Leicester
City Council

MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY SCRUTINY COMMISSION

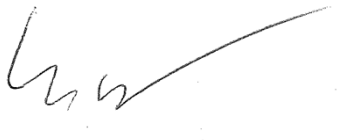
DATE: WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2025
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Members of the Committee

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Dr Barton (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Bajaj, Batool, Osman, Porter, Rae Bhatia and Singh Sangha

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.



For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Julie Bryant and Ed Brown (Governance Services),
Tel: , e-mail: committees@leicester.gov.uk
Leicester City Council, City Hall, 3rd Floor Granby Wing, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Julie.bryant@leicester.gov.uk** **or** **Edmund.brown@leicester.gov.uk**. Alternatively, email committees@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

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1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed on the agenda.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING **Appendix A**

The minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on 6th November 2024 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

Additionally, the record of a separate meeting held in private on 4th December 2024 to discuss the proposals for the marketplace is appended. Members will be asked to note this.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures will be reported.

The following question has been received:

Mr Wynd asks,

"Plans for the marketplace seem to be getting smaller than the original proposal. It seems no proposition was ever put forward to include all the traders. When the market moved it was downsized and when it moves back to its original site it will be even smaller. It seems the council are not listening to the public who want a bigger market. As it stands the proposal makes our market the size of Grantham's and they are trying to develop theirs whereas we seem not to want one."

6. PETITIONS

Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

7. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26 Appendix B

The Director of Finance submits a draft report proposing the General Revenue Budget for 2025/26.

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider and provide any feedback which will be submitted to the Council Budget meeting.

8. DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 Appendix C

The Director of Finance submits a draft report proposing the Capital Programme for 2025/26.

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider and provide any feedback which will be submitted to the Council Budget meeting.

9. ASHTON GREEN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE Appendix D

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submits a report summarising the delivery of the Ashton Green development programme and progress since the last reporting to the Scrutiny Commission in March 2019.

A presentation will be given at the meeting.

10. EXAMINING BUS LANE OPERATING HOURS - INFORMAL SCRUTINY Appendix E

The Chair of the task group submits a report examining bus lane operating hours in Leicester. The Commission will be asked to note the report and support the recommendations set out in paragraph 1.2.

11. WORK PROGRAMME **Appendix F**

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Appendix A

Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2024 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Waddington - Chair

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Batool
Osman
Councillor Porter
Councillor Rae Bhatia
Councillor Singh Sangha

In Attendance

City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Geoff Whittle

* * * * * * * *

100. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting.

There were no apologies for absence.

101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

No declarations were made.

102. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission held on 28 August 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

103. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reminded the Commission that the last meeting of the informal scrutiny to consider bus lane operating hours would be on 7th November.

104. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

105. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

106. 20 MPH REVIEW - EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

The Chair of the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Committee gave a verbal update on the Executive response to the 20 MPH Scrutiny review report.

The Chair provided a verbal update on the response from the Executive as follows:

- The City Mayor had given thanks and said that the Commission, through its informal review group, had clearly developed a good understanding of the issues and had put forward clear proposals.
- It was noted that good progress had been made delivering the bespoke design for different locations across the city and it was agreed that blanket solutions were not appropriate.
- The intention was to move as quickly as possible to full coverage in appropriate streets and areas.
- The executive was happy to accept all recommendations.

The Commission was invited to respond, no comments were given.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

107. LEICESTER MARKET REDEVELOPMENT

The Director of Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment presented a report providing members of the commission with details of the proposed option for the redevelopment of Leicester market, the rationale behind the proposal and to invite members to comment as part of a consultation period that would run until 9th December 2024.

