

Leicestershire Enhanced Bus Partnership Forum

Minutes of meeting held on 9th October 2025 at 1:30pm via MS Teams

Present			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
Steve Burd (SB)	Independent Chair	Emma Odabas (EO)	LCC
		Hina Gadhia (HG)	LCC
Ross Hitchcock (RH)	Kinchbus / trentbarton	Richard Briggs (RB)	LCC
David Robinson (DR)	Stagecoach	Yusuf Isat (YI)	LCC
David Bott (DB)	First	Usman Karim (UK)	LCC
Dean Shorthouse (DS)	Roberts Travel	Jenna-Mai Smith (JMS)	LCC
		Andrew Jeffreys (AJ)	LCC
David Jones (DJ)	CrossCountry Trains	Bijel Mistry (BM)	Leicester City Council
		Liz Hopwell	Charnwood BC
Apologies			
David Conway	NCT	Steve Jones	Harborough TAG
Patrick Stringer	Stagecoach		

	Item	Lead																																																
1	<div><div>Welcome and introductions</div><div>SB was introduced and welcomed to the meeting as the new EP Chair and commented on his previous roles and experience about how local authorities and operators working together was key to improving the bus experience for passengers.</div></div>	EO / SB / All																																																
2	<div><div>Minutes and actions from previous meetings</div><div><ul style="list-style-type: none">EP Forum and AGM 22nd May 2025EP Board 12th June 2025</div><div><div>Actions from previous meetings</div><div><div><div>Leicestershire County Council</div></div><div>EP Forum and AGM 22nd May 2025</div><table><thead><tr><th>Ref</th><th>Action</th><th>Owner</th><th>RAG</th><th>Date</th><th>Comment</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>EFP225-1</td><td>LCC to share completed franchising feasibility study at next EP Forum (22nd May)</td><td>LCC</td><td></td><td></td><td>To be shared at EP Board 13/11/25</td></tr><tr><td>EPF225-3</td><td>Operators to provide suggestions and comments on service improvements as part of the Passenger Transport Network Review</td><td>Ops</td><td></td><td></td><td>Phase 5 between Oct and Jan/Feb dates</td></tr><tr><td>EPF225-4</td><td>LCC to develop an outline promotions calendar and share with the group</td><td>LCC</td><td></td><td></td><td>To be shared at Promotions T&F</td></tr><tr><td>EPF525-2</td><td>Operators to provide LCC with commercial leisure travel information for summer promotion comms</td><td>Ops</td><td></td><td>14/07/25</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>EPF525-3</td><td>LCC to circulate finalised summer fares promotion fares pack to participating operators / stakeholders</td><td>LCC</td><td></td><td>14/07/25</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>EPF525-4</td><td>LCC to arrange for FoxConnect publicity to be provided at Market Harborough railway station</td><td>LCC</td><td></td><td>28/08/25</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>EPF525-5</td><td>Members to advise LCC of any community groups to host FoxConnect user sessions</td><td>All</td><td></td><td></td><td>Ongoing</td></tr></tbody></table></div></div></div>	Ref	Action	Owner	RAG	Date	Comment	EFP225-1	LCC to share completed franchising feasibility study at next EP Forum (22nd May)	LCC			To be shared at EP Board 13/11/25	EPF225-3	Operators to provide suggestions and comments on service improvements as part of the Passenger Transport Network Review	Ops			Phase 5 between Oct and Jan/Feb dates	EPF225-4	LCC to develop an outline promotions calendar and share with the group	LCC			To be shared at Promotions T&F	EPF525-2	Operators to provide LCC with commercial leisure travel information for summer promotion comms	Ops		14/07/25		EPF525-3	LCC to circulate finalised summer fares promotion fares pack to participating operators / stakeholders	LCC		14/07/25		EPF525-4	LCC to arrange for FoxConnect publicity to be provided at Market Harborough railway station	LCC		28/08/25		EPF525-5	Members to advise LCC of any community groups to host FoxConnect user sessions	All			Ongoing	AJ
Ref	Action	Owner	RAG	Date	Comment																																													
EFP225-1	LCC to share completed franchising feasibility study at next EP Forum (22nd May)	LCC			To be shared at EP Board 13/11/25																																													
EPF225-3	Operators to provide suggestions and comments on service improvements as part of the Passenger Transport Network Review	Ops			Phase 5 between Oct and Jan/Feb dates																																													
EPF225-4	LCC to develop an outline promotions calendar and share with the group	LCC			To be shared at Promotions T&F																																													
EPF525-2	Operators to provide LCC with commercial leisure travel information for summer promotion comms	Ops		14/07/25																																														
EPF525-3	LCC to circulate finalised summer fares promotion fares pack to participating operators / stakeholders	LCC		14/07/25																																														
EPF525-4	LCC to arrange for FoxConnect publicity to be provided at Market Harborough railway station	LCC		28/08/25																																														
EPF525-5	Members to advise LCC of any community groups to host FoxConnect user sessions	All			Ongoing																																													

