be cleaner, safer, healthier, greener, cheaper, more convenient, and more inclusive. Our approach will be underpinned as far as possible by the following Future of Transport principles:

1. New modes of transport and new mobility services must be safe and secure by design.

2. The benefits of innovation in mobility must be available to all parts of the UK and all segments of society.

3. Walking, cycling and active travel must remain the best options for short urban journeys.

4. Mass transit must remain fundamental to an efficient transport system.

5. New mobility services must lead the transition to zero emissions.

6. Mobility innovation must help to reduce congestion through more efficient use of limited road space, for example through sharing rides, increasing occupancy or consolidating freight.

7. The marketplace for mobility must be open to stimulate innovation and give the best deal to consumers.

8. New mobility services must be designed to operate as part of an integrated transport system combining public, private and multiple modes for transport users.

9. Data from new mobility services must be shared where appropriate to improve choice and the operation of the transport system.

Emergency Covid Measures in the Next Few Months

In many places, roads already operated at or close to capacity before the pandemic. There is a risk that when full economic life returns, the move away from public transport during the crisis will lead to unmanageable levels of car traffic, slowing some places to a crawl. Traffic congestion will damage the economic recovery and cause an increased pollution risk to human health.

As the crisis abates, therefore, we must urgently encourage people to return to public transport. We will do so, as social distancing on transport is withdrawn, by selectively expediting a number of the policies in this strategy.

We will expect LTAs in areas of high traffic stress to install bus lanes swiftly, subject to proper consultation with local residents and local firms, and to make more existing bus lanes full-time. Implementing these measures will improve bus services by making them quicker and more reliable and cheaper to run. (See page 46 for more on bus priority)

We will work with operators and local authorities with the aim of introducing targeted fares cuts swiftly in some areas, starting with Cornwall. (See page 59 onwards for more on what we would like to see Bus Service Improvement Plans cover on bus fares)

96

97

Chapter 4

Delivering for passengers

Buses for Everyone:
We will set a high bar for standards enabling buses to be used by all.

100

101

In 2018, the Government consulted on proposals to use powers introduced by the Bus Services Act 2017 to mandate the provision of audible and visible route and next stop announcements on local bus services, in order to help disabled passengers to travel with greater confidence. Subject to final analysis, we will make these Accessible Information Regulations by summer 2022, ensuring passengers can board any bus with confidence and that they will know when to alight when their destination is reached. We will increase the funding for the smallest bus companies to ensure their passengers benefit from improved onboard information by at least £1.5m in 2021–22.

We will make sure that apps can provide passengers with accessibility data about bus stations and stops so they can make informed travel choices regarding accessibility of services. Recognising roadside information and hard copy formats are also important for many passengers.

We will expect LTAs to explicitly consider inclusivity and to review the impact of roadside infrastructure on passenger safety, security and accessibility as part of their Bus Service Improvement Plans.

We will also review the impact of roadside infrastructure on passenger convenience, comfort, safety, security and accessibility, seeking to understand the factors which permit or encourage greater bus usage, and those which turn potential passengers away. We will also consider how we can use this understanding to empower passengers to make informed journey choices, and to support LTAs to provide facilities which encourage greater bus use.

We will ensure that buses funded by Government provide an enhanced level of accessibility: including additional flexible space for a second wheelchair user or passengers with pushchairs, hearing loops, space for assistance dogs, and audible and visible information.

We will review eligibility for free bus travel for disabled people to ensure that we are improving equality of opportunity and helping disabled people participate fully in public life. We will also look to digitalise the concessionary bus pass for older and disabled people in England, giving passengers the option to store their permit on a smartphone.

We will digitally transform the bus service registration process, ensuring it is optimised for passenger information purposes and is suitable for the provision of new innovative services. In addition, we will consider setting minimum standards for registration in the future to ensure buses are providing what passengers want. We will deliver a comprehensive review of the Public Service Vehicle Registration Regulations under which operators register their services, to ensure they are fit for purpose for the 21st century.

We will review key regulations to improve accessibility. This includes the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) by the end of 2023, ensuring that future decisions on accessibility standards are based on an up-to-date understanding of passenger need. We will consult in 2021 on draft amendments to the Public Service Vehicles (Conduct of Drivers, Inspectors, Conductors and Passengers) Regulations 1990, to ensure that the wheelchair space and priority seats are made available for passengers who need them. We will continue to work with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to ensure that non-compliance is identified, and effective action is taken in response.

Accountability for local services also means accountability for promoting access for all. We expect each Local Transport Plan to include measures that improve accessibility for older and disabled people, including: designing appropriate networks which minimise walking distances to key destinations and streamline inter-connectivity, promoting high-quality customer service through appropriate and consistent training, modernising vehicles and upgrading supporting infrastructure to facilitate independent accessible journeys.

102

The design of bus infrastructure improvements should be informed by the experience of disabled people and consulted on with a range of passengers; particular care should be taken when implementing bus priority measures to ensure that they do not impede access for disabled people reliant on private motor vehicles, taxis and private hire vehicles.

We will continue to fund free off-peak bus travel for disabled people, free off-peak travel for pensioners and free travel to and from school for children who live beyond walking distance. We will not fund travel for people who are not necessarily disadvantaged, such as blanket free travel for unaccompanied children or older people below the state pension age.

Fares must be lower and simpler

Average bus fares have risen by 403% since 1987*, compared to 325% for rail fares and 163% for motoring costs[23]. Lower and simpler fares attract passengers. They should be seen as an investment not just in transport but in town centres, in social inclusion and in a greener future. We will expect to see fares policy as an integral part of Bus Service Improvement Plans.

Within cities and towns, we want low flat fares (or maximum fares and daily price caps) to be the norm, as in London. Flat fares speed boarding and are easier for passengers and potential passengers to understand. We want to see lower single fares and more low daily price capping. We will also expect Bus Service Improvement Plans to consider youth fares; initiatives such as the youth fares implemented in Merseyside had a positive impact on patronage and we want to see this replicated across the country.

There must be seamless, integrated local ticketing between operators and we want to see this across all types of transport

We know that passengers value the integrated and simplified service found in London, with no fuss multi-modal and multi-operator tickets and the same high-quality information for passengers – and we want LTAs to work towards replicating this seamless experience everywhere. There are many places where we can see that integrated multimodal ticketing drives up use of public transport. In the West Midlands, the SWIFT scheme which connects bus, tram and train has enabled passengers to travel on public transport in a seamless manner. The West Midlands is one of the few areas nationally, that pre-pandemic, had reported significant increases in ridership.

Merseyside – 'MyTicket'

Across the Liverpool City Region, the introduction in 2014 of 'MyTicket' priced at £2.20, which allows under 19s unlimited day travel on any bus, has been one of the key drivers of fare paying passenger growth. By 2019, the number of bus journeys made by young people had increased by 168%[24]. Initiatives like this give young people a great value and easy to understand ticketing offer, which can encourage bus use from an early age and increase the likelihood of these people remaining bus users throughout their adulthood.

* DfT buses fares data weighted together with coach fares data collected by the Office for National Statistics.

103

Retail Prices Index (RPI): Bus and coach fares, rail fares and motoring expenditure, 1987–2019[25]
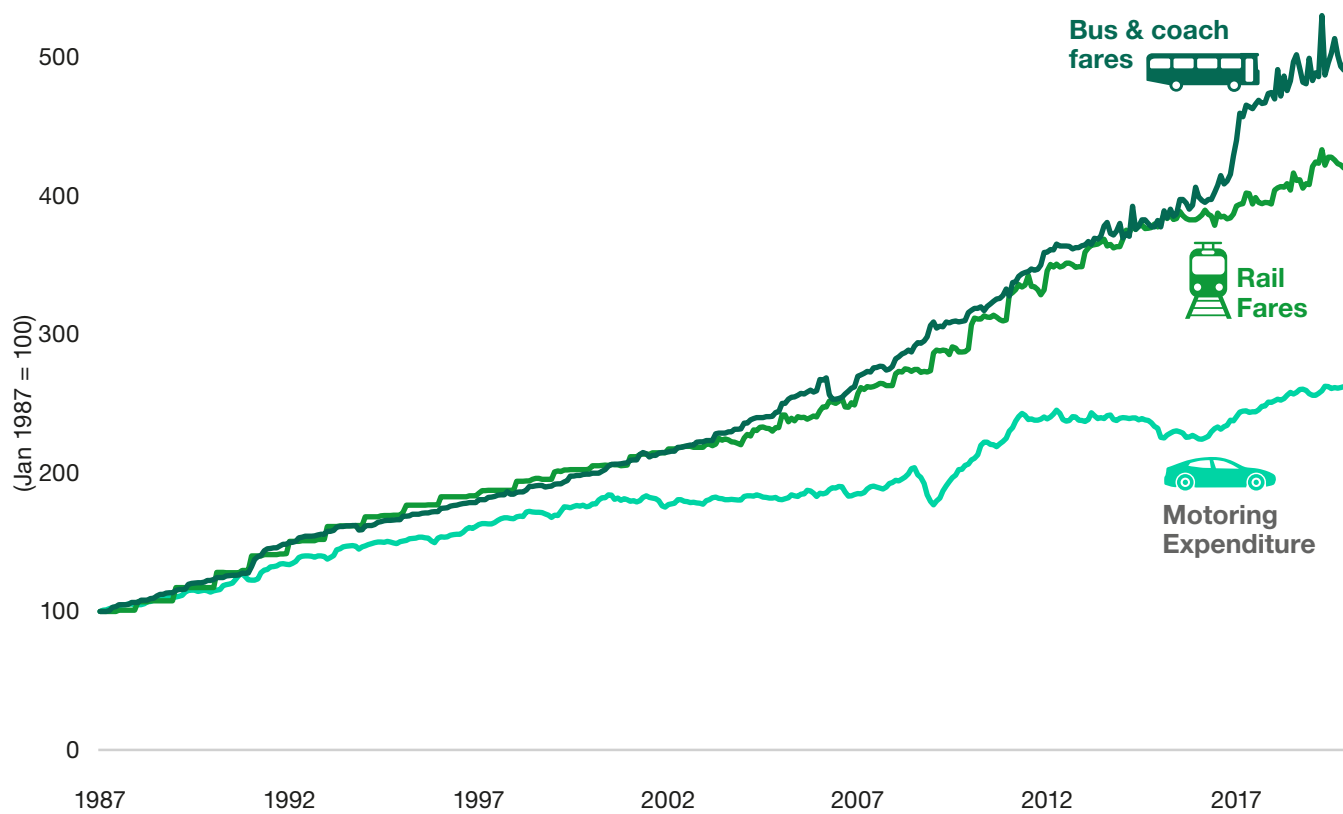
We want to see multi-operator ticketing everywhere, covering all bus services at a price little if at all higher than single-operator tickets, then to extend this to tickets that cover all travel modes (bus, light rail/metro, rail). Approximately 75% of places do now have multi-operator tickets allowing travel on all bus services in the area but they are not always well advertised and can be significantly more expensive than single-operator tickets.

Nowhere outside London has multi-modal daily and weekly price capping using contactless debit or credit cards, and only a few places have multi-operator daily price capping using contactless. We want partnerships and franchising agreements to change this. We expect to see all Bus Service Improvement Plans setting out how they will deliver no-fuss, multi-operator tickets and price caps on contactless credit and debit cards, at little or no premium to single operator fares. We will expect all operators to work with LTAs to deliver this.

We will work with transport technology providers, app developers, bus operators and LTAs to ensure that any technology to support this is developed strategically, and money is not wasted on different technology solutions for different places. As rail ticketing and fares systems are updated, we will also consider opportunities for facilitating integrated electronic ticketing with buses.

84% of buses in England already accept contactless payment[26]. To drive even greater adoption of contactless across the industry, we will use CBSSG to incentivise operators to adopt the technology. In the longer term, to ensure the industry reaches, and then maintains the standard of 100% contactless, we will consider making it a condition of bus service registration and BSOG eligibility.

104

Given the growing importance of contactless on buses, we do not believe that there is any need to integrate or unify the many existing bus smartcard products. Their usage will decline as contactless uptake rises. But we also believe that operators should continue to accept cash for now: there is a risk that otherwise we will deter or exclude passengers who, for any reason, may not have usable debit or credit cards. Price-capping will obviously not be available to those who pay cash, but paper day tickets should be.

Through ticketing should also be easier. A degree of through ticketing between bus and rail is already available under the PlusBus scheme, although its coverage and availability are limited. We will promote PlusBus better, and work towards extending the range of destinations available under it and making PlusBus tickets available as e-tickets and mobile tickets, so users can start their journey with a bus trip without needing to have paper tickets posted out or collected in advance from a railway station.

We want to see through fares for any journey across England involving bus, rail and light rail easily available, not only on journey planning websites, but also on smartphones as standard, and will work with industry to secure this.

Service patterns must be integrated with other modes

More bus routes and demand responsive services should serve railway stations and for easy connections between modes, bus services should be timed to connect with trains. For example, in Cornwall, the railway line running through the county will act as the spine of the transport network and the new Superbus services will align with it. We will work towards the inclusion of bus services in rail journey planners as standard.

Buses must also work better with each other. There are many instances of poor connections and uncoordinated timetables. Bus Service Improvement Plans should detail plans for ensuring that in places (often rural) where services are regular, but not frequent, connectivity is maximised. Hub models can connect services, with buses all arriving and departing at the hub town within the same ten or fifteen-minute window each hour, ideally all servicing the same centrally located bus or railway station.

We will support people into work

Currently, only some bus operators accept the Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card. This card is provided by Jobcentre Plus advisers to those unemployed claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit, and it gives 50 per cent off selected rail tickets and some operators' bus fares. We want to make the card accepted by all operators and will work with them to deliver this. We will also explore relaxing the eligibility criteria so the card is available to more claimants.