The City Mayor introduced the item and noted that:

- The Market had been an important space in the City Centre for over 700 years.
- The space over recent decades had been under cover and was seen as inflexible.
- The covered market of the twentieth-century had hidden buildings such as the Corn Exchange and the rears of the buildings on Gallowtree Gate and Cank Street.
- When the latest roof had been taken down for replacement, it had initially been planned to replace it like-for-like. However, once it had been taken down, many people had said that the space was something special. The removal of the roof had enabled views of the Corn Exchange and other architecture and facades at the rear of Gallowtree Gate, which had been retained due to planning intervention when the other side had been developed.
- Initially the following alternatives were considered:
    - Continuing with the original plan to reinstate a market in the whole area in front of the Corn Exchange.
    - Keeping the market on Green Dragon Square – this was seen as not viable as it was too constrained.
    - Constructing a new market space on Cank Street.
    - Discontinuing the market altogether
- Traders had been met with to discuss ways of creating flexible space and also bringing stalls back onto the site. The City Mayor noted trader representatives had proposed a smaller scheme than had been originally designed, with a new market building in front of the existing Food Hall.
- This plan would create around 48 stalls under cover which would be capable of being dismantled for special events, but would also be well covered and a good trading environment. This proposal was now out to consultation.
- The consultation would close on 9th December. It was noted that in the first week since the proposal had been released more than 800 responses were received, with more than half being positive about the proposed option.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments. Key Points included:

- Concern was raised that there now only appeared to be one option out for consultation.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) did not seem to be addressed in the plan. It was suggested that Jubilee Square had some of the highest levels of crime in the city.
- A question was asked about how traders had been engaged to have their views taken in to account.

Due to issues in the public gallery, the Chair, explained the process for representations and suggested that a separate meeting be held to discuss the issue.

AGREED:

1) That the update be noted.
2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
3) That a separate meeting be held to allow scrutiny oversight of the issue.

108. HEART OF LEICESTER PLAN

The Director of Planning, Development and Transport submitted a report for the commission to consider issues and opportunities facing the city centre area, both now and over the coming years and contribute their thoughts and ideas to inform the development of a 'Heart of Leicester' Plan.

The City Mayor attended the meeting to assist with the discussion.

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation presented slides (attached) on the Heart of Leicester Plan. Key points to note were:

- This was a promotional tool, to attract avenues of investment hopefully including both the private and voluntary sectors and also potentially to secure government grants.
- The plan had been developed to consider three key areas; these being:
  1. The City Centre as a neighbourhood
  2. The City Centre as an accessible hub for work, shopping and leisure
  3. The City Centre as a thriving and well connected regional centre
- There we seven potential themes to focus on to be seen as an eco-system working together.

There had been many changes to Leicester over the past few years. The following factors were noted:

- Leicester's retail environment had altered significantly over the past few years. Some shoppers had moved to outer city areas such as Fosse Park and there had been a substantial growth in online purchasing. However, there had been a positive net gain of around 40 units within the City Centre. St Martin's now had a full occupancy of retail units. The new changes to the Market Place were also a key feature and there had been a significant investment to the Highcross Shopping Centre.
- The impact of Covid had been substantial with less office workers coming into the city centre now.
- Positive changes to the city centre had included, pedestrianisation, tree planting and the creation of the Richard III visitor centre.
- The public realm had received substantial investments. Jubilee Square for example had been converted from a carpark into a public open space.
- There were around three hundred events annually including Riverside and Pride.
- There has been investment around facilities at Leicester Tigers Rugby Ground and there has been planning permission for expansion at Leicester City Football Club.
- In terms of transportation, there was a heavy investment in buses, around 50% of which are now electric. The cycleways have also been developed significantly.

Upcoming change was examined as follows:

- There were around 45,000 students in Leicester, many of which were accommodated in the City Centre. There was a need to explore how to unlock further potential for the students to utilise city centre facilities.
- There were substantial changes coming to The Jewry Wall Centre and Leicester Cathedral with the Heritage and Learning Centre. There are around ten million visitors to the city. Five new hotels have been created with around six hundred new beds.
- Future developments for Leicester included developing brownfield sites into residential areas for some 6,000 new homes.
- A significant new development was coming to the railway station.
- Work would need to take place with the police surrounding risks posed by delivery cyclists. It was noted that engagement with operators had been problematic.
- Work was ongoing with Housing, Social Care and the Police in relation to street lifestyles.