Actions from previous meetings



□ EP Board 12th June 2025

Ref	Action	Owner	RAG	Date	Comment
EFB325-2	LCC to provide regular social media statistics and analytics from Passenger Transport Network Review phases to the Board	LCC		13/11/25	To be shared at EP Board 13/11/25
EPB325-11	LCC to set up meeting cycle with Contract Managers and nominated EP representatives	LCC			Ongoing
EPB625-1	LCC to draft Terms of Reference for the refreshed Task & Finish groups and circulate to members	LCC		30/07/25	
EPB625-2	LCC to contact Warwickshire CC to discuss marketing group experience and work processes	LCC			Ongoing
EPB625-3	LCC to circulate Task & Finish nomination forms to non-present operators	LCC		16/06/25	
EPB625-4	LCC to share details of the summer fares promotion to all EP Forum operators	LCC		12/06/25	
EPB625-5	LCC to keep members informed of EP Chair recruitment and assessment progress	LCC		20/08/25	

Actions from previous meetings



□ EP Board 12th June 2025 (contd)

Ref	Action	Owner	RAG	Date	Comment
EFB625-6	LCC and Centrebus to liaise on the practical arrangements and notification of the EP Board meeting scheduled for 13th November	LCC and CB		31/09/25	
EPB625-7	LCC and Leicester City to co-ordinate additional February half-term service change date	LCC and Leicester		15/08/25	
EPB625-8	LCC to share infrastructure scoring matrix with operators when it is available	LCC		29/09/25	Responses by 10/10/25
EPB625-9	LCC to liaise with GTS on <u>Thorpebury</u> progress and revert to <u>Centrebus</u> on this and the <u>St Luke's</u> change	LCC		26/08/25	
EPB625-10	LCC to investigate the delay in POs for de minimis services and respond to RH	LCC			
EPB625-11	Operators to provide examples of display issues to LCC to pass on to Leicester City Council RTI team	Ops and Leicester			Ongoing
EPB625-12	LCC to acknowledge registrations on receipt and consider advising of the officer the registration is allocated to	LCC			Registrations are being acknowledged

Only a small number of actions from previous meetings are either ongoing or to be reported at this or following EP meetings. Members **noted** the completed and ongoing actions.

Action: LCC to confirm placeholders for refreshed Task & Finish group meetings to take place in late October.

4

LCC update





Passenger Transport Network Review: Phases 4 and 5

Following the rollout of the new LCC-supported local networks and connecting DDRT and wider district services in the market towns, Phase 4 was implemented in the Hinckley and Coalville areas from 26th August and marks a move from previous phases to working more closely with operators on supplementing their commercial services. This is continuing in Phase 5 in Oadby, Blaby and Wigston where LCC has been obtaining feedback through roadshows on how to promote the network that is in place in those areas.

HG

	<p>Overall the review has delivered 22 new or redesigned services since January as well as 11 FoxConnect zones serving 150 villages providing better connectivity, access to onward travel and an improved level of provision for settlements with either a very limited taxibus service or no service at all previously. 33 sustainable travel roadshows held over each phase have engaged with over 1,000 residents and users. These have been supplemented by over 60 FoxConnect user sessions ranging from village hall to local coffee morning settings which have reached around 1,400 people, educating them about how to access the service through the two types of booking process, and helping individual users with any barriers to their use of the service.</p> <p>Up-to-date service and other information about the progress made by the review is at: https://www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk/public-transport/get-around-by-bus/leicestershire-buses/leicestershire-network-review/</p> <p>SB: What has been the split between app and telephone bookings?</p> <p>JMS: It is 70% app and 30% call centre.</p>	
4a	<p>Bus service infrastructure</p> <div data-bbox="261 824 869 866" data-label="Section-Header"> <h2>Bus service infrastructure</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="1171 813 1311 851" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="268 909 649 1012" data-label="Text"> <p>Infrastructure grading process developed and comments invited from EP operators</p> </div> <div data-bbox="268 1030 534 1061" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>Stops categorised by</h3> </div> <div data-bbox="268 1077 647 1305" data-label="List-Group"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-modal connectivity hub • Major bus interchange (town centre, key attractor / destination) • Urban / suburban / rural (factored by service frequency) • Hail & Ride or 'by custom' stop </div> <div data-bbox="673 891 1311 1341" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>A bus stop grading document has been shared with all EP operators and enables a holistic approach to be stop provision and upgrading including sustainable travel facilities such as cycle storage facilities at hubs, information about onward travel by rail at selected stops, and specifying features needed at stops according to location or key destination and the number and frequency of services that use the stop.</p> <p>LCC will also start to audit all the bus stops in the county for which additional resource is being added to the passenger transport team as the audit will cover some 3,500 stops. It is expected this will take place in the same geographical sequence as the network review and enable the capital grant funding received from DfT to be utilised by the March 2027 deadline. LCC will shortly contact the district and borough councils to seek views and input on the type of improvements they need.</p> <p>RH: Hail and ride isn't particularly appropriate for urban areas so it would be helpful if the final document included this.</p> <p>RB: There are advantages to passengers in formalising stops but there are also limitations in rural settings where most hail and ride stops are found so the review will look to balance this.</p>	RB