Services must be simpler and easier to understand

A key deterrent to using buses is that they are, or are perceived as, confusing. We have already described some negative features of the market, such as rival networks which do not acknowledge each other's existence, and which use the same route numbers for wholly different services. Bus Service Improvement Plans must eradicate this. We want to see common numbering systems, and routes that are as far as possible the same in the evenings and weekends as they are in the daytime. All operators which run the same route should accept the same tickets, use the same route number and be shown on the same timetable. Timetable changes should wherever possible be co-ordinated, and at set, relatively infrequent points in the year.

105

Bus Service Improvement Plans should consider whether to simplify routes; for example, considering whether networks should have more high-frequency major route services rather than lots of low-frequency services combining. Route variations and letter suffix routes should be reduced.

Networks often try to provide infrequent through services to everywhere or divert buses away from the main route to serve smaller places, reducing speed and convenience for people travelling between a route's major points. As described, on high-frequency services more use could instead be made of good hub-and-spoke connections, with frequent feeder buses connecting into frequent major routes and through ticketing. This becomes possible if frequency and reliability improve.

Bus Service Improvement Plans should consider questions of network design like this – and as with all elements of the plan, show how stakeholders and communities will be engaged in the thinking.

Bus information

It is too difficult for non-users to find where buses go. Information online is often incomplete, misleading or hard to locate. But bus operators now have a legal obligation to publish timetable and running data, and we will be providing funding for predictions information which will inform the passenger how many minutes away their bus is from the bus stop and on average how long the journey will take.

Nottingham's Hucknall Connect

The Hucknall Connect service operated by Trent Barton offers local Hucknall residents in Nottingham an easy route into the city centre by connecting them to their local tram station and the main bus routes.

Their connect ticket option includes a full day's travel on Connect in Hucknall and the tram.

Picture: Trent Barton

62

Bus Journey Information

Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM) is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority, chaired by the Mayor of the West Midlands. It is the UK's third largest public transportation authority, responsible for a region encompassing the major cities of Birmingham and Coventry, with a population of 2.9 million people and in 2019/20 accounted for 246.6 million passenger journeys.[27]

To improve customer experience and increase use of public transport, TfWM has invested significantly in the provision of accurate passenger information, supporting operators and the developer community to include timetable and location data for bus tram and rail delivered to journey planning applications, websites and third-party developers as well as to 1,800 real time information displays at bus stops and stations.

However, this is a challenging task, with more than thirty bus operators, six train operators as well as a tram operator running services they use many different systems each providing data in different forms and formats, at different frequencies and with varying levels of accuracy.

The Bus Open Data Service was launched in November 2020 and the statutory obligation to publish data was introduced on 1 January 2021, with national datasets currently being built for timetables, fares and location. None of the most commonly-used public transport journey planning apps and websites yet provide comprehensive, accurate, England-wide local bus information and there are many other apps that only include some operators.

This may mislead potential passengers into thinking that there are no services to the place they want to go. A number of apps and websites give inaccurate information when tested. Web searches for particular routes often also bring up old timetable PDFs which have since changed. Every town, city and rural area should have published, up to date maps.

We will continue to work with app providers and search engines to support the creation of transport apps using this data. We will aim for the apps to show every service, including fares and running information, and support inclusive and accessible journey planning, and will provide guidance through our upcoming Mobility as a Service Code of Practice. We want passengers to be able to plan, buy and show tickets on their smartphone for any journey, including through trips on buses and other transport modes, though this will not be achievable immediately.

Information at bus stops is often poor. They should be viewed as free advertising sites for the bus, including the opportunity to promote services' frequency and price, and should include full timetable information.
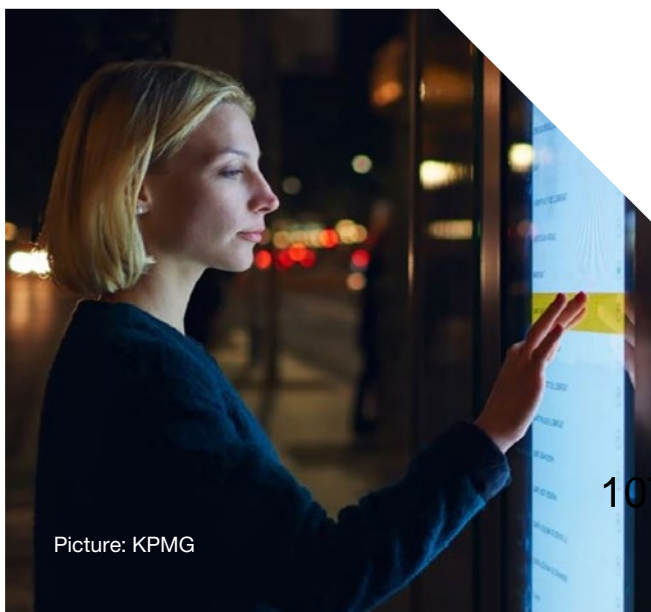
Picture: KPMG

Networks must feel like a whole system which works together

One of the distinguishing features of London's bus network is that it feels like a network, a coherent, consistent, strongly-branded operation which gives people confidence in using it. Passengers know that a bus will be along in a few minutes, what the fare will be and what the experience will be like. They know that at an interchange there will be a poster guiding them to the next bus or a train. Typefaces, liveries, logos create an impression of unity. Most successful consumer businesses, such as retailers and airlines, aim to create similar levels of consistency and brand identity. LTAs, in their Bus Service Improvement Plans, should consider strong network identities. There are already successful examples of individual, eye-catching route branding in different parts of the country. Route branding can still work well as part of a wider network identity.

We will promote buses, aiming to demystify them and improve their image

Research shows that many people have negative perceptions about buses but are often pleasantly surprised when they try them. We, as Government, have a role to play in promoting the use of buses, to attract both previous and new users onto buses, working closely with the LTA, bus operators and trade bodies to reverse the decades of decline in customer numbers. To do this, we will support an industry led Back to Bus campaign this year to promote the reformed network and address misconceptions, encouraging people to use the bus. This may include signposting people to apps and websites, targeted local promotions encouraging non-users to give buses a try, such as free day vouchers, try-before-you-buy, refund guarantees if a passenger is dissatisfied and a period of free travel for people who have started new jobs or bought new homes. We will also showcase services focussing on the quality of experience for commuters, including charging points, comfortable seats and other perks.

107

In popular tourist areas such as the West Country and the national parks, often blighted and congested by too many cars, we want Bus Service Improvement Plans to show how far more will be done to promote buses to visitors, with improved services, easily accessible information, park-and-ride sites and special tickets. Scenic railways, such as the Settle-Carlisle and West Highland lines, are now significant tourist attractions and wealth generators in their own right. We see no reason why several of Britain's equally splendid bus routes should not be marketed in the same way.

We will give bus passengers more of a voice and a say

Bus Service Improvement Plans must include a passengers' charter giving bus users rights to certain standards of service, including punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, information and redress.

We want to see mechanisms for redress at a local level and means to ensure these standards are met, which could include forums such as Bus Advisory Boards being set up. At a national level, we will consult on the appropriate standards and mechanisms by which these can be enforced, and a review of the consumer landscape to determine the appropriate body to supervise them.

We will continue to work with the bus industry to increase awareness of bus passenger rights including those specific to disabled passengers, and how complaints can be made. We will also continue to promote the adoption of best practice in disability awareness training: we will publish the high-level training framework to drive up standards of customer service of drivers and on-board staff who seek to understand passengers' access needs, and who tailor the support they provide accordingly.

Picture: Tees Flex Service

Tees Valley – Tees Flex Service

The new Tees Flex service, which has been funded by the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority, was introduced in February 2020. It is operated by fully accessible minibus vehicles and caters for on-demand and pre-bookable journeys for residents in more isolated communities across Darlington & Stockton, Hartlepool, and Redcar & Cleveland.

The service has created new links which can now be accessed for the cost of a bus fare and passenger numbers have remained strong even during the COVID-19 outbreak. The service can be easily pre-booked via a smartphone app, website or over the telephone. Passengers can request pick-up and drop-off points within the serviced area, and to destinations including train and bus stations, along with hospitals outside of the area.

More demand responsive services

In lower-density areas and at less popular times, conventional fixed-route buses can never compete with the attractiveness or flexibility of the car. But now, aided by technology, demand responsive services can – offering a more personal, on-demand service, taking people from their doors or closer to their doors than a regular bus.

Demand responsive services are not a perfect solution to every challenge. Several of the large operators have tried and failed to operate them commercially. They must strike a balance: on the one hand, providing a service which is responsive and frequent enough to be useful and on the other, not running too much mileage, with little environmental advantage over the car or subsidy advantage over conventional buses.

They will never replace frequent urban and inter-urban routes, as too many vehicles would be needed.

But they could be particularly useful to improve provision in the countryside and in the evenings and on Sundays, including serving large workplaces with anti-social hours, such as hospitals, tackling the bugbear of hospital car parking. Because they are more door-to-door, they can overcome the concerns of some users, particularly women, about taking public transport at night.

We have already established a Rural Mobility Fund to trial more demand responsive services and have awarded funding to 17 pilot projects. We will consider expanding this work, including piloting non-rural services. We expect all demand responsive services to be fully integrated with the mainstream network, accepting the same tickets and passes, using the same or similar branding and shown on timetables and journey planning apps and websites. We also expect them to be provided using accessible vehicles, including provision for a wheelchair user.

On demand bus services in Sevenoaks

In Sevenoaks, Kent, an area with very high car ownership but also high levels of rail commuting, some local bus services have been replaced by demand responsive vehicles during the COVID-19 outbreak, while demand for services has been lower and social distancing in force.

These services have improved passengers' access to buses, which are easily bookable via a smartphone app, so residents can continue to make essential journeys to shops, work and medical facilities at no extra cost beyond a regular bus fare.

109

Picture: Go Coach

We want to ensure that the needs of rural transport users are given equal consideration to those in urban areas. We have piloted projects targeting rural areas specifically. We are committed to improving the connectivity of isolated rural communities and those with infrequent and unreliable services. We have been seeking views and evidence on what could be incorporated into a Future of Transport: rural strategy. This strategy will set out how innovations and technological developments in transport can be harnessed in rural communities. We want improved rural transport to support economic growth and development in rural communities.

Rural Mobility Fund

We have awarded funding to 17 pilot projects of this £20m funding scheme: the successful schemes will trial innovative, demand responsive solutions to transport challenges that rural, and suburban, areas often face.

"Total Transport"[28]

In 2016 we allocated £7.6 million to 37 separate schemes run by 36 local authorities to pilot Total Transport solutions; these were focussed on rural areas. "Total Transport" is about finding ways of commissioning public sector funded transport so that passengers get a better service with less duplication of resources. This can include services like non-emergency patient transport, adult social care transport and home to school transport. Considering all these streams together can allow networks to be designed so they complement each other, reduce administrative overheads by centralising commissioning, and achieve overall cost efficiencies.

We will support more Bus Rapid Transport networks

Bus Service Improvement Plans should include consideration of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) networks on key corridors. BRT is a hybrid between bus and light rail, using high-capacity buses on segregated, bus-only roadways with stops more like light rail stations. Unlike light rail, however, buses can leave the segregated busways and use conventional roads. BRT could be a game-changer for bus networks. It can deliver a large proportion of the benefits of rail-based schemes at much lower cost, as demonstrated in schemes such as Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, Belfast Glider and Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway.

BRT systems feature comfortable vehicles, fast journey times, real time passenger information and high-quality waiting environments. Costs are typically much lower than for rail-based schemes, owing to fewer engineering, planning and land acquisition constraints.

Passenger journey times can be lower than those on rail-based systems due to increased frequencies. In a number of large South American cities, they can carry tens of thousands of passengers per direction, per hour, equivalent to conventional rail lines. Journey times are optimised when travelling on segregated infrastructure. However, buses are able to run on conventional roads and are therefore not constrained by the infrastructure: they can steer around roadworks and are not dependent on the provision of a fully-segregated alignment. The Cambridgeshire system is a good example of mixed operation.

We think Glider-style BRT has great potential, and our ambition is to see the development of proposals for up to five Glider-style systems in England's towns and cities. We will work with local authorities and operators as local Bus Service Improvement Plans are produced to identify potential locations for system trials. These services could be protected from other competition through bus franchising powers (which are flexible and can cover routes at a local level not just wider geographies) – so they could be tendered like rail or light rail services.

Picture: Translink Glider

Bus Rapid Transport – Belfast's Glider

Translink's cross-city Glider services are operated by tram-style vehicles, which have three sets of doors on each vehicle for speedy alighting and boarding. The Glider provides an inclusive environment, including separate areas for wheelchair users and passengers with pushchairs, step free boarding and audible and visible stop announcements.

Key Features:

- Tram style stops with a shelter, benches and perches.

- Dedicated bus lanes throughout the route.

- Real time passenger information at all stops.

- 30% fewer stops than conventional bus, on average 400m apart to improve predictability and reliability of the service.

- Services spaced apart for maximum frequency and reliability, arriving every 7–8 minutes in either direction, so that passengers know they will never have long to wait.

- Additional facilities at the terminus, including a waiting room with seating and toilets.

- Sheltered bike storage to encourage cycling and free parking for cars to encourage park & ride into the city centre.

- Priority road maintenance – ensuring a high quality of surface for the bus lanes and improving drainage all along the route.

Construction costs for Bus Rapid Transit systems, such as Glider, are typically at least 50% lower than traditional light rail/tram schemes.