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments. Key Points included:

- Points were raised about the branding of the areas of the city, noting that some areas of the city were older than the 'Old Town' which perhaps should be known as 'Greyfriars'.
- In response to issues raised about delivery bikes, it was noted that this was not an issue unique to Leicester, and therefore solutions were being explored, largely around the powers of the police and their ability to prioritise. It was a national issue that required regulation. Operators needed to be regulated and firms needed to apply regulation to the delivery riders and their bikes.
- In response to points made about housing in the city centre it was explained that a balance as needed. Houses needed to be built to avoid people having to travel long distances for work. Additionally, national space standards needed to be adhered to.
- In response to queries about how students, including international students, could be better engaged to make use of the city centre, it was acknowledged that students needed a good welcome to encourage them to use the city extensively, wherever they were from. The two Universities provided information packs, but it was also acknowledged that the universities could be worked with to draw students into the city centre. This could include the provision of workspaces in places such as cafes with welcoming staff. Collaborative action could connect students.
- Responding to a query about employment opportunities it was noted that it was not that people did not want to set up offices in the city centre, but rather that people did not want to invest in them. However, it was also noted that there was a strong commercial demand that was shown by the places that had been built with Government funding and the fact that these places had filled up quickly. It was an issue of the private sector being able to fund these developments commercially.
- In response to points made regarding play space for children in the city centre, it was recognised that finding play space could be challenging. Attention was drawn to the play area on Jubilee Square and it was suggested that the new market plan could possibly accommodate play space.
- Issues surrounding making good paving on Marble Street following utility works would be picked up by officers.
- With regard to school provision in the City Centre, it was noted that provision included four schools in the city centre and education colleagues were looking at sites to accommodate a special school.
- The importance of the night time economy was raised as part of what the city offers.
- It was suggested that the possibility of installing double-bike stands could be explored and delivery riders could be encouraged to make use of them. It was noted that there were funds to install secure bike stands including those provided now at St Margaret's Bus Station.

- In response to concerns raised about parking provision in the city, Councillors were assured that parking was adequate and there was in fact a surplus of parking spaces in the city centre. The NCP-owned car parks needed some improvement work.
- In response to points made about the need to incentivise businesses in the city it was noted that there was a small business rate relief, and additionally there were offers surrounding security measures and greening initiatives.
- It was stressed that masterplans needed to be manageable in scale and deliverable. The Waterside development had been a good example of this. The Old Town had also had a masterplan that had seen buildings brought back into use. Moving forward there was an arc of development opportunity that could include areas such as the former Matalan on Church Gate and the former Liquid Nightclub. Masterplans were made where appropriate. In terms of development opportunities around Lee Circle, it was acknowledged that many areas could benefit from development. Fleet House was near completion and Homes England had been approached to discuss grant monies.
- The importance of running costs was stressed as what was built would need to be maintained. This could be helped through the choice of materials, using durable materials such as porphyry and easily replaceable materials.
- The footprint of Leicester Royal Infirmary was acknowledged in terms of the numbers of workers and visitors. The hospital would feature in plans.
- The plan was intended to be promotional in nature to encourage investment in the city, sitting beside statutory plans. The plan would be updated periodically and available on the website to invite comment on an ongoing basis.
- The City Mayor stressed the need to acknowledge comments from members that may not fit in with the plan as these were issues that needed to be addressed.
- Progress was being made on the Granby Street works. The main works were aimed to be complete by the time the Christmas Market began, but works would return in the new year on the Dover Street entrance.

AGREED:

1) That the update be noted.
2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
3) That a report be brought to the Commission on City Centre Maintenance, to include delivery bike regulation and issues around development and the areas that need it.

Councillor Porter left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

109. 24 HOUR BUS LANES - SCRUTINY REVIEW - VERBAL UPDATE

The Chair gave an update on the Scrutiny Commission's ongoing scrutiny review of 24 Hour Bus Lanes.

