
Date: 22/09/2022

Purpose: Leicestershire Enhanced Partnership Forum Meeting

Venue: MS Teams

Present: David Taylor, Independent Consultant (Chair) (DT)
Denise Faber, ITP (DF)
Matthew King, Arriva Midlands (MK)
David Bott, First (DB)
Patrick Stringer, Stagecoach Midlands (PS)
Tom Morgan, trent barton and Kinchbus (TM)
Adam Hemingway, Vectare (AH)
Adrian Thorpe, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council (AT)
Barrie Walford, North-West Leicestershire District Council (BW)
Lee Quincy, Leicestershire County Council (LQ)
Hina Gadhia, Leicestershire County Council, (HG)
David Robinson – Stagecoach Midlands (DR)
Lilith Hine-Dickinson, Melton Borough Council (LH)
Kilian Hall, Arriva Midlands (KH)
Liz Hopwell, Charnwood Borough Council (LH)
Andrew Gibbons, Leicester City Council (AG)
Richard Thresh, Hinkley and Bosworth Borough Council (RT)
Nicola Tidy, Nottingham City Transport (NT)
Rebecca Phillips, ITP (RP)

Minutes taken by: Rebecca Phillips, ITP

Minutes of Meeting

	ACTION
<p>1. Welcome and Introductions (DT)</p>	
<p>2. Funding Update (DT)</p> <p>DT asked LQ to provide an update on potential future funding.</p> <p>LQ indicated that Leicestershire County Council (LCC) has received Enhanced Partnership (EP) Officer funding from the DfT to be used to secure resource to help with the EP and to move things along with the BSIP; this totals around £300,000 over a 3-year period but LCC is still in the process of working out how to spend this.</p> <p>Whilst local transport funding (LTF) was provided by DfT, this was used for the supported network.</p> <p>LQ informed the Forum of the recent meeting with DfT to obtain feedback on the BSIP (for which no funding was received). The feedback was that the BSIP needed to better identify issues and be evidence-led. A Relationship Manager is in place for dialogue between LCC and DfT.</p> <p>AG provided a summary of DfT's response to the Leicester BSIP, stating similar issues, especially surrounding delivery of the Plan.</p> <p>AG suggested issues of funding were linked to political governance deals in the area, of which Leicester and Leicestershire were not a part.</p> <p>LQ agreed, stating that feedback was disappointing and too general but will continue dialogue with DfT through the Relationship Manager regarding absence of BSIP funding.</p> <p>Hertfordshire's BSIP was identified as a good example of a successful BSIP; LQ will approach Hertfordshire to learn lessons from their example to implement in Leicestershire and for the BSIP annual review.</p> <p>LQ highlighted the recent announcement of a £2 single fare cap and invited comments. DT asked if operators had any more information on implementation.</p> <p>TM has raised issues with DfT regarding the £2 fare reimbursement but had no response so far; he voiced concern about overcrowding on long-distance services.</p>	<p>LQ</p>

AG and DF agreed that to the best of their knowledge, reimbursement would go straight to operators. DT indicated that this would likely create a cliff edge of no funding following the end of the scheme.

AG asked whether bus usage was included in Levelling Up bids (as suggested by DfT for those who did not receive BSIP funding), to which LQ confirmed not as yet. LQ suggested that there may be scope to look at Section 106 funding opportunities in the future.

3. **Bus User Forum (HG)**

HG provided an update explaining LCC is still exploring how the forum will be set up, highlighting it will likely be outsourced but will report any further information as soon as possible.

HG

4. **Report back on 'Catch the Bus' Month (DT)**

DT provided an update regarding progress on 'Catch the Bus' month in September, reporting that little had been done at a county level. Discussions with operators in the lead up to the September campaign favoured a longer-term approach to encouraging passengers back to bus, along the lines of the 'Think Bus' campaign adopted in neighbouring LTA areas, including Derbyshire.

AG offered pre-made materials used by Leicester City for countywide use.

DT opened the discussion to bus operators for their opinions and feedback.