111

5

Chapter 5

A green bus revolution
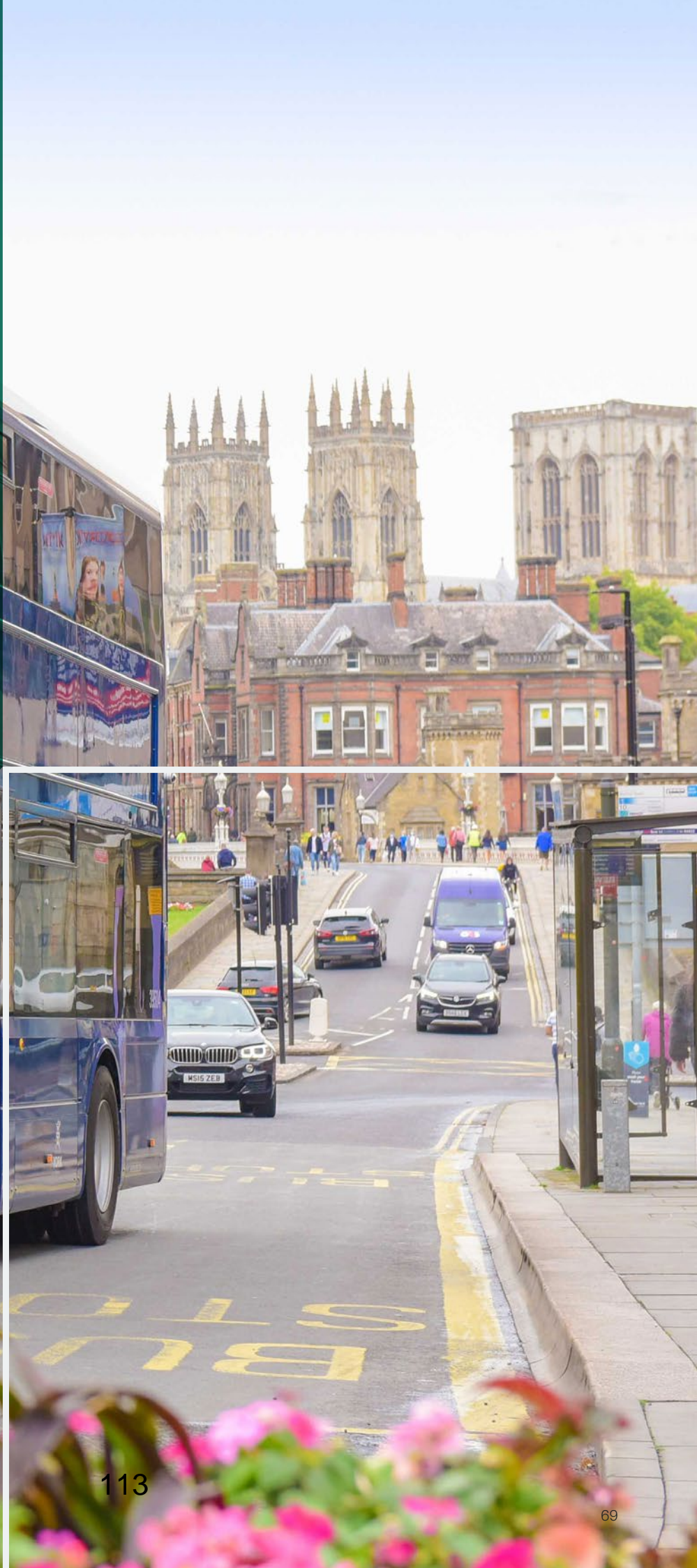
The UK has one of the most ambitious approaches in the world to achieving net zero by 2050. Our Transport Decarbonisation Plan (to be published shortly) will set out measures to help achieve this, with significant local air quality improvements preventing thousands of early deaths each year.

114

100%
ELECTRIC

ZERO
EMISSIONS

Zero emission bus services, that meet the needs of passengers and communities, and attract passengers from other forms of transport, are at the heart of our plans.

New vehicles offer more than environmental benefits – with more comfortable journeys and a reduction in vehicle noise and vibration they provide an opportunity to attract new users. The added incentive is that we expect that zero emission buses will achieve operating cost savings in the longer term, which can be reinvested in more frequent services, lower fares and other improvements for passengers.

Where we are

UK bus operators have invested over £1.3bn in cleaner and greener buses over the last five years, supported by £89m funding through the Government's Low and Ultra-Low Emission bus schemes*. However, there is much more to do. The majority of these vehicles are hybrid or gas-powered and only around 2% of England's bus fleet is fully zero emission today[29]. This represents 4% of London's fleet and 1% of the fleet in England outside of London[30]

Bus operators share our ambitions to achieve a zero emission bus fleet. Many have committed to purchase only ultra-low or zero emission buses from 2025, and to start this process by 2023 in some urban areas, if there is continued Government support towards the extra purchase and fuel infrastructure costs[31].

3%

of transport greenhouse gas emissions in the UK are produced by **Buses and Coaches**

A fully-loaded double deck bus can take **75 cars off the road,** helping to reduce congestion and reduce the impact of transport on the environment
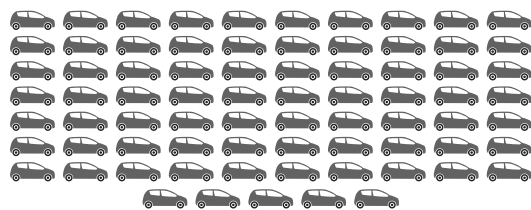
Each zero emission bus saves around per year

100% $\downarrow\downarrow$ NO$_x$

23 kilograms

70% $\downarrow\downarrow$ CO$_2$

46 tonnes

0

In June 2019, Parliament passed legislation requiring the Government to achieve **'Net Zero' Greenhouse gas emissions by 2050**

116

The Roadmap to Net Zero Bus Services

Five principles underpin our roadmap to a zero emission fleet. They are:

- We will consider all technologies fairly, assessing their cost, contribution to decarbonisation and utility.

- We will provide the financial support and incentives needed for the market to scale up quickly.

- We will take a place-based approach to investment wherever appropriate.

- Both operators and LTAs must play their part.

- We will ensure our plans for buses lead to overall carbon reductions.

We will consider all technologies fairly

Zero-emission buses can run on electric batteries or hydrogen fuel-cells. Battery-electric has dominated zero emission bus purchases to date, but both technologies have strengths in different circumstances. On current technology, battery-electric is a more efficient user of energy, but hydrogen can lend itself better to longer journeys in rural areas. We will consider all technologies fairly and our ambition is that:

- Fuel must be green: in the future we want to see carbon-free fuel being used;

- Zero emission first: low or ultra-low emission vehicles should only be purchased where a zero emission vehicle is not a viable operational alternative.

We also understand that local decarbonisation roadmaps may include transitional technologies such as biofuels and hybrids, which can help support decarbonisation of fleets while zero emission technology develops its capability.

This work will be aligned to the consultation on the date for the phase out on the sale of diesel buses. See page 75.

We will provide the financial support to scale up quickly

The high upfront capital costs of vehicles and energy infrastructure can act as a barrier to the rapid adoption of new zero emission buses. In the short term we will play our part by providing funding to address this challenge.

We will support the market to scale up by:

- giving the certainty to create a sustained pipeline of vehicle orders, allowing British bus manufacturers to invest, production volumes to increase and the costs of vehicles to fall.

- ensuring that we support new funding and financing models needed to deliver our ambition, including new types of vehicle leasing and maintenance arrangements, as part of a vibrant financing strategy.

As a first step we will invest an unprecedented £120m in zero emission buses in 2021/22. This is in addition to £50m from 2020/21 to deliver the first All-Electric Bus Town or City.

It will also launch the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) scheme, bringing together LTAs, bus operators, energy companies and other stakeholders to develop financial and commercial models of delivering zero emission buses at scale, with government and non-government funding.

Based on experience in these pathfinder areas, we will then scale up to deliver the Prime Minister's commitment to 4,000 new zero emission buses. This unprecedented investment, the single biggest of its kind for zero emission buses, will also help safeguard thousands of jobs in Britain's bus manufacturing industry.

We are clear that our support must focus on green vehicles and as such Government funding will not incentivise the continued use of diesel buses. As a principle, our reform of grant funding for bus services* will ensure it is no longer paid on the basis of fuel used and instead will incentivise the take up of zero emission vehicles.

117

We will take a place-based approach to investment wherever appropriate

De-carbonising the bus fleet requires investment in both fuelling infrastructure and vehicles. Taking an area-based approach to infrastructure investment allows more innovative solutions to be considered – such as:

- allowing for more effective land use and spatial planning;

- adopting plans to address local issues such as air quality; and

- utilising the technology solutions that work for the economies and topography of the area.

This approach allows a more strategic approach to energy networks which can provide longer term savings.

The All-Electric Bus Town or City competition demonstrated significant interest across England in rolling out zero emission buses quickly and at scale. The Department expect to announce funding for the first All Electric Bus Town or City by the end of 2020/21.

We will build on existing interest to identify locations that are ready this year deliver hundreds more zero emission buses. This will utilise the £120m announced at the Spending Review for the roll-out of zero emission buses. To drive forward our ambitions, we will learn from this early investment to inform models that will support scaling up of investment, exploring private financing and leasing options. This aligns with the work on the UK Government's new national infrastructure bank.

As we committed in "Gear Change" we will create at least one zero emission city. We are looking for at least one small or medium-sized city which wants to create a zero emission transport system, with extensive bike lanes, a zero emission bus fleet, and a ban on nearly all petrol and diesel vehicles in the city centre, with deliveries made to consolidation hubs and the last mile being done by cargo bike or electric van.

We will shortly announce details of the ZEBRA scheme and how this can be part of local areas' decarbonisation plans.

Both operators and LTAs must play their part

We expect decisions on the local transition to zero emission fleets to be taken collaboratively through local bus partnerships.

Local authorities:

- will have expectations for the outcomes they want to see and when;

- will work with energy providers to integrate the needs of buses into wider fuel infrastructure plans and identify best energy provision solutions; and

- may play a central part in funding and financing arrangements.

Bus operators:

- should always take the lead in specifying the technical requirements for vehicles – ensuring that they meet passengers' needs;

- should develop an understanding of the energy requirements of decarbonising their fleet so that the best energy provision solutions can be identified; and

- will often provide or secure the majority of the investment required.

118

We will ensure our plans for buses lead to overall carbon reductions

We are committed to achieving an all zero emission bus fleet in the future and will set a legal end date for the sale of new diesel buses, and set an expectation for when the entire bus fleet will be zero emission. We will consult on potential dates this year. A key factor will be ensuring these ambitions do not make bus services more expensive to operate overall, otherwise fares will rise or services will be cut – potentially leading to greater overall carbon emissions as more journeys are made by car.

At a local level we will expect every LTA that wishes to receive funding from the Department for local transport projects to develop ambitious strategies, targets and measures for cutting carbon from transport in their area. We will expect all LTAs to work with bus operators and energy providers to include ambitions to decarbonise the local bus fleet in their Bus Service Improvement Plans. We want to see local standards for zero emissions set in partnership and franchising schemes ensuring that commitments to invest are delivered.

Bus2Grid – An example of a smart charging approach

In January 2018, the Office for Low Emission Vehicles and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy awarded almost £30 million, through an Innovate UK vehicle-to-grid programme, where electric vehicles can supply electricity to the grid at times of high energy demand.

Bus2Grid is part of this programme and is exploring the commercial value and social benefits to the energy and passenger transportation systems. The project will develop services to support National Grid, local Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), bus operators and transport authorities and at the same time will consider bus fleet consumer engagement approaches necessary for its commercial implementation. Bus2Grid claims to be developing the "world's largest bus to grid site" and is bolstered by a diverse project consortium, including: SSE Enterprise, automotive manufacturer Build Your Dreams (BYD), the Distribution Network Operator UK Power Networks (UKPN) and the University of Leeds.

The project is a first of a kind large scale, multi-megawatt, demonstration of vehicle-to-grid technology in electric bus depots located in London. This process is managed by an aggregation platform that enables the 28 e-bus batteries to interact with the energy system by charging or exporting energy to support the grid in times of high energy demand.

119

Appendix

COVID recovery 2021–22

121

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had the potential to severely impact and reduce the bus network. Both the request to travel less and the new social distancing requirements posed significant questions of viability on the bus network across the country. During the first lockdown, passenger numbers fell to approximately 10% of those before the pandemic[32] However, through the joint efforts of Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), bus operators and central government, vital bus services were supported, enabling frontline workers to get to their jobs, children to return to education and the public to make the essential journeys needed.

To support this effort, the Government has provided an unprecedented amount of support for the bus sector. Through the discretionary COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) Restart, and by continuing to pay out Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) at pre-COVID-19 levels, the Government had announced over £1 billion of support by the end of 2020. This has been essential to keep bus services running when, with reduced capacity due to social distancing, the vast majority of buses would otherwise have operated at a loss or would have stopped running entirely.

The efforts of LTAs and bus operators were also substantial over the year. Together, they have worked flexibly to adapt service levels to work for their local areas, adapted to the challenge of children returning to school in September, and worked to manage sickness absence and conduct winter planning. This, combined with the continued concessionary fare funding support from local government, has been central to the transport response to the pandemic. We will build on these successful partnerships to drive not only recovery of the sector but also to improve services for passengers and bring more people onto buses.

CBSSG Restart

We will continue to provide CBSSG until the funding is no longer needed. To ensure services remain responsive to local demand whilst ensuring social distancing requirements are met, all operators receiving CBSSG are expected to continue to work closely with LTAs to agree service levels.

Local collaboration is a key tenet of this emergency funding. As a condition of receiving CBSSG, DfT can ask operators to demonstrate on request that consultations on service levels have taken place, and that reasonable requests from LTAs for service changes have been considered in good faith. DfT can deny or recover CBSSG payments from operators who have not engaged adequately with LTAs. From 1 July 2021, CBSSG and future funding streams will be available only to LTAs, outside of London, who have committed to entering Enhanced Partnerships or who have started the statutory process of franchising services, as set out in the Bus Services Act 2017; and to operators who are cooperating with those processes.

We also expect operators to run cost-effective services which are delivering value to the local area. As CBSSG has provided financial support for operators that have lost passenger revenue as a result of reduced demand, operators cannot achieve pre-tax profits on their bus services in receipt of CBSSG.

Over the coming months, we will be reviewing the terms and conditions of CBSSG to begin to rapidly deliver the policies set out in this strategy. Initially, we will be using this funding to drive the roll-out of contactless ticketing machines. However, we will also look at how we can encourage engagement on the rest of the strategy, including strengthening the role of LTAs in decisions on the services needed.