	<p>DJ: Is there a definite list of multi-modal hubs and does it include railway stations?</p> <p>RB: There is no list but the review will include stops that allow connections to stations and rail services.</p>	
4b	<p>Franchising</p> <div data-bbox="215 398 1332 1019">  <p>The slide is titled 'Franchising study' in green. It features the Leicestershire County Council logo in the top right. A green bar at the top contains the word 'OBJECTIVES'. Below this, a list of five bullet points is shown in a light green box. To the right of the list, a purple box contains three checkboxes with their corresponding text. At the bottom right of the slide is a photograph of a man in a suit standing next to a red bus with 'Better Buses' written on its side.</p> <p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of the state of play regarding current bus franchising nationally, including current legislation and guidance. • Consider the benefits, disbenefits, risks and opportunities of bus franchising versus an Enhanced Partnership (EP), taking account of the potential impacts of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). • Estimate the potential costs of different franchising models, to determine whether LCC might expose itself to additional financial risk compared to the existing position. • Consider the potential costs and benefits of each model. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Report has been completed <input type="checkbox"/> Undergoing internal briefing and clearance <input type="checkbox"/> A summary of findings will be circulated to EP operators once briefings are completed </div> <p>An initial report has been drawn up by consultants to assess the level of benefit and risk that each type of franchising model would bring to Leicestershire. This suggests there is little advantage in pursuing a franchising option now with local government reorganisation pending so LCC is considering whether it would be a more feasible approach once new local government structures emerge.</p> <p>Action: LCC to provide a summary report to EP operators following internal clearance.</p>	EO
4c	<p>Promotions</p> <p>The Fab Free Fares offer over the 5 weekends in August on all LCC-supported and FoxConnect services was successful with early figures indicating patronage uplift on a number of routes. The online information included a list of top places to visit across the county by specific route and this was included in response to resident enquiries. One complaint was received from a resident who had used the previous Free Fare Super Saturdays promotion in 2024 to travel into Leicester.</p> <p>The focus for the end of year promotion is on working with the local councils to identify opportunities to support seasonal events through providing a supplementary service or journeys on existing rather than bespoke services. Councils have been contacted and suggestions are being received to develop comms assets and other passenger information.</p> <p>SB: For operators' benefit, are there any examples of the type of service LCC is looking to provide?</p> <p>HG: Christmas lights switch-on and events that run past or close to when the bus service finishes for the day are among the enhancements that are currently being scoped.</p>	AJ