Key Points included:

- Having scoped out the issue, group members heard evidence from bus operators First and Arriva, and also received written representations from Kinchbus and Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire.
- Following this, some recommendations were drafted and considered at a third meeting on 7th October.
- Following this, it was requested that any further recommendations be sent to Senior Governance Officer by 25 October ahead of the final meeting to agree recommendations.
- This final meeting would take place on 7th November at 16:00.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

110. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

111. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 7:28pm.

EDTCE 6th November 2024

Heart of Leicester Plan

Andrew Smith

Director Planning, Development and Transportation


IMP·CAES·DIVI·TRAIANI·PARTH
·FIL·DIVI·NERVAE·NEPOTI·TRA
IANO·HADRIANO·AVGVSTO·PONTIF
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CIVITAS·COPIAE·TAVRORVM

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON UK RETAIL

And the shift towards online


wagamama


Leicester St. Margaret's Bus Station
SM
SK
SJ
leicester buses
Leicester electric
leicester buses
100% ELECTRIC ZERO EMISSIONS FOR A GREENER LEICESTER


AND DISCOVERY
RUJI
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HEART OF LEICESTER

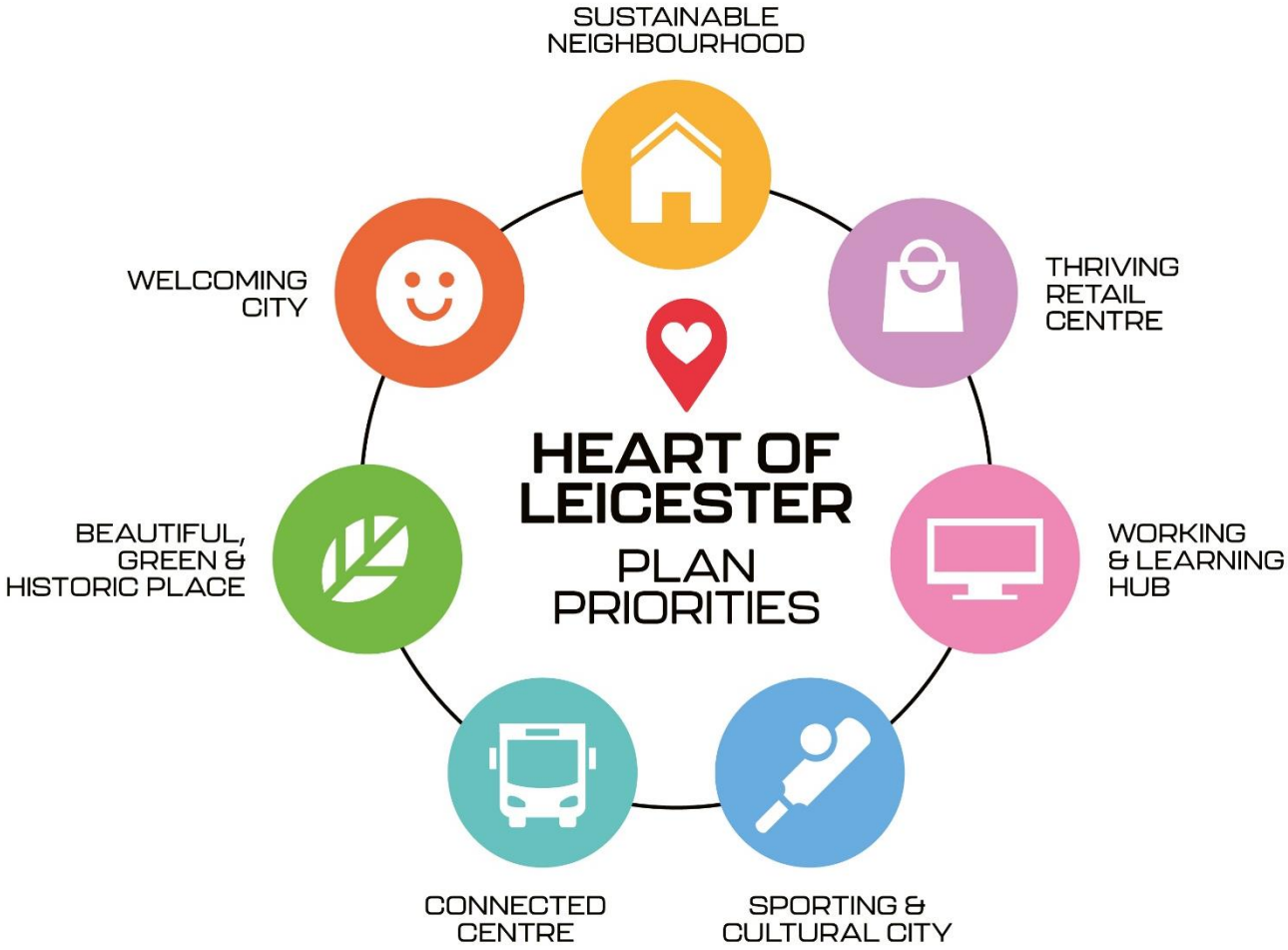
A TEN YEAR PLAN.