123

We will continue to provide CBSSG as long as necessary. Passenger numbers are likely to remain depressed for some time as confidence in public transport returns and new travel patterns bed-in. Further funding (outside of London) will only be available to LTAs who have committed to entering Enhanced Partnerships, and operators who cooperate with the process. It will also be available to LTAs that have started the statutory process towards franchising, or which have applied to the DfT for powers to do so.

This provides LTAs and operators with a significant opportunity. As service patterns and networks are reset, there is no better time to simplify fares and ticketing or address the traffic bottlenecks which can reduce operating costs on key routes.

What is needed during 2021–22 will be agreed locally, but we expect LTAs and operators to continue to work together to:

- maximise the number of services provided, supporting them and re-growing the customer base;

- prevent a scaling back of services to just the most profitable routes: focusing on the entire network and planning for the longer term;

- work towards agreeing the Bus Services Improvement Plans needed for October 2021 (see Chapter 3);

- ensure bus services meet the changing needs of local communities and do not change suddenly or unexpectedly;

- explore innovative approaches such as demand responsive transport; and

- deliver noticeable improvements for passengers, particularly around bus priority measures, information provision, fares and ticketing.

Funding will be used to achieve the objectives in this strategy, including bus priority measures in areas of high traffic stress, tendered services, support for existing services or set payments to operators similar to CBSSG Restart funding. We expect the majority of the funding will be used to support services, though the funding is not designed to replicate CBSSG and we understand operators and LTAs may need to make difficult decisions about the network they continue to run. Further information will be published once we have greater certainty about any follow-on funding and have confirmed how this will be delivered. Once Bus Service Improvement Plans are in place then the LTA must ensure it is clear how any funding drives delivery of these plans.

We want to see the commitment to these partnerships realised. From April 2022, only LTAs with an Enhanced Partnership in place, or following the statutory process to decide whether to implement a franchising scheme, will be able to access new streams of Government bus funding; and only services operated, or measures taken, under Enhanced Partnerships or where a franchising scheme has been made will be eligible for these discretionary funding schemes. The Secretary of State may disapply these rules or the deadline of April 2022 in individual cases, on an exceptional basis; we will also ensure that no operator is disadvantaged through any failure to establish an Enhanced Partnership due to actions beyond their control.

124

Concessionary fares funding

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the continued contribution from local authorities to support the bus network in the form of English National Concessionary Travel Scheme payments has ensured that, along with our CBSSG funding, buses have continued to operate full networks and support essential journeys. The vast majority of local authorities have continued to use their pre-existing budgets to pay concessionary fares at pre-COVID levels, despite the significant fall in concessionary travel which has supported operators to maintain routes and service levels. As the pandemic response continues, we are asking local authorities to continue to make these payments in line with the guidance we have issued and we will be laying a statutory instrument to support them to do so, to explicitly strengthen the legal basis for these payments.

Further to this, however, we also expect that once social distancing rules are relaxed, local authority funding to operators will need to remain above the actual level of concessionary patronage for a period of time, in order to protect services and maintain sufficient service levels. While the bus market is recovering, we will still look to Local Authorities to contribute to the operation of their bus markets, though to a decreasing extent. We are working with Local Authority organisations, through the Urban Transport Group, the Association of Transport Coordination Officers, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport and the Local Government Association, and with bus operators, through the Confederation of Passenger Transport and the Association of Local Bus Company Managers, to develop how best we can re-establish the link between concessionary journeys and concessionary fares payments as quickly as possible.

In doing so, we want to ensure that we do so in such a way that concessionary fare payments work effectively for local authorities and bus operators. To this end, we will be reviewing how these payments will work in this recovery period. We will also review the current appeals process, reimbursement guidance and, by extension, the reimbursement calculator, following the impact of COVID-19 on travel patterns.

125

Endnotes

1. DfT (2020) Local bus passenger journeys, *Table BUS0103: Passenger journeys on local bus services by metropolitan area status and country: Great Britain, 2019/20*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/annual-bus-statistics-year-ending-march-2020.

2. DfT (2020) Vehicles operated by local bus operators, *Table BUS0602 Number of buses used as Public Service Vehicles by metropolitan area status and country, local operators only: Great Britain*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus06-vehicle-stocks-technology-and-equipment.

3. DfT (2019) National Travel Survey, *Table NTS0409: Average number of trips (trip rates) by day of the week/month and purpose/main mode: England*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts04-purpose-of-trips.

4. Urban Transport Group (2015) *Ticket to Thrive: The role of urban public transport in tackling unemployment.* Available online at: https://www.urbantransportgroup.org/resources/types/reports/ticket-thrive-role-urban-public-transport-tackling-unemployment.

5. DfT (2020) Costs fares and revenue, *Table BUS0405b: Local bus fares index (in constant prices2) by metropolitan area status and country: Great Britain, annual from 1995*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus04-costs-fares-and-revenue.

6. Greener Journeys (July 2012) Buses and Economic Growth: *Summary of Report by the University of Leeds, Institute for Transport Studies*. Available online at: https://www.cpt-uk.org/media/prpjezjj/25-1.pdf.

7. DfT (2016) Value for Money Assessment for Major Bus-related Schemes, *Economic Appraisal and Scheme Benefit-Cost Ratios.* Available online at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/503824/Value_for_Money_Assessment_for_Major_Bus-Related_Schemes.pdf.

8. DfT (2020) Local bus passenger journeys, *Table BUS0103 Passenger journeys on local bus services by metropolitan area status and country: Great Britain, annual from 1970*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys; and DfT (2020) All vehicles, *Table VEH0103 Licensed vehicles at the end of the year1 by tax class, Great Britain from 1909; also United Kingdom from 2014*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/all-vehicles-veh01.

9. DfT (2020) Transport use during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, *Transport use by mode: Great Britain, since 1 March 2020*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic.

10. DfT (2020) Local bus passenger journeys, *Table BUS0110 Passenger journeys on local bus services per head of population by local authority: England*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys.

11. The Harrogate Bus Company.

12. Transport for West Midlands.

13. KPMG (2015) An economic evaluation of local bus infrastructure schemes, *A report for Greener Journeys*. Available online at: https://www.cpt-uk.org/media/rd5bbnvm/ex-post-evaluation-of-bus-infrastructure-june-2017.pdf.

14. Transport Focus (2020) *Bus Passengers' priorities for improvement survey*. Available online at: https://d3cez36w5wymxj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/09095433/TF-Bus-passenger-priorities-Sept_20-WEB.pdf.

15. DfT (2019) Local bus service vehicle distance travelled, *Table BUS0207: Vehicle distance travelled (miles and kilometres) on local bus services by urban-rural status and service type: England, annual*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus02-vehicle-distance-travelled.

16. The Government of Jersey (2017) Jersey Bus Franchise: *The Commissioner Perspective*. Available online at: https://www.urbantransportgroup.org/system/files/general-docs/Presentation%20by%20Jersey.pdf.

17. Greener Journeys (2017) Costs and Benefits of the Bus Service Operators' Grant. Available online at: https://greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/BSOG-June-2017.pdf.

18. Transport Focus (2019) *Bus passenger survey autumn 2019 main report*. Available online at: https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/bus-passenger-survey-autumn-2019-report/.

19. DfT (2020) Local bus passenger journeys, *Table BUS0110: Passenger journeys on local bus services per head of population by local authority: England, 2019/20*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys.

126

20. DfT (2020) Local bus passenger journeys, *Table BUS0109: Passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority: England, 2018/19*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys.

21. DfT (2020) Future of Transport regulatory review, *call for evidence on micromobility vehicles, flexible bus services and Mobility-as-a-Service.* Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/future-of-transport-regulatory-review-call-for-evidence-on-micromobility-vehicles-flexible-bus-services-and-mobility-as-a-service.

22. Law Commission (2018) Consultation and review of regulatory framework for Automated Vehicles. Available online at: https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/automated-vehicles/.

23. Office for National Statistics (2021) *Retail Price Index: fares and other travel costs: bus and coach fares, rail fares and motoring expenditure*. Available online at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/consumerpriceindices.

24. Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (2021) *Liverpool City Region's Transport Infrastructure.* Available online at: https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/transport/#:~:text=Liverpool%20City%20Region's%20buses&text=Our%20pioneering%2C%20award%2Dwinning%20Bus,trend%20of%20falling%20bus%20use.

26. DfT (2020) Vehicles operated by local bus operators, Table BUS0607b: Percentage of buses with live EMV readers that can accept contactless payments cards1 by metropolitan area status and country2, local bus operators only3 Great Britain, from 2016/17. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus06-vehicle-stocks-technology-and-equipment.

27. DfT (2020) Local bus passenger journeys, *Table BUS0109: Passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority: England, 2019/20.* Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus01-local-bus-passenger-journeys.

28. DfT (2019) Total transport feasibility report and pilot review, Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/total-transport-feasibility-report-and-pilot-review.

29. DfT (2020) Energy and environment: data tables, *Table ENV0201: Greenhouse gas emissions by transport mode: United Kingdom*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/energy-and-environment-data-tables-env.

30. DfT (2020) Vehicles operated by local bus operators*, Table BUS0609: Percentage of buses used as Public Service Vehicles by emissions standards and fuel type by metropolitan area status and country: Great Britain*. Available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/bus06-vehicle-stocks-technology-and-equipment.

31. Confederation for Passenger Transport (2019) *Moving Forward Together, Our commitments*. Available online at: https://www.cpt-uk.org/moving-forward-together/.

32. Ticketer Data (2020) *Passenger numbers during the first Covid-19 lockdown in England outside of London.*

Department for Transport

Department
for Transport

National Bus Strategy: Bus Service Improvement Plans
Guidance to local authorities and bus operators

May 2021

Contents

131

1. Introduction

Why Bus Service Improvement Plans?

1. The National Bus Strategy ('the Strategy') sets out an ambitious vision to dramatically improve bus services in England outside London through greater local leadership, to reverse the recent shift in journeys away from public transport and encourage passengers back to bus. 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.

2. The quality of bus services before the pandemic varied greatly across the country and the Government is determined that great bus services should be available to everyone, everywhere. The Bus Services Act 2017 provides the tools needed to deliver this and the Strategy commits £3 billion of new funding to support this. The pandemic has resulted in stronger and closer cooperation between LTAs and their local bus operators and we need to capitalise on this good work, so all the ingredients needed to deliver long overdue improvements to bus services are already in place.

3. As the Strategy explains, there can be no return to a situation where services are planned on a purely commercial basis with little or no engagement with, or support from, LTAs. Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) are how LTAs, working closely with their local bus operators and local communities, address this – by setting out a vision for delivering the step-change in bus services that is required by the Strategy. A BSIP is the essential first step as it will be the extent of the ambition, delivered through an Enhanced Partnership or franchising, that will be critical when Government decides how new funding is allocated.

What will central government do to support the aims and objectives in the BSIP?

4. The Government has provided over £1 billion of financial support to buses during the pandemic so far, to allow the sector to provide the essential services needed for key workers to get to work. The Strategy makes it clear that Government has a continuing role to play in promoting the use of buses, to attract lapsed, existing and new users and reverse the decades of decline in passenger numbers. We also recognise that the pandemic has had a severe impact on passenger demand – in part resulting from Government messages not to use public transport.

5. As the Strategy sets out, to address this, we will support an industry-led 'Back to Bus' campaign later this year to promote the reformed network, improve public confidence and address misconceptions, encouraging people to use the bus.

Purpose of this guidance and who should read it

6. This guidance is intended to help each LTA and their local bus operators develop an ambitious BSIP to improve local bus services and access new funding. In particular, it will help LTAs understand what is required.

7. Individual LTAs must take responsibility for how their BSIPs will be produced and delivered. This is not a step-by-step guide on how they and their bus operators develop the BSIP. That will depend on a range of local circumstances and available data that LTAs and their bus operators are best placed to understand and take decisions on. Its purpose is to build on what the Strategy sets out about the objectives for buses and provides advice on using BSIPs to deliver the outcomes required by the Strategy itself. It also explains how LTAs and their bus operators can build on the relationships developed during the pandemic to forge the even closer working arrangements that are required to deliver an ambitious and successful BSIP.

Timescales and context

8. The next year provides a unique opportunity to deliver significant improvements for passengers. That is why it requires urgent action. The Strategy sets a fast-paced agenda to transform bus services and encourage the return of passengers including by promoting modal shift. To deliver this, there are specific dates by which LTAs must take each of three steps:

- **Step 1** - **by the end of June 2021**

    Decide which statutory path to follow - pursue an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme or develop a bus franchising assessment**.**

133

- ## Step 2 – by the end of October 2021

  Publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan.

- ## Step 3 - by the end of March 2022

  Have either an EP Scheme in place or be following the statutory processes to develop a bus franchising assessment. As the Strategy says, those LTAs (other than mayoral combined authorities) which wish to pursue franchising must be able to satisfy the Secretary of State that they have the capacity and resources to deliver the franchised model chosen. Since franchising can take several years, and we want to deliver change for all parts of the country quickly, LTAs (other than those already pursuing a franchising assessment, such as Greater Manchester) should also commit to establishing an Enhanced Partnership in the meantime. If LTAs believe they can deliver franchising sufficiently quickly, we will consider allowing them to skip the EP stage.

9. Further detail on all these steps is provided next.

STEP 1 – DECIDE WHICH STATUTORY PATH TO FOLLOW - PURSUE AN EP OR DEVELOP A BUS FRANCHISING ASSESSMENT

10. As stated in the Strategy, **by the end of June 2021**, to be eligible for continued access to COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) every LTA must have:
    - Published a statutory notice that they intend to prepare an EP Plan and Scheme[1]; and/or
    - Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs), may publish a statutory notice that they intend to prepare a franchising assessment[2]. Non-MCAs can apply for franchising powers from the Secretary of State. All franchising powers requests will be subject to the requirements in para 8 above.

11. The Strategy sets a clear blueprint for improving bus services and it will be for LTAs to decide whether it is best achieved via an EP or preparing a franchising assessment and publishing a statutory notice to that effect. Nothing further is required on a statutory basis by the end of June. Template EP and franchising notices of intent are at **Annex A**.