TM highlighted this would have been a good opportunity for promoting bus travel, however, major news stories (new Prime Minister, death of Queen Elizabeth II) detracted from awareness raising of the scheme. TM expressed disappointment that LCC did little to support 'Catch the Bus' month.

5. **Scheme 1 – Standardisation of Bus Service Change Dates (RB)**

DT updated the forum on responses from different operators with ability to standardise service changes within the periods of: *end of Christmas Holidays / beginning of New Year, Easter, Summer Half Term, Beginning of Summer Holiday, End of Summer Holidays or Autumn Half Term*. He reported that there were issues in determining a date due to differences in academic and school years across the county.

HG raised concern that the beginning of January seemed too soon in terms of resourcing, capacity of staffing and for the administration. She proposed the end of January as a more realistic date.

DT asked for operator views on either the beginning or end of January.

TM responded that he was happy with the last Sunday in January but wanted to confirm the situation for changes in Leicester City, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

AG highlighted that it would be best to align changes to already agreed Leicester city changes, due to higher city to county movement than to Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire's term dates due to lower levels of cross county travel. LQ confirmed term dates were the same across the county.

DT, HG, TM and NT agreed with AG on aligning with Leicester and making changes based on school terms.

The table below shows the six proposed change dates for Leicestershire. The January, April, July and August dates are consistent with the four Leicester City change dates (changes 1, 2, 4 and 5). Change date 3 and 6 are specific to Leicestershire. Given the short timescale until the first change date in January 2023, it is intended that the standardisation process commences with the second change date in April 2023.

Change	Month(s)	Change Date Description	Actual date in 2023 / 24
1	Jan	Spring term starts	3 rd Jan 2023
2	Mar / Apr	Summer term starts	17 th Apr 2023
3	May / Jun	First day after half-term break	5 th Jun 2023
4	Jul	Summer holiday start	13 th Jul 2023
5	Aug	Autumn term starts	29 th Aug 2023
6	Oct	First day after half-term break	23 rd Oct 2023
1	Jan	Spring term starts	8 th Jan 2024

Operators to confirm their agreement or otherwise with the proposed change dates by Tuesday 18th October 2022. Should operators not respond by this date, it will be assumed that they agree with the proposal.

Bus
Operators

6. **Scheme 2 – Bus Stop Audit on B4114 Corridor and Development of Minimum Standards for Roadside Infrastructure (DF)**

DF presented slides regarding the results of the bus stop audit (see slides attached to meeting notes email).

DF invited the Forum to provide any comments or further ideas following the review.

LQ proposed a standard infrastructure approach, based on a hierarchy of usage. Highlighting the standardised structure in Leicester and the possible replication of this across the county.

AG informed the Forum of the standardised system currently in place in Leicester City, suggesting the ability to mirror it with no clear obstacles to procurement of the same resources, with these having operational benefits to uniformity.

LQ asked about accessibility challenges with information / timetable cases affixed to totems and the practicalities of implementing a defined standard. AG confirmed this is flexible, with options for variable amounts of cases per stop, and scope to implement these easily.

AG informed the Forum of a recent order for 75 new 4-sided totems for the orbital service within Leicester, using county branding.

The issue of outside the Leicester Buses 'Flexi' zone branding into the county arose from the minimum standards discussion.

As part of these discussions, TM suggested as a standard, each stop should have a totem, flag, pole and service information with standards changing based on usage.

7. **Passenger Charter (DF/DT)**

DT updated the Forum on the draft Passenger Charter, based on the Warwickshire and Milton Keynes charter with the aim to agree and roll this out at the next EP Board meeting.

DT

AG raised concern over a 'race to the bottom' situation as operators will only promise what others promise.

DF highlighted the link between the Leicestershire Charter and the Warwickshire Passenger Charter where there was difficulty in brokering a charter acceptable to all due to the involvement of bus users, operators and the council.

TM has reviewed the charter and raised a couple of issues with providing, and reimbursing for, alternative transport in the event of a breakdown, as well as around the fare change timeline of 21 days.

