


Leicestershire Enhanced Bus Partnership Forum

Minutes of meeting held on 19th March 2026 at 2:00pm via MS Teams

Present																																																			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation																																																
Steve Burd (SB)	Independent Chair	Hina Gadhia (HG)	LCC																																																
		Richard Briggs (RB)	LCC																																																
Toby France (TF)	Arriva	Kim Salt (KS)	LCC																																																
Ross Hitchcock (RH)	Kinchbus / trentbarton	Jenna-Mai Smith (JMS)	LCC																																																
Patrick Stringer (PS)	Stagecoach	Andrew Jeffreys (AJ)	LCC																																																
David Robinson (DR)	Stagecoach																																																		
David Brookes (DB)	Centrebus	Bijel Mistry (BM)	Leicester City Council																																																
Paul Radford (PR)	NCT	Liz Hopwell	Charnwood BC																																																
Justin Chrich (JC)	Roberts Travel																																																		
David Jones	CrossCountry Trains	Steve Jones	Harborough TAG																																																
Apologies																																																			
David Conway	NCT	Emma Odabas	LCC																																																
Michael Moore	First Bus	Usman Karim	LCC																																																
Item	Lead																																																		
1	Welcome and introductions																																																		
	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.																																																		
	SB / All																																																		
2	Minutes and actions from previous meetings																																																		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EP Forum 9th October 2025 EP Board 13th November 2025 																																																		
	<div style="text-align: right;"></div> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Actions from previous meetings</h3> <p>□ EP Forum 9th October 2025</p> <table border="1"> <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>EPF1025-2</td> <td>LCC to provide a summary version of the franchising study to EP operators following internal clearance</td> <td>LCC</td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> <td>Ongoing</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>□ EP Board 13th November 2025</p> <table border="1"> <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>EPB11/25-3</td> <td>LCC to advise operators of the timeline for BSIP approval and publication</td> <td>LCC</td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> <td>Ongoing</td> <td>Agenda item</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EPB1125-3</td> <td>LCC to circulate a final list of pinchpoint locations for review and agreement by operators</td> <td>LCC</td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> <td>Ongoing</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>EPB1125-6</td> <td>LCC to add map to service change page on CHYM showing Leicester Buses EP Scheme area</td> <td>LCC</td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> <td>Ongoing</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>EPB1125-8</td> <td>LCC to consider request from City to allocate some funding to promote the Flexi add-on ticket within the county</td> <td>LCC</td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> <td>Ongoing</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>EPB1125-9</td> <td>Arriva to co-ordinate Flexi add-on ticket promotion with Arriva marketing team</td> <td>Arriva</td> <td style="background-color: orange;"></td> <td>Ongoing</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Ref	Action	Owner	RAG	Date	Comment	EPF1025-2	LCC to provide a summary version of the franchising study to EP operators following internal clearance	LCC		Ongoing		Ref	Action	Owner	RAG	Date	Comment	EPB11/25-3	LCC to advise operators of the timeline for BSIP approval and publication	LCC		Ongoing	Agenda item	EPB1125-3	LCC to circulate a final list of pinchpoint locations for review and agreement by operators	LCC		Ongoing		EPB1125-6	LCC to add map to service change page on CHYM showing Leicester Buses EP Scheme area	LCC		Ongoing		EPB1125-8	LCC to consider request from City to allocate some funding to promote the Flexi add-on ticket within the county	LCC		Ongoing		EPB1125-9	Arriva to co-ordinate Flexi add-on ticket promotion with Arriva marketing team	Arriva		Ongoing	
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Completed actions



EP Forum 9th October 2025

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

Members to review the Passenger Charter and provide comments to LCC

Operators to review if service start date is included on timetables and advise LCC

Leicester City Council to provide LCC with integrated timetable artwork

EP Board 13th November 2025

LCC to amend service change dates notification on CHYM to emphasise the dates applicable only to changes outside of the Leicester Buses EP Scheme area

Operators to develop a proposal for a through travel ticketing scheme in market towns

Operators to provide LCC with details of pinchpoints / hotspots



Members **noted** the completed and ongoing actions.

BM: To clarify, the actions on LCC and Arriva in regard to promoting the Flexi add-on within the county are separate from LCC's recent contribution of £300k to subsidise the lower Flexi prices applying from 29th March.

DB: Is there any update on the bus stop infrastructure work and is there a target for Melton to be completed in line with the sequence of the PTNR phases?

RB: The stop audit work is progressing across the county as part of the wider programme but the county towns are a priority and LCC is still in discussion with Melton BC. With commissioning and supplier lead times in mind, it is hoped that there will be new infrastructure in Melton in the summer.

HG: LCC is also liaising with the City on further RTI totems and appropriate locations for them and we already have your ideas and suggestions around best sites in Melton town centre. The aim is for improvements to go in well ahead of the audit being completed but also that, from a procurement viewpoint, there will be economies of scale rather than ad hoc ordering and installation.