12. The latest detailed guidance on Enhanced Partnerships and Franchising can be found here, as well as an overview of the Bus Services Act 2017 (which amends the Transport Act 2000):
    - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-act-2017-new-powers-and-opportunities
    - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-act-2017-enhanced-partnership-creation

---

[1] As required by S.138F(1)(a) of the Transport Act 2000
[2] As required by S.123(4) of the Transport Act 2000

- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-act-2017-bus-franchising-creation

13. This guidance is being reviewed to ensure that it is fully consistent with the National Bus Strategy, and a new version of the EP and franchising guidance will be published shortly. In the meantime, it is important to note that only underlined text in those documents is statutory guidance. Where there are any potential conflicts, this document and the National Bus Strategy represent the Government's current views and supersede the non-statutory aspects of the guidance linked below.

14. As explained in the Strategy, bus operators must co-operate with this process to continue to receive CBSSG and future forms of discretionary funding. This requirement will be included in the revised Terms and Conditions for that funding.

15. A given geographical area can only have an EP or a franchising arrangement. However, it is possible for an LTA to divide up its geographical area into separate areas that are covered by an EP or franchising or multiple EP schemes and/ or franchised areas. But the whole LTA geographical area must be covered by either an EP, be subject to a franchising assessment, or a combination of both.

16. If notices of intent have been issued for an EP and franchising, the BSIP should take into account both potential methods for delivery.

LTAs which are not MCAs and wish to pursue franchising

17. An LTA that is not an MCA cannot access franchising powers at present. This will require the successful passage of secondary legislation and the consent of the Secretary of State. We support the use of franchising and will allow any LTA which has the capability and intention to use franchising powers at pace to deliver improvements for passengers.

18. In assessing LTA capability, the Secretary of State expects LTAs to demonstrate the capability in traffic management necessary to ensure buses are prioritised appropriately. The Secretary of State will reserve the right to refuse an application for franchising if he believes a LTA does not, or will not, have the capability and resources to deliver the franchised model chosen; or that an EP would deliver the improvements proposed more quickly and cost-effectively.

19. We will open up access to franchising powers, subject to legislation, for any LTA which shows it meets the criteria above. However, it will not be possible for an LTA to issue a franchising notice until it has been granted franchising powers and failure to issue any notice will result in the LTA being unable to access new funding. Therefore, any LTA which wishes to request access to franchising powers should issue a notice of intent for an EP by the end of June.

20. Developing an EP in the meantime is not wasted effort. Part of the franchising process requires the LTA to complete an options assessment exercise, identifying

those options with the potential to achieve the objectives it has set. Working closely with operators on an EP will provide important data to assess whether an EP offers a better alternative. Access to franchising powers does not compel the LTA to use them.

Swapping between franchising and an EP

21. Issuing a notice to pursue either franchising or an EP does not prevent an LTA from subsequently changing to the other option. However, LTAs should be mindful of the importance in the Strategy of aiming high, delivering at speed and meeting the March 2022 deadline to access new funding (see **Step 3** below). For example, if an LTA believes, after an EP notice of intent has been issued and subsequent discussions with operators, that it will not deliver the outcomes set out in their BSIP or that, after initial work, a 'full' franchising assessment is unlikely to deliver its ambitions more effectively than an EP, then a switch can be considered. As explained above, a non-MCA must obtain franchising powers from the Secretary of State to pursue a franchising assessment. Once it has, it can decide, at any point, to switch back to an EP.

22. LTAs switching from one statutory process to the other would need to begin the new process from the start of its statutory requirements – i.e. publishing a notice of intent to follow the EP/ franchising process. However, the Government would not automatically expect the BSIP to be updated as well. This would also apply for LTAs switching from an EP to franchising and back again.

Interaction of schemes with existing Advanced Quality Partnerships (AQPS)

23. AQPSs may fall short of some of the requirements in the new Strategy, in particular for multi-modal or multi-operator tickets to be available at a set price. We would expect BSIPs to include plans to revoke most of the relatively small number of existing AQPSs. However, a few may need to remain, for example where they support existing bus priority and all sides agree that they are working well. The revocation will coincide with the 'making' of an EP or franchising scheme - which should offer the opportunity to include both the benefits previously available under the AQP, and multi-operator ticketing and other benefits needed to fulfil the requirements of the Bus Strategy. Operators' consent is required for revocation. As with EPs, bus operators will be required to cooperate with the process to receive discretionary funding, including CBSSG.

Early engagement with local bus operators

24. It is for the LTA to decide which statutory option(s) to pursue. Franchising is not the only route to better and more locally accountable bus services. Most of the outcomes from franchising can be delivered using an EP if the LTA and its local bus operators work together. They also offer significantly more flexibility than franchising and can deliver benefits to passengers far more quickly.

136

25. This means that the decision on statutory routes needs to be an informed one, taken in the best interests of local people. Before a notice(s) of intent is issued, each LTA/ MCA must discuss both options with their local bus operators. This will provide them with an important opportunity to influence the way forward and table proposed partnership measures that, taking into account the ambitions and agenda driven by the Strategy, they believe will quickly deliver the dramatic improvements to bus services that are required.

STEP 2 – PUBLISH A BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

26. Local authorities should develop and publish a BSIP by 31 October 2021. A BSIP sets out the outcomes which the LTA would like to see and can therefore be developed alongside deciding whether to pursue an EP or franchising.

27. Where an LTA decides to pursue an EP, the BSIP content will set out a high level vision and key interventions to deliver it, with the EP plan containing the detail of how they will be delivered, so that the documents make up a blueprint for bus service improvement. The BSIP will need to be developed in collaboration with bus operators; and other stakeholders such as bus user, service provider and local business groups should also be consulted. LTAs may wish to make an outline estimate of funding needed, accepting that it will be broad and not definitive at this stage – we will issue further guidance on funding and assessment in the summer. Further details on what a BSIP should contain and how to deliver it are outlined in the sections below.

28. Where an LTA has issued a statutory notice to pursue franchising, the BSIP sets out how it plans to improve bus services if it took a decision, following development of a franchising assessment, to improve bus services under a franchised model. The BSIP is still required alongside the statutory steps required to implement bus franchising, as set out by the Transport Act 2000[3].

29. Where an LTA is pursuing both franchising and an EP in different parts of its area, the BSIP should set out a vision across the whole LTA, with the franchising assessment and EP plan drawing on it for the relevant areas which they are covering.

30. A template BSIP is at **Annex B**.

STEP 3 – HAVE AN EP IN PLACE, EITHER AS AN END-STATE OR AS A TRANSITION STATE TO FRANCHISING

31. **From April 2022** – The BSIP should be delivered using one of the two statutory options under **Step 1** above.

---

[3] As amended by the Bus Services Act 2017

32. By this date, each LTA (except those, such as Greater Manchester, which were already following the franchising process at the time of the Bus Strategy) will need to have an EP in place. This will be either as an end-state, or as a transition state to franchising, depending on their choices. We ask for the EP stage from those pursuing franchising because the public expects swift improvements. If LTAs which wish to pursue a franchising scheme can convince us they can deliver it quickly, we may at our discretion allow them to skip the EP stage.

33. Further guidance on what is required to be delivered using an EP or franchising by April 2022 will follow in our updated EP and franchising guidance shortly.

Future government funding

34. **Access to a share of the new £3 billion funding will require the LTA to issue a notice of intent, produce a BSIP and have an Enhanced Partnership in place (where this is being pursued) by the dates required**. This funding will cover both capital and revenue support. The Government will issue further guidance in the summer about how funding will be allocated. However, we are able to provide the following high level guidance at this stage.

35. We anticipate two tranches of funding being available, one allocated by formula to all local authorities based on the overall quality of their BSIP, together with other relevant information; and a separate tranche of funding for specific larger schemes.

36. In assessing the overall quality of BSIPs, the Government will give particular weight to measures which support local bus markets as they emerge from the pandemic, for example bus priority and targeted fares reductions.

37. 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 relation to specific schemes, the BSIP will be assessed as a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). Further assessment will be required after the SOBC stage and additional guidance on the assessment process will be issued as part of the funding guidance mentioned above.

38. To support LTAs in forming partnerships and developing BSIPs, we will make £25 million available in the 2021-22 financial year to improve LTA capacity and capability to deliver BSIPs, EPs and franchising assessments. Further details of this support package is set out in paragraph 128 below.

Other Government funding streams

39. The Strategy also explains that, as part of the wider reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), we will consult on linking payment of that reformed grant to BSIP commitments. Government will also take into account an LTA's performance with respect to the policies set out in the Strategy when considering funding allocations for wider, non-bus local transport schemes.

2. Bus Service Improvement Plans

Part 1 – Content and purpose

Who should produce a BSIP?

40. A BSIP must be produced by upper-tier authorities (e.g. Combined Authority/County Council). As a minimum, a single BSIP should cover each LTA's full geographical area (e.g. MCA or County Council area), all local bus services within it (including cross-boundary ones), and take proper account of the differing needs of parts of that area (e.g. urban and rural elements).

41. LTAs may also join together to produce a <u>single</u> BSIP – particularly where local economies and travel patterns overlap significantly. We expect LTAs to collaborate to resolve any cross-boundary issues. Where all, or the vast majority of, services in one area run across the border into another area (for example a small unitary authority with services running into a shire authority), we would expect a single BSIP to be produced. **We also expect to see shared arrangements across any areas wishing to become new or expanded MCAs in the future**[4]. There can also be other real advantages in developing a multi-LTA BSIP:

    - LTA resources and funding can be pooled to improve efficiency and cut costs.
    - A joint scheme properly joins up cross boundary bus services.
    - Local bus operators can share resources to develop the BSIP in a joined-up way.

42. The BSIP should explain the reasons for adopting a single or multi LTA geographical area.

43. BSIPs should be produced in close consultation with operators, who will have some of the data needed. See also below for third-party involvement.

---

[4] A decision whether to develop a multi-area EP a required statutory step for all LTAs under the Transport Act 2000.

What are BSIPs for?

44. BSIPs should describe in outline how LTAs and operators in an area can achieve the overarching goal of the National Bus Strategy - to grow bus patronage: both to build it back after the pandemic and then to increase it and raise buses' mode share.

45. Given that BSIPs will have to be produced within six months, they will necessarily be outlines. We do not expect vastly detailed and granular documents running to hundreds of pages. Nor will we take them as definitive or immutable commitments or statements of intent on your part. Their main purpose is to get everyone thinking about what questions need to be addressed in the area, to explore possible answers, and to provide an early basis for funding decisions in the autumn and winter in preparation for the financial year 2022/3 when transformational funding begins.

46. See paragraph 126 below for further details of the DfT capability fund which will help LTAs with the resource they may need to compile BSIPs.

What should BSIPs say?

The current situation

47. Using available operator, population and travel demand data, you should gather evidence on the areas set out below. DfT will supply an annex setting out the data we will ask you to publish, but we would expect you to develop your BSIP taking account of:

  - basic information about your current bus network(s) and the roads they run on: bus patronage levels and trends; the density of service; the proportion of people within walking distance of a frequent service; average fares per km; mileage of bus lane; buses' modal share and how it has changed in recent years; road congestion and traffic levels and how they have changed in recent years; data on average bus speeds and how they affect bus operation and use; how readily comprehensive information is available; size and age of fleet; what if any common ticketing or partnership and coordination arrangements there are, etc.

  - information about the local operators and the LTA: is there one dominant operator or a mix of operators? To what extent are services (including branding and ticketing) specified centrally by bus operators or are they designed with local people in mind? What contact is there between the LTA and the bus operator(s)? How many staff does the LTA have working on buses, what do they do, and what is their seniority? How much funding does the LTA provide for supported services, other than school services? Does it publish timetables or promote services?

  - what and where are the main barriers to bus usage and growth in your area - congestion, lack of bus priority, a confusing network, lack of easily-accessible information, lack of common ticketing, an elderly bus fleet, whether services connect with each other easily or there are long waits, etc.

- the main areas of opportunity, such as places or markets that are underserved.

- any specific local evidence of the benefits of improving bus services for example economic, environmental and social evidence

- how, if possible, services in your area compare to the best in England, such as the places mentioned in the National Bus Strategy.

48. It is mandatory that BSIPs seek and report the views of passengers and third parties on the merits and demerits of bus services locally and the performance of the LTA and the local operators. These should include local transport users' groups, MPs, local services and business organisations and so on. Passenger survey data, if any, should be reported.

Proposals for improvement

49. BSIPs should then describe in outline how you and operators propose to deliver the key goals of the Bus Strategy in your area. These are making services:

- more frequent, with turn-up-and-go services on major routes and feeder or demand-responsive services to lower-density places.

- faster and more reliable, with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room.

- cheaper, with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.

- more comprehensive, with overprovision on a few corridors reduced to boost provision elsewhere and better services in the evenings and weekends, not necessarily with conventional buses.

- easier to understand, with simpler routes, common numbering, co-ordinated timetable change dates, good publicity, and comprehensive information online.

- easier to use, with common tickets, passes and daily capping across all operators, simpler fares, contactless payment and protection of bus stations.

- better integrated with other modes and each other, including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers.

50. Each of these areas is explored in more detail below.

51. In a few cases, LTAs may wish to say that some aspects of the service do not need improvement - for instance where a very high, turn-up-and-go frequency is already provided. But even in high-performing bus towns, further improvements (for instance to priority and fares) are always necessary.

52. BSIPs need not include an exhaustive list of specific interventions. This granularity will be developed as part of an EPS or as any necessary part of a franchising

process. A BSIP might, for instance, say that a bus lane or bus priority is needed on the Anytown Road corridor - but not that a 1km bus lane is needed between 150 and 425 Anytown Road and a bus gate at the junction of Anytown Road and Anytown Avenue. Greater detail can be provided, however, if LTAs wish.

53. We are interested in conventional buses but also in innovative ideas for journeys which are difficult to serve well with conventional buses. For instance, as stated in the Strategy, large workplaces and destinations with anti-social hours, such as hospitals or out-of-town business parks, could be given their own demand-responsive bus service.

