



Leicestershire Enhanced Bus Partnership Forum

Minutes of meeting held on 6th February 2025 at 1:30pm via MS Teams

Present			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
David Taylor (DT)	Chair / Independent	Emma Odabas (EO)	LCC
Barry Allitt (BA)	CT4N	Andrew Jeffreys (AJ)	LCC
David Bott (DB)	First		
Patrick Stringer	Stagecoach	Anthony Lambell (AL)	Leicester City Council
David Robinson (DR)	Stagecoach	Liz Hopwell (LH)	Charnwood BC
Ross Hitchcock (RH)	Kinchbus / trentbarton		
David Conway (DC)	NCT	Steve Jones (SJ)	Harborough TAG
Alex Niemczyk (AN)	Roberts	David Jones (DJ)	Cross Country Trains
Adam Hemingway (AH)	Central Connect		
Apologies			
Toby France	Arriva	Hina Gadhia	LCC
		Bijel Mistry	Leicester City Council

	Item	Lead
1	Welcome and introductions Deputies for the member apologies above were noted and welcomed.	DT / All
2	Minutes and actions from previous meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EP Forum 26th September 2024 EP Board 7th November 2024 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;">   <h3 style="text-align: center; color: #800080;">Actions from previous meetings</h3> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> EP Forum 26th September 2024 COMPLETED </div> <div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> LCC to contact participating operators for confirmation of data and services in / out of scope of Free Fare Super Saturdays promotion </div> <div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> LCC to circulate promotion comms pack to operators for feedback and finalisation </div> <div style="background-color: #ADD8E6; padding: 5px;"> LCC to canvass PTUG members on changes including an additional meeting date in 2025 </div> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <div style="background-color: #8FBC8F; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> EP Board 7th November COMPLETED </div> <div style="background-color: #8FBC8F; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> LCC to arrange Fares T&F meeting following on from Leicester EP Board discussion on 20th November </div> <div style="background-color: #8FBC8F; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> LCC to contact the Traffic Commissioner's Office to identify any specific requirements of the TC in relation to registrations </div> <div style="background-color: #8FBC8F; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> LCC to include the fare cap as a priority item at the next Fares T&F group meeting when arranged </div> <div style="background-color: #8FBC8F; padding: 5px;"> LCC to review exempted services list and add to CHYM </div> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <div style="background-color: #FFDAB9; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> Operators to contribute ideas for future promotions </div> <div style="background-color: #FFDAB9; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> Operators to provide hard copy information for PTNR roadshows </div> <div style="background-color: #FFDAB9; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> LCC to share BSIP funding trackers </div> <div style="background-color: #FFDAB9; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> LCC to review works communication processes </div> </div> </div> </div> <p>The completed and outstanding actions from these meetings were agreed with further updates being provided under the Forum agenda.</p>	AJ

3	<p>EPs update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfT Review of EPs • Updating the LCC EP Plan and timeline <p>The new government's approach to EPs became clearer in December when it became known that DfT would be contacting local transport authorities and operators for views, through a survey, of how effectively EPs are working as part of a review to be completed by summer 2025; this would presumably result in updated guidance or best practice resources. [UPDATE: the survey was issued on 13th February with responses requested by 14th March]</p> <p>At the same time, dedicated DfT relationship manager support to BSIPs will largely be switched to those LTAs actively pursuing a franchising approach. This is initially being done through a new working group with a first meeting on 12th February and a separate workshop on 12th March for LTAs who wish to remain informed of developments.</p> <p>EO: LCC will be using BSIP revenue funding from the award carried forward from 2023-24 to 2024-25 to commission a feasibility study which we will bring back to partners in the next few months. This is a prerequisite of being a member of the working group so that will start with LTAs that have already done this work and LCC would expect to join in due course when our study is completed.</p> <p>RH: Franchising will be a challenge geographically as Kinchbus / trentbarton, for example, operate into six different LTA areas besides Leicester. The other issue is whether franchising provides a more effective solution to congestion and related impacts on bus journey times.</p> <p>EO: The treatment of cross-border services is one of the things the feasibility study will consider as well as the merits or otherwise of a franchised approach across the whole of Leicestershire or smaller areas. In terms of congestion-busting measures, LCC will be using the capital funding in the 2025-26 award to accelerate the pinch points work from April onwards. Work on the BSIP funding tracker will be complete by early March and circulated with Forum members.</p> <p>ACTION: LCC to share completed franchising feasibility study prior to next EP Forum (25th May)</p> <p>ACTION: LCC to update and share BSIP spending plan and workstreams when available</p>	AJ / EO
4	<p>BSIP25-26 grant (capital) spending plans</p> <p>LCC has received £7.5m in BSIP grant for 2025-26 comprised of £3.1m capital and £4.4m revenue as well as £534k in LA-BSOG and £94k in capacity and capability funding. The allocations for all LTAs in England can be found on GOV.UK. The grant is subject to a publishable Delivery Plan being submitted by LCC to DfT by March 2025 and spent by March 2026 with carry-over only in exceptional circumstances.</p>	AJ / EO

What can the grant be spent on?