4d	<p>Passenger Charter annual review</p> <div data-bbox="247 212 590 257"> <h2>Passenger Charter</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="247 268 823 313"> <p>The Leicestershire Bus Passenger Charter has been developed in conjunction with the Enhanced Partnership bus operators and is reviewed annually.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="247 329 874 418"> <p>The passenger charter sets out the minimum standard of service performance and facilities a passenger can expect on and off the bus, what to do if things go wrong, and how to get in touch with either the Council or operators with your ideas and comments or for more information.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="248 434 884 770">  </div> <div data-bbox="927 371 1286 743"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service change dates – 6 dates to 7 • Compliance with Public Service Vehicles (Accessible Information) Regulations 2023 in respect of providing on-board audio and visual route, destination and next stop announcements • Any other changes needed? • Thoughts on promoting the Charter? </div> <div data-bbox="217 851 1335 1052"> <p>The Charter was developed in conjunction with operators and the Passenger Transport User Group and includes a commitment to be reviewed annually. The main changes proposed are to reflect the additional service change date in Leicestershire from February 2026 and the requirement for qualifying vehicles to comply with the latest PSVAR regulations. LCC has already contacted EP operators for information on the proportion of their fleet that meet the new audio-visual information requirements.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="255 1086 1246 1120"> <p>Action: Members to review the Charter and provide comments to LCC.</p> </div>	AJ
5	<p>District and Borough Council updates</p> <p>No written updates had been received prior to the meeting.</p>	
6	<p>Bus operator updates</p> <p>The following operator updates had been received prior to the meeting:</p> <div data-bbox="260 1469 884 1516"> <h2>Bus operator updates: NCT</h2> </div> <div data-bbox="220 1541 810 1991">  </div> <div data-bbox="845 1547 973 1576"> <p>Service 1</p> </div> <div data-bbox="845 1594 1275 1977"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same timetable with additional early morning and evening journey on the full length of route from Nottingham to Loughborough in our September 2025 change in order to assist with staff travel for the National Rehabilitation Centre, which is due to open later this year • by the end of 2025 we'll be operating 62 electric single deckers, which completes the conversion of this type of bus in our fleet from diesel to electric. Trent Bridge depot, now has charging capacity for 78 vehicles. Zenobe completes NCT depot electric upgrade </div> <div data-bbox="1165 1464 1308 1505">  </div> <div data-bbox="1203 1930 1289 2002">  </div>	

Bus operator updates: Stagecoach



Service 148

- We have been pleased to introduce new electric buses on to service 148 between Leicester, Earl Shilton, Barwell, Hinckley, Nuneaton and Coventry over the summer and have already received some great customer feedback about them.



Bus operator updates: CT4N



ROUTE 66

your **new** community connection for

Sutton Bonington
Zouch Hathern
Loughborough

starts 28 October

up to **every hour** • six days a week

Service 66

- 66 continues to operate with no issues. The only matter that may bring a challenge is the closure of the A6006 for the next 12-months with the closure of the railway bridge in the Hathern area.



Up to date information including for road closures due to the Zouch bridge scheme can be found at:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-projects/zouch-bridge-replacement-scheme>

RH: ZEBRA2-funded electrification is ongoing with likely completion of charging infrastructure towards the end of this year and the first EVs being introduced early next year. The Skylink service has recently been upgraded with 18 new diesel vehicles.

DB: Capacity and frequency enhancements to Fosse Park with the extension of service 18 have been operated over the summer months and have been well used: <https://news.firstbus.co.uk/news/first-bus-announces-more-frequent-buses-to-fosse-park>. Contracted shuttle and car park operations at East Midlands Airport continue to operate in line with seasonal requirements.

DS: The renewed Park & Ride operations from August have bedded in well with nothing other than minor teething problems at the start.

7	<p>Feedback from PTUG meeting 11th September 2025</p> <p>Group members commented on the difficulty of finding a 'best fare' from the zonal and ticket product information available on operators' websites. This will be raised with operators at the Fares, Ticketing and Promotions T&F group.</p> <p>Periodic requests are made for a Park & Ride service for North West Leicestershire residents to add to the existing network into Leicester along other key routes. The principle behind the network is that it should not overload corridors that are already well-served by operators' commercial services so an additional P&R based on the A50 would not be viable and would also require a suitable site to be provided for anything other than a very bespoke service or need.</p> <p>Members have also expressed a preference for timetable panels to have a clear 'effective from' date to assist non- or infrequent bus users. LB-branded timetable formats produced to accompany each phase of the passenger transport network review do include a clear date but this is not consistent practice on operator-produced publicity. It would be helpful to take this forward through the Branding & Infrastructure T&F group and also to include it in the Passenger Charter.</p> <p>Action: Operators to review if service start date is included on timetables and advise LCC.</p> <p>BM: The City Council is trialling a new type of combined corridor timetable for all services along the Humberstone Road corridor. This is based on TfL practice where the integrated timetable supports individual journey RTI information. If successful, it will be rolled out on stops outside the city centre and within the Flexi boundary.</p> <p>Action: Leicester City to provide LCC with the integrated timetable artwork.</p>	AJ
8	<p>AOB / Questions</p> <p>AJ: Provisional dates for the 2026 EP meeting cycle are being compiled and will be confirmed following the EP Board meeting on 13th November.</p> <p>DJ: Can EMR's new Integrated Transport Manager be invited to EP Forum meetings going forward?</p> <p>AJ: I have reached out to EMR and await a response.</p> <p>EO: Any further comments on the discussions today are welcomed by email.</p> <p>Action: All.</p>	All
9	<p>DoNMs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP Board (in person) – 13th November 2025 hosted by Centrebus, Leicester • 2026 meeting dates to be confirmed 	All