54. We will expect you to consider and report on what is required to co-ordinate bus services with other public-sector transport provision (hospital patient transport services, school transport, provision by the Department for Work and Pensions and so on) to minimise duplication and maximise journey opportunities – the so-called "Total Transport" approach. We will also work nationally to ensure that other government departments are bought in to this agenda.

Post-COVID challenges

55. Buses' adaptability is one of their great strengths. BSIPs should address how networks might change in response to any lasting demand changes due to COVID-19. This need not mean reductions in demand - there might, perhaps, be more local or inter-suburban journeys even as there are fewer journeys into city centres. BSIPs may also propose short-term measures to attract passengers back, rebuild confidence in buses and prevent a car-led recovery.

56. We recognise, however, that October is likely to be too early to make firm judgments about what is happening to demand. BSIPs should also reflect the requirements set out in the Bus Strategy for the post-COVID period, namely to maximise the number of services provided, supporting them and re-growing the customer base; prevent a scaling back of services to just the most profitable routes; focus on the entire network and plan for the longer term; and ensure bus services meet the changing needs of local communities and do not change suddenly or unexpectedly.

57. COVID-19 has threatened the viability of some previously commercially-viable services. BSIPs should explore which parts could become commercially viable again with the right capital investment (e.g. in bus priority), and which parts will not return to viability, but are socially or economically necessary – and how these could best be supported

Part 2 – Drafting the BSIP

Gathering data to understand the scale of the problem

58. To deliver significant improvements to buses in a BSIP area, it is necessary to understand how buses in the area are currently performing so that LTAs and operators can develop a shared understanding of the most urgent priorities for the

142

BSIP. The BSIP should draw on the most relevant and available data. We encourage LTAs to approach operators at an early stage for information and data.

59. In considering what data to gather, the Government would generally recommend considering data over a five-year period. However LTAs may wish to consider the extent to which COVID-19 has resulted in fundamental changes in passenger demand and therefore whether pre-COVID data remains relevant.

60. To determine this, the BSIP should, as a minimum, take into account available operator and LTA data on:

- Passenger numbers by route, time of day and ticket type.
- Bus vehicle speed and congestion data by route and time of day – using GPS vehicle data from operators.
- Bus average journey times.
- Granular data on single operator fare volumes for single fares, flat fares such as youth or hopper fares, period passes (daily/weekly/monthly), flexible/carnet tickets, annual season tickets and concessionary passes – including the average price. Also, the use of any multi-operator or through ticketing and the split between cash and electronic payment including concessionary fares.
- The current bus market share compared to other modes, particularly the private car. This should be split between urban and rural where possible.
- Bus service frequency (including days of operation).
- Bus stop network density.

61. Where particular datasets are not available, the BSIP should explain why and what urgent action will be taken to fill the data gap.

62. The Strategy sets out a number of key issues that every BSIP should address and these are set out in the section below on ambition. If other factors have adversely affected bus growth, these should be addressed in the BSIP as well, supported by data (such as past surveys and published statistics, where available). A good approach is to look at buses from the point of view of people that don't use them or do so infrequently, to understand why. This might include considering alternatives to bus use such as the cost and availability of parking; land use planning; actual and perceived passenger safety; and connections and coordination of timetables.

63. These are just some examples. The aim is for the LTA, bus operators and any other stakeholders such as passenger groups to work together to understand what factors are currently holding back bus patronage growth. This will inform the package of measures included in the BSIP and the subsequent EP or franchising assessment.

Confidentiality

64. It is possible that some of the information obtained and used during BSIP development will be commercially sensitive. The LTA should seek to aggregate information it obtains where possible and appropriate - given the nature of the work

being undertaken on the BSIP - and put in place measures to avoid inadvertently disclosing any commercially sensitive information provided by a bus operator. If an operator can demonstrate that certain information they provide is commercially sensitive, authorities should also look favourably upon any request from the operator concerned for a confidentiality or non-disclosure agreement.

Setting targets

65. We expect BSIPs to set targets for journey time and reliability improvements for the LTA as a whole and for each of the largest cities and towns, as well as for passenger growth and customer satisfaction. LTAs should show what progress they expect to make by 2025 and also 2030; and progress against these targets should be reported publicly every six months.

66. For individual measures in the BSIP, LTAs should explain how they contribute to the delivery of the targets.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED BY BSIPs

67. This section provides further guidance on areas which the Government expects to see covered in BSIPs. It should be read in conjunction with the strategy and is designed to provide further advice in the preparation of BSIPs. All areas listed below should be included in the BSIP. LTAs and operators may also wish to cover other topics referenced in the Strategy and not covered here and may do so at their discretion.

Intensive services and investment on key corridors, with routes that are easier to understand

68. LTAs should work with operators to set the daytime, evening and Sunday service levels that different communities need. In densely populated areas, EP or franchising agreements should ensure that key radial roads have buses so often - every few minutes - that passengers never need a timetable. Evening services on these roads should be at least every 15 minutes.

69. LTAs and operators should also consider network design – for example, whether local needs are best met through infrequent 'branch' services of main routes which provide through journeys at the expense of frequency, or through high-frequency feeder routes connecting to the main line service instead, with through ticketing at no extra charge. Service planning should make sure that buses are appropriately spread between corridors, avoiding significant over and under provision.

70. In considering network design, LTAs and operators should agree common route numbering systems – for example, to avoid two routes with the same number serving the same bus stops. Buses from different operators on the same route should be

144

shown on the same timetable. Routes should be as far as possible the same in the evenings and weekends as in the daytime.

71. Consideration should be given to whether to simplify routes; for example, whether networks should have more high-frequency major route services rather than lots of low-frequency services combining. Route variations and letter suffix routes should be reduced.

72. BSIPs should also consider network design and avoid providing infrequent through services to everywhere or divert buses away from the main route to serve smaller places, reducing speed and convenience for people travelling between a route's major points. On high-frequency services, BSIPs should consider whether more use could be made of good hub-and-spoke connections, with frequent feeder buses connecting into frequent major routes and through ticketing. This becomes possible if frequency and reliability improve and with the consideration of demand responsive transport options. Overprovision on some urban corridors with dozens of competing buses every hour should be reduced to boost under provision elsewhere.

73. For BSIPs, LTAs should set out which corridors they consider to be appropriate for this high intensity treatment and whether they consider that this requires an increase (or reduction) in service frequencies compared to the current position. Where LTAs consider that feeder services are appropriate, they should set this out.

There must be significant increases in bus priority

74. The Strategy explains that to increase bus modal share, buses must become an attractive alternative to the car for far more people. The key to doing this is making them faster and more reliable. The Government expects plans for bus lanes on any roads where there is a frequent bus service, congestion, and physical space to install them. Bus lanes should be full-time and as continuous as possible. They should be part of a whole-corridor approach, including other physical measures such as:

- Traffic signal priority;
- Bus gates, which allow buses to enter a road that prohibits access to other traffic, and;
- Clear and consistent signage for traffic and for bus users.

75. The impact of vehicles loading and unloading on bus lanes should be minimised, so hours should be restricted, or loading bays inset or moved close by but away from the main carriageway, with consideration of the views of local businesses. LTAs should consider physical changes to road layouts to allow the provision of continuous bus lanes. Where there is insufficient space for a bus lane, LTAs should consider point closures of some main roads to private cars, allowing through traffic on other main roads nearby.

145

76. Issues such as bus stop locations and spacing, parking provision, impact of vehicle loading, and removal of buildouts and pinchpoints will need to be addressed in the development of the EP. Non-residential parking will not generally be an efficient use of road space on such routes.

77. Difficult decisions or commitments may be needed by both the operator and LTAs. Close co-operation with and between authorities with relevant highways and traffic powers is essential.

78. BSIPs will not be able to consider all of these issues in detail, but should set out which corridors will be prioritised for bus priority treatment. The extent to which individual LTAs commit to new bus priorities in their BSIP will be an important indicator of ambition as well as providing confidence to local bus operators that these outcomes – which will influence their reciprocal action and investment – will be delivered.

79. The Department will consider proposals for capital investment as Strategic Outline Business Cases. LTAs should therefore describe corridors and potential packages of measures at a high level, but will not need to have identified a preferred option.

80. Most MCAs now have a Key Route Network (KRN) of the most important local roads for which they share powers to operate and manage with their constituent Local Highways Authorities. The Government plans to consult on strengthening the KRN approach to give MCAs more powers to manage key routes, helping to enable integrated highways and transport planning, better delivery of services across local authority boundaries, and give MCAs greater accountability.

81. Where LTAs commit to bus priority improvements, the Department expects bus operators to make firm and clear commitments to improve the customer offer, which can be included in the resultant EP scheme.

Fares must be lower and simpler

82. Lower and simpler fares attract passengers. They are an investment not just in transport but in town centres, in social inclusion and in a greener future. Fares policy should be an integral part of BSIPs. Lowering fares will either be a commercial decision for each operator or may require subsidy from the LTA – which each operator would negotiate separately with the LTA during EP or franchising assessment development.

83. Within cities and towns, the Government wants low flat fares (or maximum fares and daily price caps) to be the norm, as in London, as well as lower single fares and more, low, daily price capping. BSIPs should also consider youth fares; initiatives such as the youth fares implemented in Merseyside had a positive impact on patronage and the Government wants to see this replicated across the country.

146

84. The Government expects there to be consideration of fares in BSIPs. At this stage, BSIPs should set out which fares have been identified as suitable for reform. For example, a LTA might choose to introduce a new fare for a group such as young people or job seekers, create a flat fare within a given area, or create a zonal fare system. Details such as the precise fare level can be included in the EP.

There must be seamless, integrated local ticketing between operators and this should be across all types of transport

85. The Strategy sets out a bold ambition for an integrated ticketing approach to allow passengers to buy a through journey for local bus, rail and metro with a single tap on a smartphone. BSIPs should set out at a high level what is required to deliver no-fuss, multi-operator tickets and price caps on contactless credit and debit cards, at little or no premium to single operator fares, and where appropriate how this could be expanded to tickets that cover all travel modes (bus, light rail/metro, rail). All buses should accept contactless payment and all operators running on the same route should accept the same tickets.

86. Full multi-operator contactless ticketing requires the provision of a back-office solution. At this stage, LTAs and operators should assume that a technical solution is available and should not seek to develop this independently.

87. All operators should work with each other and their LTAs to overcome historic challenges around commercial agreements and pricing so that they can deliver the ticketing outcomes demanded by the Strategy through an EP (or delivered by LTAs through their franchising assessment).

Service patterns must be integrated with other modes

88. Bus journeys are not made in isolation but form part of an overall journey package that can include walking, cycling, park and ride or light rail and BSIPs should be developed in this context. A BSIP should consider these whole journeys so that buses can form an integral and attractive part of them.

89. More bus routes and demand-responsive services should serve railway stations and for easy connections between modes, bus services should be timed to connect with trains. Buses must also work better with each other to eliminate poor connections and uncoordinated timetables. Where services are regular, but not frequent (often in rural areas), connectivity should be maximised. Hub models can connect services, with buses all arriving and departing at the hub town within the same window each hour, ideally all servicing the same centrally located bus or railway station. Bus stations should be protected from closure and redevelopment and be improved and well maintained.

90. At this stage, BSIPs should identify key transport interchanges and set out whether services are considered to be adequate and timetable changes are required. It

147

should also set out what engagement already takes place, or is planned to take place, between operators from different transport modes, to address these issues.

The local bus network is presented as a single system that works together, with clear passenger information

91. BSIPs should consider strong network identities so that to passengers it feels like a coherent, consistent, strongly-branded operation which gives people confidence in using it – so that passengers know when the bus will arrive, what the fare will be and what the experience will be like. Typefaces, liveries and logos create an impression of unity.

92. Bus stops should show accurate information about the services stopping there. Better passenger information will require joint working between the LTA and bus operators so that, for example, new bus stop RTI display locations can be informed by bus operator boarding and alighting data, or that fare information and other passenger information can be co-hosted on a new or improved website or app. Every town, city and rural area should have easy to access, up to date maps, showing all local bus services. Bus stops should be named consistently by operators running the same bus routes. Local branding should reflect the community and not the operator, though successful existing brands should not be sacrificed.

93. Timetable changes should be minimised and co-ordinated across operators, so they happen at the same time. There should be heavy promotion and marketing to familiarise non-users with their local buses, to demystify the service for non-users, and introductory offers to promote the service to them.

94. In holiday destinations and scenic areas, much more should be done to promote buses to visitors. Popular tourist areas such as the West Country and the national parks are often blighted and congested by too many cars. More must be done to promote buses to visitors, with improved services, easily accessible information, park-and-ride sites and special tickets. LTAs need to consider how work could be undertaken with tourist attractions and venues to promote and facilitate bus travel to the site e.g. more accessible parking/stops for buses and coaches.

95. Disabled people and those with protected characteristics must be able to use bus services as easily as other passengers. Making buses more accessible (not just the vehicles themselves, but also bus stops, bus stations, and by providing excellent customer service) also benefits other passengers.

96. To support the Strategy's vision, BSIPs should provide information on existing provision of real time information, what expansion is proposed and why, existing information provision at bus stops and plans for its improvement, and plans for a local brand.

148

Modern buses and decarbonisation

97. The Strategy supports the introduction of at least 4,000 more zero-emission buses, with the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme helping support the delivery of this through providing funding to LTAs in partnership with local stakeholders. At a local level, every LTA that wishes to receive funding from the Department for local transport projects must develop ambitious strategies, targets and measures for cutting carbon from transport in their area. All LTAs must work with bus operators and energy providers to include ambitions to decarbonise the local bus fleet in their BSIPs. We would expect to see the relative ambition of areas reflected in these plans, with an expectation of all areas fleet to more to zero emission in the long run. Local standards for zero-emissions must be set in partnership and franchising schemes ensuring that commitments to invest are delivered. BSIPs (and subsequent EP/ franchising proposals) need to be flexible enough to respond to future funding schemes that the Department may run to support decarbonisation of fleets. They also need to have scope to meet future government targets that could be set to meet UK decarbonisation commitments.