Heart of Leicester 10 Year Vision

An exciting new **neighbourhood** and place to live and work

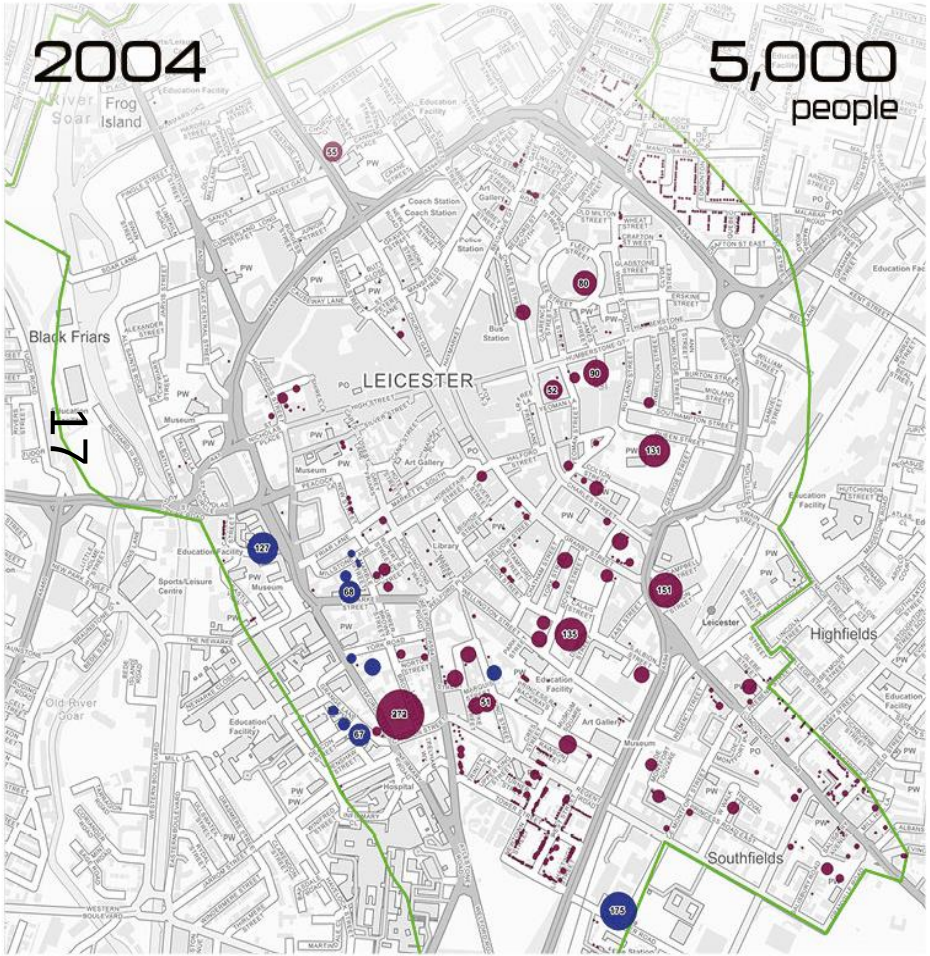
An accessible hub for work, shopping and leisure **for everyone in the city**