Capital

BSIP measures

- Bus priority infrastructure to improve service reliability on key routes / corridors
- Improved passenger facilities, stops, shelters and interchanges
- Improved ticketing, information and network identity
- Contribute to the purchase of zero emission buses and / or infrastructure

Wider funding packages for public realm projects

- Safer streets, road corridors, road junctions, neighbourhood or town centre improvement schemes

Revenue

Network development

- Enhanced bus service levels and coverage (frequency, hours / times of operation), new and restored routes, network simplification.

Fares

- Local fares promotions, discounted young persons' fares, local fare caps below the £3 NBFC scheme
- Overall structure and range of all day and period fares products across all operators in their area

Safety and security

- Improved in-person enforcement and safer bus waiting facilities / environment
- Delivery of Bus Passenger Charters

EO: While this latest funding is limited and there is no indication as yet of what the post-2026 arrangements might be, it puts all the awards received to date into one pot and gives LCC better control of how to plan and prioritise spend compared to having to meet different deadlines and requirements for the previous funding rounds. EP members noted the report.

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Passenger Transport Network Review update

EO

Implementation of Phase 1 in Melton with 5 new town services, enhanced longer distance services and a new Melton FoxConnect service took place on 6th January but performance in the first few days was affected by adverse weather, related flooding and some snagging issues on specific journeys / connections and in migrating residents who now have a DDRT service in place of fixed route provision for which further resources and support, including local drop-in sessions, is being developed. However, the new network has settled down and positive feedback is being received.

Tender awards for Phase 2 wider district services in Charnwood and Harborough will be communicated to operators imminently and planning for Phase 3 town services in those areas is now in hand. The timeline for remaining phases reflects the possibility of local elections which are now confirmed so there will be a slight pause in promotional activity between late March and April up to election day. This enables LCC to take on board any further suggestions from operators for service enhancements (evenings, Sundays, new need) even if on a trial or ad hoc basis to tie in with the BSIP spend cut-off. This will also provide an evidence base for DfT reporting purposes and for LCC and operators to manage residents' complaints about provision or where enhancements have not been sustainable.

ACTION: Operators to provide suggestions and comments about potential service improvements to LCC.

SJ: Local neighbourhood forums attended the Farmers' Market roadshow in Market Harborough earlier today and observed some good feedback to LCC. The forums are also arranging a separate event on 11th February and are grateful to LCC for providing support for this.

DJ asked is there any possibility of providing a new bus stop by the steps to Melton Mowbray station from Burton Road to improve bus and rail connectivity?

	<p>EO: This has been raised by Arriva with officers here and I can also raise with Melton BC as part of wider discussions about bus stops in the area. The BSIP capital funding enables us to look at a range of infrastructure enhancements to follow up implementation of the new network phases including establishing mini-hubs where the DDRT zones feed into main bus services.</p> <p>DT asked what has been the take-up of the roadshows and has the engagement been mainly about the bus services?</p> <p>EO: The indoor event numbers are good and average at between 30-50 attendees, the market walkabout engagement is more variable but we find that people are coming in from various settlements. Overall the reaction is mostly positive as residents feel that they have been listened to, understand the changes we are proposing and have take-away timetable and promotional materials as well as sustainable travel information.</p> <p>LH asked are the dates for the next roadshows for Charnwood and Harborough town services fixed yet?</p> <p>EO: Not yet but now we are looking to book venues and publicise dates soon now that we are clear on the elections timetable.</p> <p>SJ asked if the engagement and tendering processes preclude further suggestions being considered before the new networks are implemented?</p> <p>EO: No, we are open to ideas or comments that haven't been raised through our network planning process and to see if there is operator interest through tendering. This enables any tweaks and enhancements to be provided following a core network implementation and managed through separate contracts as appropriate.</p>	
6	<p>Fares Task & Finish Group update</p> <p>The T&F group met on 18th December 2024 and considered the Free Fare Super Saturdays promotion ran for 7 consecutive Saturdays between 19th October and 30th November 2004 and delivered patronage increases across all participating operators based on loadings for the equivalent period in 2023. The level of uptake varied between services and areas with some examples of double-digit growth in localities.</p> <p>Operational issues were minimal and mostly affected cross-boundary routes or eligibility of journeys from Leicester to the county where lack of driver awareness or failure to interpret fare stage data resulted in customers being incorrectly refused travel. In most of these cases, customers were directed to the operators' refund processes. Regular briefings were provided to operators after each week so that local managers could ensure drivers were aware of the scheme criteria.</p> <p>T&F members had agreed that a co-ordinated approach would be helpful to identify and plan future promotion activity. One output of this could be a calendar that included operators' regular promotions as well as opportunities identified for bespoke services or promotions to places of interest across the county.</p> <p>ACTION: LCC to develop an outline calendar and share with the group.</p>	AJ