98. Buses should offer end to end accessibility and provide ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to the wheelchair space, so that everybody can travel with confidence. They should also offer audible and visible information, in addition to WIFI and charging as standard - allowing people to work and interact online whilst they travel and make better use of their time. More buses, particularly in rural areas, should also carry cycles.

Give bus passengers more of a voice and a say

99. BSIPs must include a passengers' charter giving bus users rights to certain standards of service, including punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, information and redress. There must be mechanisms for redress at a local level and means to ensure these standards are met, which could include forums such as establishing Bus Advisory Boards. This will be backed with action at national level as set out in the Strategy.

100. Further guidance on establishing and maintaining a Bus Passenger Charter is at Annex C. It is not necessary to create a full charter as part of creating a BSIP, but BSIPs should commit to the creation of a charter and set out key provisions to be included.

101. Bus services should also be safe and perceived to be safe by all. BSIPS should include how LTAs and bus operators will ensure this is delivered. Areas to consider are:

- **Walking routes to bus stops** - LTAs should plan and maintain routes to stops with safety in mind, ensuring, where appropriate, that they are well-lit and support natural surveillance – especially those used by evening and night buses (operator boarding and alighting data can help with this).

149

- **The waiting environment** - Siting of bus stops should take into account convenience and safety, with LTAs ensuring, where necessary, they are well-lit and covered by new or existing CCTV. Bus stations should also be adequately staffed and monitored.
- **Staffing and procedures** - Bus drivers should have appropriate passenger safety training to deal with emergency situations on or off the bus. Drivers should be able to contact depot staff at all times and operators have proper 'code red' procedures with the emergency services so that help can be summoned quickly. Vehicles themselves should have working CCTV.
- **Customer relations** - Bus operators should include safety in their marketing and customer charter - with clear and publicised procedures to deal with complaints or suggestions on how to improve passenger safety. Bus operators should liaise with local police and other stakeholders such as local schools to address safety concerns.
- **Information provision** – Good quality passenger information can help to reassure passengers about safety issues such as when the bus will arrive at the stop and where individual passengers will board and alight for their journey, especially important for those that may be unfamiliar with the local area. Buses themselves should have next stop announcements, for example, so that everyone knows where the bus is going and when they have reached their stop.

More demand-responsive services and 'socially necessary' transport

102. In lower-density areas and at less popular times, conventional fixed-route buses can never compete with the attractiveness or flexibility of the car. Infrequent, irregular services with long journey times discourage patronage. Aided by technology, demand-responsive transport (DRT) can address this, offering a more personal, on-demand service, taking people from their doors or closer to their doors than a regular bus, integrated with conventional buses, where they exist. In developing BSIPs, LTAs should consider the role of DRT in improving access to bus services in rural areas.

103. DRT should be provided in the evenings and late at night. Places that are economically disadvantaged should also be included in that thinking to connect them better to centres of employment, broadening opportunities and the choice of work, education and leisure for those who live there. Better services must be provided to places of employment off existing main bus routes, such as out-of-town industrial estates and factories, and services should meet the needs of passengers who do shift work. Again, this could be done with integrated DRT geared to shift times. There is a role to play for employers in helping with this that the BSIP should consider.

104. Although EP and franchising legislation does not apply to community bus services[5], the LTA will already be providing a range of bus transport that is not commercially viable but which it considers 'socially necessary' to enable local people to have

---

[5] S.123J and 138C of the Transport Act 2000 exclude services provided under s.22 of the Transport Act 1985.

access to bus services. Community bus services can provide an important contribution to meeting overall bus transport needs and the BSIP should reflect this.

105. Particular consideration should be given to the provision of transport to facilitate access to social and leisure services. In considering such services, local authorities should consult those with expertise on local needs in relation to loneliness and social isolation, including groups at risk of loneliness and providers of social prescribing schemes.

106. LTAs should consider the scope for applying Total Transport principles, as explored in the Department for Transport's 2015 pilots. The feasibility report and pilot review, including benefits, outcomes and lessons learned was published in 2019 and can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/total-transport-feasibility-report-and-pilot-review.

Longer term transformation of networks through Bus Rapid Transit and other measures

107. BSIPs should provide the Government with information on local areas' ambitions for bus over the longer term. In the strategy, the Government commits to supporting bus rapid transit and other schemes which lie between conventional bus and light rail, aiming to bring the benefits and user experience of light rail to bus corridors. LTAs should include aspirations in this area in their BSIPs, even if they are not yet at SOBC stage, to help generate a better understanding of where such schemes are potentially feasible.

Regular updates

108. BSIPs will be 'living' documents and can be altered (and republished) if the LTA, working closely with its bus operators, believes this is necessary. BSIPs should be revised at least every twelve months to ensure they remain relevant and that the plans within it are working as intended. Revised versions should also be sent the Department for Transport at: BSIP@dft.gov.uk. Please title your email 'Published revised BSIP for [insert name of authority]'.

Part 3 – LTAs and bus operators working together

109. This part of the guidance provides advice on how LTAs and their local bus operators can work productively together to develop a high quality BSIP. It is particularly focussed on the joint working required to deliver a BSIP where it will be translated into an EP.

151

110. Although the LTA is ultimately responsible for producing the BSIP, it cannot unilaterally decide what goes in it. We also expect operators to engage constructively in discussions, offering active suggestions for improvement, explaining what they can and cannot support and why and seeking to resolve any differences of view constructively and in the best interests of current and future bus users.

111. If the LTA has chosen an EP to deliver its BSIP there is an operator objection mechanism. Working together from the outset is therefore vital. The BSIP needs to set out a vision which the EP can deliver.

112. The objection process is designed to ensure that any proposal which requires delivery by operators is realistic and will not have unintended consequences for passengers. We do not wish to see operators using the objection process lightly and would expect any potential objection to have been raised with the LTA at an early stage with practical suggestions for changes. Nor do we wish to see operators feeling forced to use this mechanism during the EP delivery phase because the BSIP process has not properly taken their views into account.

Joint working between stakeholders

Create a forum for discussion

113. If a BSIP is to be effective, a forum should exist for the free and frank exchange of views, data and ideas from its members on how to improve bus services in the BSIP's geographical area. Its members will of course include all local bus operators and those running cross-boundary services. However, there will be other groups that can contribute, such as bus user groups and representatives of disabled people, and local business groups. Where LTAs are not also highways authorities, it will be important that highways authorities regularly attend the forum and recognise its importance, since they will be crucial in delivering bus priority measures. Not all need to attend every meeting and sub-groups can be commissioned for individual stakeholders to discuss and develop draft BSIP content to bring back to the wider forum for consideration.

114. These will be informal discussions to encourage co-operative working, so it is not necessary for them to be led by the LTA. Collectively, stakeholders may prefer the forum to be independently chaired or the chair to revolve amongst its members, to give confidence that all views will be represented and properly taken into account. What is important is that the forum is seen by all as a place that encourages and facilitates an open and honest exchange of views, without fear of ridicule or recrimination.

115. The forum should provide an opportunity for an open discussion about current deficiencies in the market and how they might be addressed, perhaps starting by reviewing any existing partnership agreement and/or comparing members' key asks.

152

Role of the LTA

116. It will be for the LTA to host BSIP discussions and arrange the first meeting. The LTA should work closely and in a spirit of co-operation with bus operators, community transport bodies and other relevant organisations. The LTA is not wholly responsible for drafting its content. BSIP content is developed jointly through discussion and negotiation, primarily between the LTA and its bus operators.

Role of local bus operators

117. It is essential that local bus operators work together to set out clearly what they want from the BSIP or any later statutory partnership process. This will involve operators discussing and reaching an agreed joint position amongst themselves on what they wish collectively to see included in the document and be prepared to negotiate this as a collective with the LTA. Asks should be specific, for example asking for bus priority measures on particular routes, rather than simply asking for more bus priority.

118. This process is designed to give operators a real say in what is delivered, so all operators should participate in the BSIP process. Individual operators, particularly the medium and 'big 5' operators must put forward company representatives that have the authority to negotiate and make decisions during forum discussions, rather than afterwards. Neither a BSIP nor an EP should focus on large operators. The EP objection mechanism is specifically designed to prevent a single dominant operator from having a veto.

119. To help this, operators should agree who will pull together and present the collective bus industry view when commenting on or providing written content for BSIP drafts. This can be for the whole BSIP development process or for individual sections/meetings. We would expect operators to hold their own separate meetings to discuss and formulate their proposals and draft content for discussion with the LTA. It is necessary and perfectly acceptable for local bus operators to have private discussions on the drafting suggestions that they intend, as a group, to share with the LTA in the forum. Advice that the Department has developed with the Competition and Markets Authority on how to avoid competition issues during the BSIP drafting process is at Annex D.

120. Where bus operators do not participate in these discussions, the Government reserves the right to cease paying the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) to them.

How those discussions become a clear way forward under a BSIP

121. LTAs and bus operators should identify where there is agreement about what should be done. Where there is disagreement, it may be helpful to consider whether measures will contribute to targets and how quickly. This document describes the level of information required in each section under each heading.

How might that translate into the content of an EP?

122. Once the BSIP has been agreed and the Government has set out the funding that it will provide, specific measures can be included in an EP. This will include both commitments by the LTA and reciprocal ones from bus operators.

An EP as part of a wider agreement

123. A BSIP can also form part of a wider agreement that sits outside of, but complements, the EP. The Transport Act 2000 defines what types of 'facilities', 'measures' and 'standards of service' can form part of an EP. But this does not prevent the LTA and operators from agreeing, on a voluntary or contractual basis, a wider agreement that includes other initiatives or mechanisms outside of what is possible under an EP to support and deliver Strategy outcomes.

Evidence of operator support

124. All operators are strongly encouraged to express their views on the BSIP. In all cases, a BSIP should be accompanied by letters of support from operators representing at least 80% of registered mileage in the geographical area covered by the BSIP. In the absence of this, the LTA must explain why this level of support is not achievable.

Publishing the BSIP

125. The LTA must publish its BSIP on its website and send the link to the Department of Transport at BSIP@dft.gov.uk. Please title your email 'Published BSIP for [insert name of authority(s)]'.

Local Transport Authority capacity and capability

126. We recognise that the LTAs are being asked to take on an important role in delivering the outcomes of the Strategy, in partnership with their local operators. To support LTAs in taking on this work, the Government has committed to provide £25 million in 2021/22 on a capacity and capabilities programme.

127. As a first step, we have made capacity funding available to all LTAs to support them in their immediate work on EPs and BSIPs. This has been allocated to each LTA on request, and it represents the minimum amount of capacity funding that LTAs will be eligible to receive.

128. Further capacity funding will be made available by 30 June, based on engagement with LTAs to understand the ongoing needs of partnerships in developing their plans.

129. The purpose of the £25 million capacity and capabilities programme is to:

154

- bring in additional capacity to support the timely development of EPs and BSIPs. Funding could be used to recruit additional staff or procure consultants to support the partnership in pulling together their plans, especially in the short term where current LTA or partnership capacity is limited, or where specialist support is needed;

- create a legacy of capability in LTAs on bus-related issues. We know that capacity and capabilities on bus policy varies significantly between LTAs, and that many authorities have lost valuable in-house skills over the years. Where possible, LTAs should look to build up that in-house capability so that they can continue to maintain and improve bus interventions whilst adapting to significant market change;

- develop a network of LTAs, facilitated by DfT and consultants, to support authorities in their work to develop and deliver BSIPs and EPs. This will serve as a forum to discuss NBS related issues and facilitate the exchange of best practice. This could include online workshops, tutorials, with follow-up FAQs and advice. It could also include some direct support to individual, or groups, of LTAs where assistance is needed to move this work forward. Much of this is likely to be taken over by the Bus Centre of Excellence once that is established;

- establish a Bus Centre of Excellence to enable the delivery of a long-term programme of activities and support. The centre will be co-sponsored by the Department, and training will be managed and delivered by experts from across the bus sector. This will focus on: public transport service planning and network design, performance oversight, contract procurement and competitive tendering[6], design and development of bus priority measures, and wider traffic management measures to improve local bus performance;

- support a peer network of senior leaders working to deliver bus transformation, to support the sharing of experience and solutions across the private and public sector.

---

[6] Existing DfT guidance on tendering best practice can be found here:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tendering-road-passenger-transport-contracts-best-practice-guidance

155

156

3. Annexes

ANNEX A: MODEL NOTICES OF INTENT TO PREPARE A FRANCHISING PROPOSAL OR AN EP

MODEL EP NOTICE

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Schemes

[Date]

At its meeting on [date], [Name of LTA] gave approval to proceed with the development of an Enhanced Partnership. The commencement of this is confirmed through this notice of the intention to prepare an Enhanced Partnership Plan and accompanying Enhanced Partnership Schemes, as required and set out in section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.

MODEL MCA FRANCHISING NOTICE

[Name of LTA] Notice

[Date]

In accordance with sections 123B and S123C(4) of the Transport Act 2000 ('the 2000 Act'), the [name of authority] ("Authority") has authorised the publication of this notice, confirming that it intends to prepare an assessment of a proposed bus franchising scheme ("Proposed Scheme").

The Proposed Scheme as currently envisaged will cover [geographical area of the proposed scheme] ('Area'/ 'Region').

Pursuant to section 123C (2) (a) of the 2000 Act, the Secretary of State's permission to carry out the assessment of the Proposed Scheme is not required because the scheme relates to the Area of a Mayoral Combined Authority.

The Bus Services Act 2017 amended the 2000 Act to provide the Authority with powers to reform the bus market and these provisions provide for new types of partnership schemes and the option to franchise bus services.

The Authority has directed [name of LTA] as the Transport Executive for the Area/Region to assess the new bus reform options available under the Act including an assessment of the Proposed Scheme. Before undertaking such an assessment section 123C(4) of the 2000 Act prescribes that the Authority must publish a notice stating that they intend to prepare such an assessment.