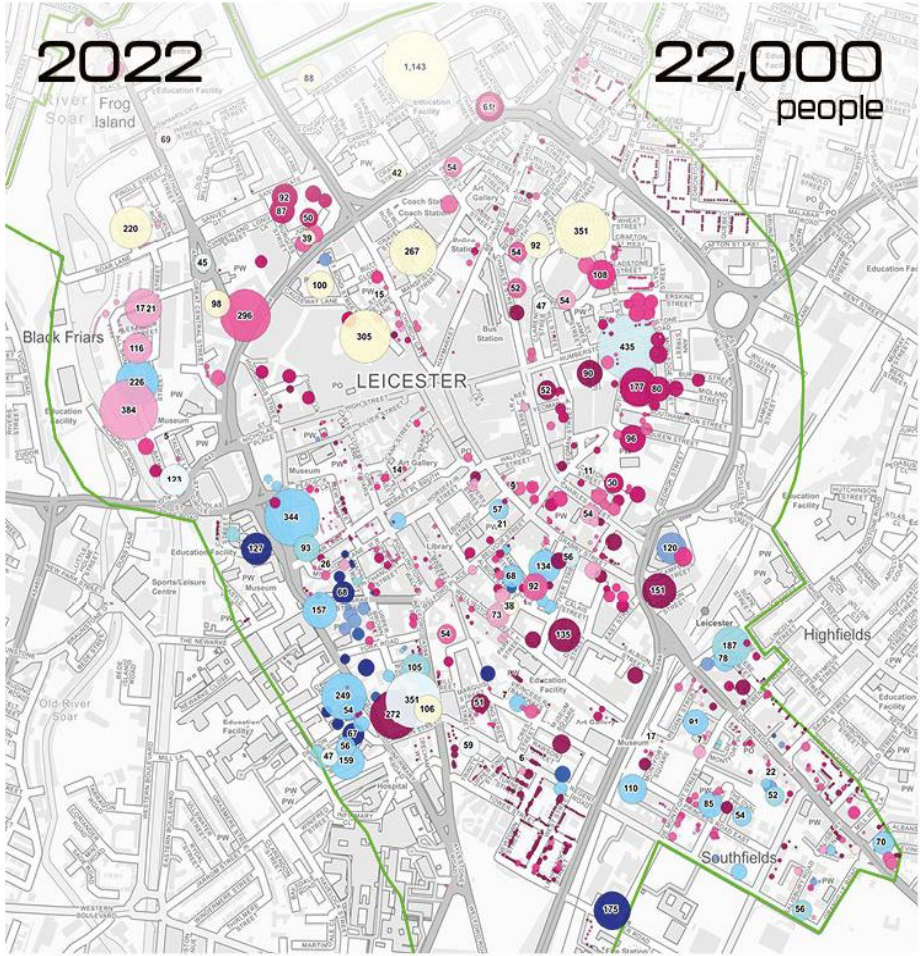
A thriving and well connected **regional centre**


SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD
THRIVING RETAIL CENTRE
WORKING & LEARNING HUB
SPORTING & CULTURAL CITY
CONNECTED CENTRE
BEAUTIFUL, GREEN & HISTORIC PLACE
WELCOMING CITY
HEART OF LEICESTER
PLAN PRIORITIES