Fares T&F update

Free Fare Super Saturdays

- 8 participating operators
- 151k journeys and patronage increase of 5-28% per operator compared to equivalent period in 2023
- 37k views (Facebook, X Instagram), 1.5k links, 214 shares
 - Local parent blogger share with 20k likes
 - One blogger travelled around the county using the promotion

Other promotions

- Twelve free Festive Timetables seasonal services to a range of attractions and destinations including Conkers, Twycross, Gates Garden Centre, local Christmas Fairs and Lights events
- Free travel on LeicestershireFoxConnect throughout January 2025 as an incentive to try the new service

LeicestershireLive

Free bus travel scheme launches across Leicestershire

The initiative has no age restriction



Free bus travel on Saturdays for some county routes



EO: Going forward, LCC is working with neighbouring LTAs through a new monthly cross-working group as well as with Leicester City to identify opportunities for future joint promotional work and to enable cross-boundary issues to be ironed out. We are also going to have conversations about an Easter promotion and will involve EP members as appropriate.

RH: Kinchbus participation in the Super Saturdays scheme was on the basis of a simple offer that wasn't complicated by services that went over the boundary into Derby and Nottingham county and city areas. Ideally, a future fares promotion would lean more into generating more permanent passenger growth through, e.g. the measures that Arriva has taken to generate traffic to Magna Park through taster fares and subsidised period ticket offers.

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Branding Task & Finish Group update

The Leicestershire Buses branding guidelines were nearing completion for agreement through the T&F and subsequent recommendation to approve to the EP shortly. Some of the content has been shaped by internal conversations such as whether or not to include grids for service number information on bus stop flags; in this case the view was that these are harder to maintain and keep up to date than information included in the timetable case or available through online channels and apps. Consistency of presentation is a key principle of the guidelines for both infrastructure and specific resources such as the area timetable books LCC are providing for the network review phases.

ACTION: LCC to circulate draft guidelines to T&F members.

AJ

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Feedback from PTUG meeting 30th January 2025

PTUG members had raised a range of issues either in person or by email that LCC would take up with individual EP operators as necessary. In some cases, it was possible for the operator to directly respond, e.g. the new Arriva service 12 in Whitwick, in other cases comments would be remitted to the relevant phase of the network review for consideration. LCC was also looking at different ways of working with the PTUG such as the drop-in model being rolled out through the DDRT support process to widen access to the group.

AJ

Feedback from PTUG meeting 30th January

Service issues

- Ensure that services in outlying villages are connected to towns with amenities – *add to PTNR feedback*
- Unfair that a campaign can get buses rerouted in Whitwick but not Ibstock
- Changes to Whitwick area services have made travel less convenient – *passed to operator for comment*
- RTI and journey planning – can [UK Bus Checker](#) app and / or <https://bustimes.org/> be added to Choose How You Move as using operators' separate websites on a street corner is impractical
- No RTI on Kinch or NCT services in Loughborough
- Can bus service information be made more accessible – larger print / size where space permits, appropriate contrast on line / service branding



DT: One output that the group would like more information or some sort of 'one stop shop' on fares and ticket products.

BA: As CT4N is on the Ticketer portal as Kinchbus, I'd expect to see any issues with RTI as well. I'd be happy to work with RH and Vix to iron these out but it would be helpful if we had more information about the issue that was raised and whether that was a casual observation or from a regular user.

AJ: We can go back to the PTUG member to clarify and then arrange a discussion on the back of that if needed.

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AOB

EP members were signposted to the Council's Local Transport Plan 4 Core Document which was adopted on 22nd November 2024:

LTP4 Core Document:

https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-01/LTP4-Core-Document-2025-2040_0.pdf

And to a new Leicestershire Highway Design Guide which has been updated to December 2024 and relocated to a new LCC-maintained website:

New LHDG website:

<https://www.leicestershirehighwaydesignguide.uk/>

DJ asked is there any updates on the integrated transport pilots that have been mentioned in LTP4 stakeholder forum meetings?

EO: These were initially conceived as a means of bringing local cycling, walking infrastructure plans and integration opportunities with rail and bus together into pilot schemes delivered through the first allocation of LTP funding but this has changed. We can ask policy and projects team colleagues to provide an update.

EO

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DoNMs

- EP Board (hybrid) – 20th March 2025
- PTUG – xx April tbc
- EP Forum and AGM – 22nd May 2025

All