You can find out more on the [name of LTA] website. For further information, please contact [contact details].

157

ANNEX B: BSIP TEMPLATE

NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY

BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

[NAME OF AUTHORITY OR AUTHORITIES]

HEADLINE MESSAGES TO AID BSIP DRAFTING

The BSIP is a vitally important document that drives forward the productive partnerships supported by an EP or a franchising assessment that are needed to make a step change in bus services required by the National Bus Strategy ('the Strategy'). It is important to bear this in mind during drafting as it will be the framework for future delivery and, in part, **act as a bidding document for future funding (see paragraphs 34-39 above)**. LTAs should cross-check with the EP and/or franchising guidance to ensure that the proposals in a BSIP content would maximise the use of the powers available.

LTAs should draw on existing work such as local transport plans and other detailed plans, data and strategy documents that exist or are currently being developed. Remember, the overall aim of the BSIP and its individual sections is to explain LTA ambition to improve buses and the plans and policies that will deliver them. Where those plans and policies do not currently exist in a particular section, the BSIP should explain what the ambition is, how proposals will be developed and when.

Overall, the BSIP should:

- Be developed by LTAs in collaboration with local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people.
- Focus on delivering the bus network that LTAs (in consultation with operators) want to see, including how to address the under provision and overprovision of bus services and buses integrate with other modes.
- Set out how it will grow bus use.
- Set out how it will be delivered.
- Be updated annually and reflected in the authority's Local Transport Plan.
- Seek to influence the share of the £3 billion of transformation funding (if it meets the Step 1-3 requirements set out above).

Section 1 – Overview

- Name of LTA(s) that the BSIP covers. This should also set out whether the BSIP covers a single LTA or more than one and the justification for that decision.
- Map showing geographical area(s).
- Explanation of whether that area(s) are proposed to be covered by an enhanced partnership scheme and/ or will form part of a franchising appraisal. All the LTA geographical area must be covered either by an EP or a franchising proposal

158

(Advice on using both an EP and franchising see advice on using both under Step 1 of the main guidance).

- Duration of the published BSIP, arrangements for annual review and how it will be aligned with wider Local Transport Plans.

Section 2 - Current bus offer to passengers

The Strategy requires BSIPs to drive improvements to local bus services in a number of ways – for example, by setting targets for passenger growth and developing plans for multi-modal ticketing. This section should provide an analysis and data of how the current bus network compares to the BSIP aims and objectives set out in the subsequent sections.

Analysis of existing local bus services compared to BSIP outcomes

- How current services meet or fall short of BSIP expectations as set out in this guidance and the Strategy.

LTA financial support for bus services

- Explain the financial support that the LTA(s) is providing for subsidised public bus services, listing the numbers of routes and route mileage supported.

Other factors that affect the use of local bus services

- This should include the extent and pricing of parking provisions in town and cities and the split between LTA and private sector provision. It should also include current LTA spending on parking enforcement.

Section 3 - Headline targets

Targets for improvement should be covered in this section. Each section should include an explanation of how and why these targets were chosen and what the percentage increase is on existing performance. The key here is that these targets should be assessed using existing available data or data that the partnership has or can compile. It is also vital to think about clear objectives and how success will be judged and explain your thinking here.

Targets for journey times and reliability improvements

- These should cover the LTA(s) area as a whole and provide specific data for each of the largest cities and towns in its area.
- Performance against these targets must be reported against and published at least every six months.

Targets for passenger growth and customer satisfaction

- This should include details of how this will be measured.

Section 4 – Delivery

This is the main body of the BSIP. Its purpose is to explain how the requirements set out in the Strategy are to be delivered. Many factors and interventions by the LTA and local bus operators will influence and contribute to delivering outcomes. The purpose of this section is for the BSIP to set out detailed policies in each of the areas, explain delivery in more detail and how they each will work together to improve local bus services. The BSIP should contain a separate section on each as set out earlier in this guidance (paragraph references are given for ease).

Section 5 – Reporting

This section should set out the arrangements for publishing six-monthly performance against BSIP targets. Please include the URL on your website where these reports will appear.

Section 6 – Overview table

This section should summarise the key outputs of the BSIP and how it meets requirements set out in the Strategy. The purpose of this section is to give readers, including passengers and the Department, an overview of the commitments in the BSIP which LTAs and operators will work towards to improve local bus services. LTAs should complete all sections of the template.

BSIP Overview Table Template

Name of authority or authorities:	
Franchising or Enhanced Partnership (or both):	
Date of publication:	
Date of next annual update:	
URL of published report:	

Targets	2018/19	2019/20	Target for 2024/25	Description of how each will be measured (max 50 words)
Journey time				
Reliability				
Passenger numbers				
Average passenger satisfaction				

Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to:	Yes/No	**Explanation** (max 50 words)
Make improvements to bus services and planning		
More frequent and reliable services		
Review service frequency		
Increase bus priority measures		
Increase demand responsive services		
Consideration of bus rapid transport networks		
Improvements to planning / integration with other modes		
Integrate services with other transport modes		
Simplify services		
Review socially necessary services		

161

Invest in Superbus networks		
Improvements to fares and ticketing		
Lower fares		
Simplify fares		
Integrate ticketing between operators and transport		
Make improvements to bus passenger experience		
Higher spec buses		
Invest in improved bus specifications		
Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services		
Protect personal safety of bus passengers		
Improve buses for tourists		
Invest in decarbonisation		
Improvements to passenger engagement		
Passenger charter		
Strengthen network identity		
Improve bus information		
Other		
Other		

162

ANNEX C: BUS PASSENGER CHARTER GUIDANCE

Overview

We want to enable passengers to hold local authorities and operators to account for delivering against the BSIPs. A BSIP should include a Bus Passenger Charter (BPC) that sets out for passengers how to use bus services and what passengers can expect from bus operators delivering local bus services across their area.

The BPC should signpost passengers to routes for recourse, enabling passengers to provide feedback on how LTAs and operators are performing in meeting their commitments in the BSIPs.

How would a Bus Passenger Charter work?

The Bus Passenger Charter would set out the commitment made between local authorities/bus operators and the passengers they serve to ensure certain standards are met for each journey. It translates the Bus Service Improvement Plan into a tangible set of outcomes that passengers should expect to see when taking a bus journey.

The Charter should signpost customers to feedback channels so that passengers have a voice and enabling operators/local authorities to address the concerns of passengers.

It should be made clear what the Charter will set out and be explicit that it will not create any new legal relationship with the passengers. It is expected that the Local Transport Authority will develop their Bus Passenger Charter in collaboration with bus operators and passengers or passenger advocacy groups. There should also be a commitment to review the charter on a fixed basis and to consult on any revised versions.

In taking decisions authorities must ensure they comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). By providing a place to commit publicly to developing transport provision in a manner which eliminates unlawful discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity, Passenger Charters can help authorities to explain to passengers the steps they are taking to fulfil the Duty and to support inclusive transport services.

The Bus Passenger Charter should be published on the local authority website and where possible, also on the participating bus operators websites too. There also needs to be consideration of the accessibility of the BPC and how we can also offer non-digital guidance to passengers.

Passenger commitments

The BPC should promise certain standards of service to passengers, including punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, accessibility of buses and related infrastructure to groups with protected characteristics, information and redress. There must be mechanisms for redress at a local level and means to ensure these standards are met.

BSIP commitments

LTAs may also decide to use the BPC to communicate to passengers the tangible outcomes they should expect to see from BSIPs.

164

ANNEX D: GUIDANCE ON NEGOTIATING BSIPS AND COMPETITION LAW

Introduction

1. The published EP guidance already provides advice on how competition law relates to negotiating an EP agreement, both between operators and with the LTA. That guidance is also relevant to developing a BSIP and readers may wish to refer to this first. This annex provides additional guidance, focussed on developing BSIPs.

2. A BSIP is not a statutory document, nor does it deliver anything on the ground – that is the purpose of an EP or franchising assessment. Negotiating a BSIP may necessarily involve a combination of discussions between operators and the LTA and operator-only discussions without the LTA present. This is for practical reasons. Operators may be prepared to be more open without the LTA in the room, or to make contributions to the BSIP in ways they may feel unable or uncomfortable to do if the LTA were present, for a variety of reasons. For example, the LTA can become the bus registration authority under an EP (instead of the traffic commissioner) and are also the 'client' for socially necessary bus services and other tendered contracts.

3. The BSIP also tasks operators with producing the 'shopping list' of initiatives, measurables or deliverables that they believe are necessary for inclusion in the BSIP, to deliver the improvements required by the Strategy. It is likely, and perfectly reasonable, that operators will only wish to share the results of that process with the LTA once it has been discussed, developed and agreed between the operators themselves.

How might competition issues impact on BSIPs?

4. The principal issue that needs to be avoided in operator-only discussions on BSIPs are **discussions about the future of individual operator businesses - pricing intentions, including rebates or discounts or commercial strategy, such as what an individual operator's future fares strategy will be**.

5. These could be seen to have particular relevance in the following outcomes set out in the Strategy and this guidance.

Lower and simpler fares

6. Reducing fares will either be a commercial decision for each operator or may require subsidy from the LTA – which each operator would negotiate separately with the LTA during EP development. Neither of these outcomes require conversations between operators. It is acceptable to discuss how fare structures could be simplified as the EP legislation can mandate what ticket structures and types should be offered by all operators in the EP area.

Multi-operator ticketing

7. The Strategy particularly requires the BSIP to set out how they will deliver no-fuss, multi-operator tickets and price caps on contactless credit and debit cards, at little or no premium to single operator fares – with all buses accepting contactless payment. Capping levels for multi-operator tickets and arrangements for through ticketing will be delivered through the subsequent EP or a franchising arrangement, not the BSIP. The EP guidance already provides advice on through ticketing and setting the price of a multi-operator ticket (which can be mandated in an EP) and also that multi-operator ticketing can be zonal, covering a geographical area.

8. A potential focus for the BSIP could be how the obstacle of commercial agreements between the LTA and operators and between operators could be overcome to deliver the ticketing outcomes demanded by the Strategy. The agreement(s) itself would be negotiated as part of EPS development (such agreements are not required under franchising).

Network design

9. The Strategy requires BSIPs to cover network design. This may involve changes to the bus network that was previously provided under the (pre-Covid) deregulated market. We would expect the LTA to take the lead on this, using available operator and other data to, for example, determine where there are gaps in network coverage and where there is overprovision – e.g. on urban corridors. Advice is provided in this guidance on dealing with commercially confidential information and the LTA can then use this data to, for example, apply funding to fill gaps in the network using their tendering powers. To address overprovision, the existing EPS powers can be applied to set maximum frequencies on individual routes or require even headways.

Conclusion

10. The corollary is that none of these issues should be insurmountable in the context of BSIP discussions. Those discussions are about how bus services will improve in the BSIP geographical area and how those improvements will collectively be delivered by the LTA and their bus operators. The specific actions and interventions required to do so will form part of the EP negotiations or a franchising assessment.

11. The BSIP is not required to consider or explain its impact on individual operators. Although individual operators will of course privately bear this in mind as they contribute to BSIP development, it does not need to be publicly shared or discussed with other operators. Individual operators can of course discuss impacts or potential impacts, on a confidential basis, during BSIP development with the LTA if they wish.

Further Guidance

12. The Strategy also raises other competition issues that the Government will provide further guidance on as soon as possible.

166

WORK PROGRAMME - INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

To include consideration of items scheduled on the Cabinet Forward Plan.

DIRECTORS	• Duncan Sharkey (Chief Executive) • Andrew Durrant (Executive Director of Place Services)
LINK OFFICERS & HEADS OF SERVICES	• Simon Dale (Interim Head of Highways) • Tracy Hendren (Head of Housing and Environmental Health Service) • Chris Joyce (Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth) • Adrien Waite (Head of Planning)

MEETING: 21ST SEPTEMBER 2021

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Q1 Performance Update Report	**Andrew Durrant,** *Director of Place*
Annual Complaints Report	**Nikki Craig,** *Head of HR*
Annual Scrutiny Report - Draft	**Chairman & Lead Officers**
Work Programme	Panel clerk
TASK AND FINISH	
TBC	

MEETING: 18TH JANUARY 2022

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Budget 2022/23 Report	**Lead Officers & Finance**
Q2 Performance Update Report	**Andrew Durrant,** *Director of Place*
Annual Scrutiny Report - Draft	**Chairman & Lead Officers**
Work Programme	Panel clerk
TASK AND FINISH	
TBC	

MEETING: 13TH APRIL 2022

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Q3 Performance Update Report	**Andrew Durrant,** *Director of Place*
Annual Scrutiny Report (Final version for approval and submission to Full Council)	**Chairman & Lead Officers**
Work Programme	Panel clerk
TASK AND FINISH	
TBC	

ITEMS SUGGESTED BUT NOT YET PROGRAMMED

ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
Homelessness Strategy and Homelessness Forum Update	**Tracy Hendren**, *Head of Housing and Environmental Health Service*
Junction Improvements	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
Maidenhead Town Centre CIL	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
New Schools Infrastructure Plans	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth* **Kevin McDaniel**, *Director of Children's Services* **Ben Wright,**
Ascot Redevelopment	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
Public Transport Requirements	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
Carbon-free Power Infrastructure	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
Air Quality and Traffic Monitoring	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
Annual Monitoring Report	**Adrien Waite,** *Head of Planning*
Pedestrian road safety	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
Affordable Housing	**Tracy Hendren**, *Head of Housing and Environmental Health Service*
21 mph speed limit across the Borough	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
5G Update	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure, Sustainability & Economic Growth*
Street Lighting Review	**Simon Dale,** *Interim Head of Highways*

TASK AND FINISH GROUP SUGGESTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
CIL	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure,* *Sustainability & Economic Growth*
Homelessness and housing solutions	**Tracy Hendren**, *Head of Housing and Environmental* *Health Service*
Digital Infrastructure	**Chris Joyce,** *Head of Infrastructure,* *Sustainability & Economic Growth*

This page is intentionally left blank