3

Operator feedback

NCT

JR: A service revision is due in June to remove some lightly used journeys and improve reliability. The 100th anniversary of service 1 commencing on 13th March 1926 is being celebrated by a heritage-liveried vehicle which was launched outside the former Gotham garage of the South Notts company.

Stagecoach

PS: Early planning is taking place for some changes in September to improve reliability on the 148 and X7 by building more recovery time into schedules to counter the effects of traffic growth and congestion.

All

	<p>Centrebus DB: Changes to LCC contracted services include the LC6 being diverted at Stapleton into Gates Garden Centre, also new service LC17 from Wigston to Fosse Park, both from April. Later in the year there will be reliability changes on LC3 and LC7.</p> <p>Kinchbus RH: Delivery of the last two ZEBRA2-funded electric buses is due in April to complete the electrification of most of the Loughborough fleet.</p>	
4	LCC update [including supplementary information provided post-meeting]	HG
4a	<p>BSIP25 refresh</p> <p>This document is being finalised for publication at the end of March and LCC is grateful to operators for feedback received on the working draft circulated previously.</p> <p>Action: LCC to share final BSIP25 document with EP members</p>	
4b	<p>Bus Grant project plan</p> <p>LCC is required to submit the consolidated funding outline to DfT by the tight deadline of 20th March. This will show summarised project headings which relate to the new bus grant element of the 4-year consolidated grant allocation (new funding due on 1st April 2026). This has not yet been paid to LCC but will include a 3-year revenue allocation up to March 2029 and the capital monies with a 4-year allocation up to March 2030.</p> <p>DB: Can operators see the plan as, so far, only headline numbers have been available. More detail on overspend, underspend and allocations to projects under each element of the BSIP would be helpful and has been asked for before.</p> <p>EO by email: The draft project plan to be submitted tomorrow does not contain any detailed schemes under the headings as this currently does not exist at such short notice. It is an over-arching indicative plan as requested by DfT; the final, detailed project plan is due to be submitted late September. This then gives authorities 6 months to consult if required, run procurements and obtain pricing and work on the detailed schemes under those headings to be able to finalise a realistic project plan for delivery.</p> <p>In terms of requests for clarity about the bus grant funding LCC has already received, actual spend has to be reported to DfT on a quarterly basis. However, the capital spend has been low to date due to the network review being the priority. The bus stop infrastructure work will be programmed for 2026/27 so therefore a high percentage of the capital will be carried forward into the next financial year. The revenue funding is all being utilised to fund the expanded fixed route network, pilot services, de-minimis agreements, increased operator contract subsidies, the 11 DDRT zones, promotions, website improvements, staffing resources and cross-boundary projects.</p> <p>As reported at every previous meeting as part of the LCC updates, the grant money is quite fluid and estimated values put against projects must be regularly re-profiled due to high tender prices, changes to the commercial bus network or when initial estimates were either over or under actual costs following procurement and / or further investigation. As well as actual spend, the summary sheet will also provide an estimate of what LCC may spend in each area by the end of the financial year.</p>	EO

Action: LCC to circulate a summary table of spend to date in 2025/26 by Friday, 27th March.

4c

Bus Network Accessibility plan

AJ

Bus Network Accessibility plan



Main themes

- Vehicles – a significant proportion of the vehicles used in Leicester and on main corridors within the county are fully compliant including to the latest PSVAIR standards
- Infrastructure – the infrastructure audit will input into this in terms of % of stops with accessibility features (raised kerbs, tactile pathway, level access / footways)
- Information – at stop / online, method / formats, compliance with relevant accessibility standards for print and digital content



- Operators' driver training / customer service processes and teams
- Assistance schemes / permits (e.g. scooters, hidden conditions)



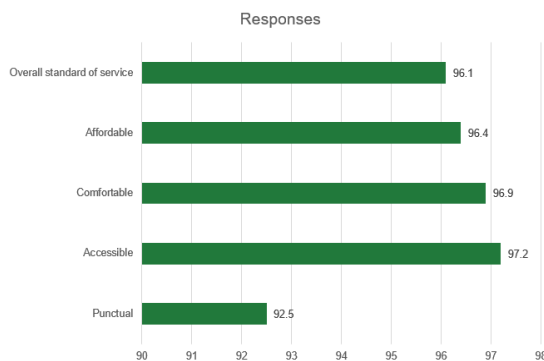
In the absence of any specific guidance about what this plan should look like, the suggested approach is not just to cover obvious areas like vehicles, roadside and other essential infrastructure, how and where passenger information is available but also where more detailed research or comparison alongside recognised accessibility standards will help to provide a comprehensive picture of what LCC and operators are providing to meet a range of needs. It is also the sort of document where a strong visual approach will help to show some of the specific features available. The aim is to have an outline document to take to the next EP Board meeting in June and any assistance from operators on content and imagery would be appreciated.