DF confirmed the section relating to what happens during a breakdown needs to be adjusted for Leicestershire as the wording was based on Warwickshire which has a different operating environment; operator feedback is required to firm up this section.

<p>DT asked all operators to send final comments and any suggested changes to the Passenger Charter to DF by 6th October.</p>	ALL
<p>8. Branding of Leicestershire EP Bus Network (DT)</p> <p>The discussion of branding the Leicestershire EP Bus Network focussed on minimum standards for roadside infrastructure. LQ asked for views from operators.</p> <p>AG raised the issue of 'Leicester Buses' branding in the 'Flexi' zone which crosses from the City into the wider county area, suggesting it is simpler to have the same branding in 'Flexi' zones but different options for ticketing and services.</p> <p>TM highlighted that Leicester Buses is clear branding, alongside a website and consistent infrastructure, therefore, arguing it makes sense for Leicester buses in the Flexi area to have this branding. From a customer point of view, passengers only want to know where they can use their ticket.</p> <p>NT suggested both Leicester Buses and Leicestershire buses use the same branding to ensure consistency, as this is clearer from the customer perspective (LQ and AG agreed).</p> <p>DT summarised that there needs to be a reason for the branding and the branding should represent something. Adding 'shire' onto the Leicester brand would be one option as it represents all the different operators and the partnership itself.</p> <p>LQ to take away all points raised in the Forum and get a political steer on the way forward.</p>	LQ
<p>9. Potential Future EP Schemes (DT)</p> <p>DT asked the Forum, what the priorities should be for the future should funding be made available.</p> <p>TM re-highlighted potential funding from Section 106 ensuring sufficient funds from developments which is index linked, whilst ensuring agreements are flexible enough for spending when triggers hit. Nottinghamshire County Council was considered to have a good record to using S106 funding to secure bus infrastructure and services.</p> <p>AG raised the proposal for continuing work on the bus priority corridor measures especially on the A6, along with the potential for matching investment in electric buses with sustainable infrastructure such as bus lanes.</p>	

LQ responded to the bus priority work suggestion on the A6, highlighting previous efforts had been met with significant political pushback related to noise levels.

TM raised the proposal for the removal of pedestrianisation in Loughborough town centre or enable some bus usage, as this has severely restricted bus usage into the town centre with declining usage since introduction).

LQ responded to Loughborough suggestions, highlighting the issue of political involvement with pedestrianisation, as changes were linked to wider cultural plans for the area.

10. **AOB – Questions/Discussion (DT)**

TM expressed concern over cheap parking charges in the region with bus operators unable to compete, suggesting the need to make charges higher than a comparable day ticket on bus to encourage public transport usage over private car.

LQ assured the Forum that DfT is keen to have parking strategies to encourage public transport, however, he raised two key issues in implementing this:

- Presence of a two-tier authority structure and difficulty in gaining consensus (DT echoed this adding that even with consensus, there still remains the issue of private companies and charges).
- Need to strike a balance between promoting the high streets following the COVID pandemic but also promoting sustainable transport in order to meet emissions targets.

AG stressed the need to look into Section 106 funding for future schemes and action, LQ agreed to look into this further.

LQ raised the example of successful use of Section 106 funding in Harborough where development has been used to subsidise bus provision to the development and surrounding areas of bus provision to Harborough.

DF queried whether future funding was dependent on BSIP refresher funding; LQ confirmed that funding is likely to be based on BSIP refreshes (AG agreed).

LQ stated that bus priority measures and parking strategies were high on DfT's agenda and would feed back any suggestions via the Relationship Manager.

LQ

TM suggested creating a package deal of matching investment from operators such as investment into low emission buses.

11. **Date and Time of Next EP Forum Meeting (DT)**

DT indicated that the next EP Forum meeting will be scheduled for early 2023 (Jan/Feb) before the AGM in May, either virtual or face-to-face.

DT asked about any suggestions for next meeting date and if a more regular meeting schedule is desired.

LQ highlighted the need for continued communication across the EP and not to wait until the next Forum meeting for discussion.

DT thanked all for attendance and contributions then closed the meeting.