4d

Passenger Surveys

AJ

Passenger surveys



- 415 responses across 39 services using ratings 1-2 (Poor or OK) and 3-5 (Good to Excellent) plus comment box
- Average satisfaction figure of 95% is derived from all ratings, aggregated satisfaction based on 1-2 vs 3-5 [excluding overall standard of service] is 82.8%
- Punctuality and reliability of most concern to respondents who marked ratings 1 and 2
- But praise too for helpful, friendly drivers and meeting specific travel needs



The aim of this new snapshot process is to provide an immediate opportunity to gain insight from passenger feedback which can be used as a litmus test against outcomes from the more detailed Transport Focus survey which LCC is going to participate as a condition of the new Local Authority Bus Grant funding; and to highlight any issues which might require an intervention to improve the service. The initial results are simple but largely positive in that, when comparing markings based on poor experience against those where the experience has been good to excellent, the aggregated satisfaction rate is 82.8%.

Punctuality and reliability have emerged as issues that passengers on a few services rated less highly and where it would be useful to understand, e.g. if this was within the operator's control or not. While the first survey was based on cards being handed to passengers then logged and analysed manually, it is hoped to automate the process for when it is repeated after six months, probably in July.

SB: It would be helpful if an aggregated scoring for each survey attribute could be presented next time.

DB: This survey seems like unnecessary duplication and perhaps the EP Board should have a view. Is it going to run alongside the Transport Focus work which is a nationally recognised benchmark?

AJ: Yes, it is intended to continue the snapshot survey even though it is limited when compared to Transport Focus so to fit with more frequent reporting cycles than annually. It's important to understand the gap between the 82.8% and the 90%+ ratings and act so that the next survey shows improvement that can also be communicated to passengers.

Action: LCC to present more granular results of future surveys.

4e **Easter 2026 group travel promotion**

RB



The poster features the Leicestershire buses logo at the top left, with a green bus icon. Below it, the text reads 'Spring Savings Up to 50% Off* On Group Day Tickets 30 March to 12 April 2026'. A small note says '* When boarding a bus in Leicestershire. See full list of participating operators and journey exclusions online.' To the right, there is a list of bullet points: '11 participating operators in outer county, market towns, Park & Rides and FoxConnect', '50% discount on most services for group or family travel tickets as defined by operators' T&Cs for boardings in Leicestershire; 10% discount on FoxConnect', 'Will not apply in the Leicester Flexi zone but the Family Day ticket will be discounted to £6.40 from 29th March on an open basis', 'LCC offer is BSIP-funded and revenue foregone will be fully reimbursed to operators', and 'Runs 30th March to 11th / 12th April'. The Leicestershire County Council logo is in the top right, and the Leicestershire buses logo is in the bottom right. The background is a green field with colorful flowers.

Spring Savings covers three elements: a discount of up to 50% group travel products on operators' commercial services; £5 for 5 on LCC's supported bus network; and 10% of FoxConnect bookings. Revenue foregone will be reimbursed or adjusted as appropriate and the promotion overall is funded from BSIP monies. Comms assets have been released to operators to check that the offer information is correct.

	<p>PS: It would be cleaner if this or future offers ran for the whole two weeks as starting on a weekend at the start of a holiday period would give it greater traction.</p> <p>AJ: That is a good point and one we will factor in for future promotions.</p> <p>DB: Centrebus is happy to support this scheme but it and past offers have tended to be fare giveaways rather than a scheme that can be built up to attract a specific passenger group or even as a multi-operator product.</p> <p>HG: This was discussed at the recent Fares, Ticketing and Promotions Task & Finish group so there is some clarity now about a digital Leicestershire Buses discount card that would be simple to market and operate as well as a proposal for Centrebus and Arriva to work up a pilot through ticketing scheme based on Melton. Short-term offers are still part of the mix but clearly, whatever the schemes that do go forward, there is mutual interest in that they show uptake and scope for repeating as examples from other areas have shown.</p> <p>AJ: The consensus from the Task & Finish group enables us to go away and scope a cost for a digital product, how that breaks down into supplier and technology costs and then how those can be funded through a Board discussion. There was also a consensus that an offer based on standardisation of young persons' fares was not realistic due to commercial reasons underpinning each operators' pricing strategy for young people.</p>	
4f	<p>Feedback from PTUG meeting 20th January 2026</p> <p>There were no substantive comments to report as the agenda had broadly mirrored that of the Forum meeting. LCC continues to look at how meaningful engagement can take place with bus users whether collectively or through representative groups to improve their participation.</p>	AJ
5	<p>AOB / Questions</p> <p>AJ: The next meeting is on 11th June and will comprise an in-person EP Board which NCT have kindly offered to host at their offices and an online EP Forum. Under the revised governance agreed at the EP Board on 29th July 2024, there will not be elections as, effective from the 2025 AGM, the Chair and Board are elected for 2 years.</p> <p>Action: LCC to confirm the meeting arrangements.</p> <p>SB: LCC has raised comms collaboration as an AOB.</p> <p>AJ: This is just to remind members of the desirability for comms timescales leading into service changes are co-ordinated so that information to residents is released in a controlled and consistent way.</p>	All
6	<p>DoNMs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EP Forum (online) – 11th June 2026 • EP Board (in person) – 11th June 2026 at NCT • PTUG – 18th June – note rescheduled date 	All