Sustainable Neighbourhood

Diagram showing growth in new development activity and proposals 2004-2022



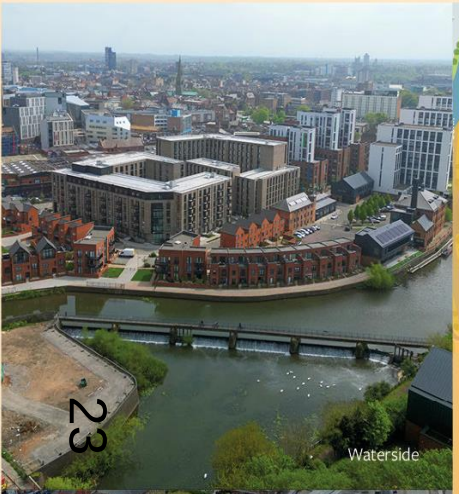


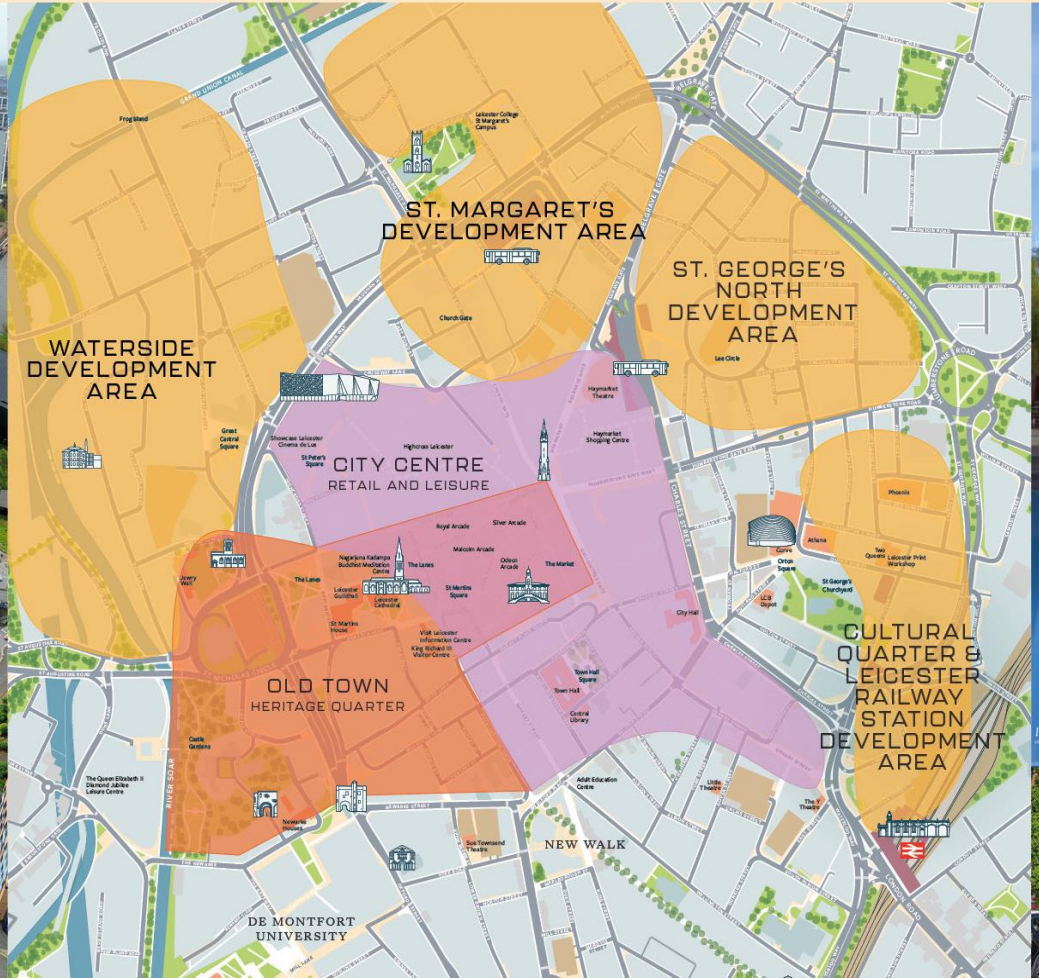
Waterside area 10 years ago


All Saints Rd
©2015 Google


All Saints Rd

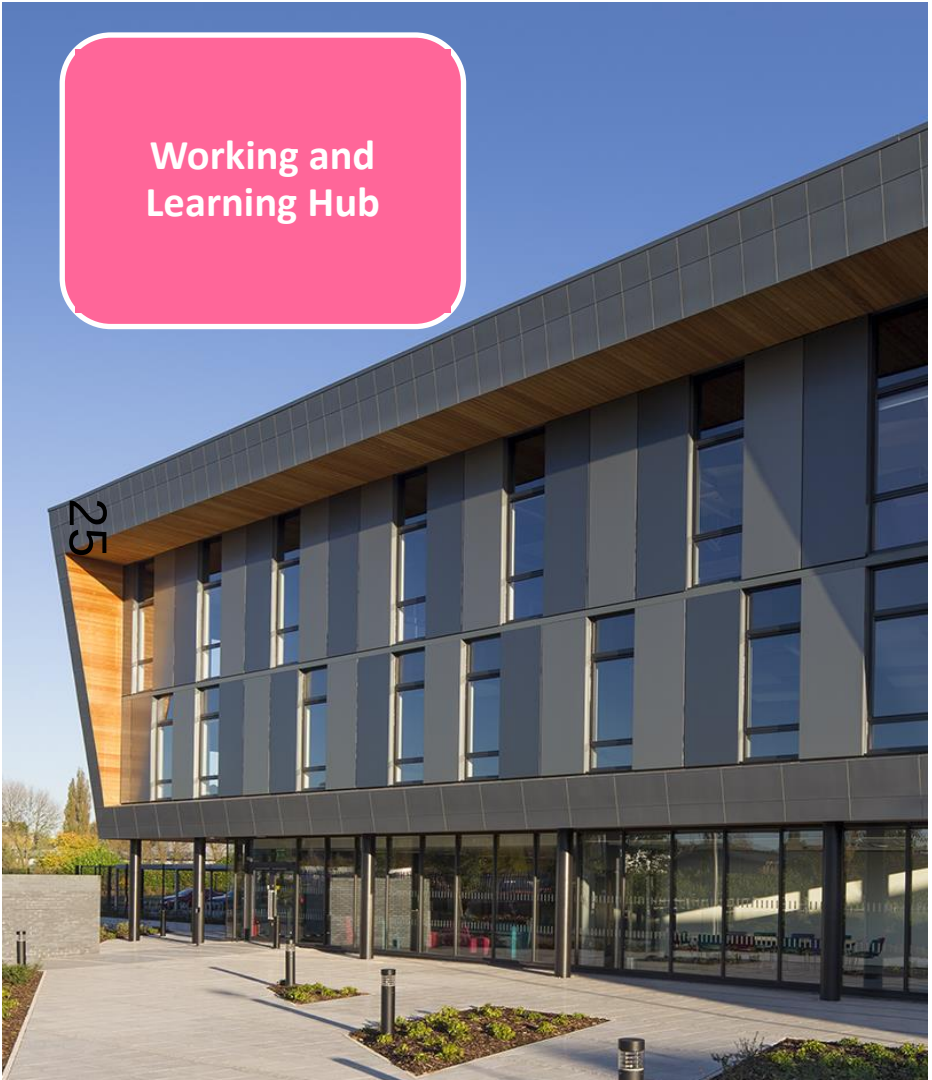
Major Development Opportunity Areas





- Arc of housing development opportunity to north of city centre
- c6,000 new homes built on brownfield land by mid 2030s
- A central neighbourhood of c30,000 people

Working and Learning Hub




LCB
DEPOT
GRAYS


NOVOTEL


Exit
Exit
Stairs
& Lift


CAFE


RECEPTION


Space Park Leicester

Thriving Retail Centre


HIGHCROSS
LEICESTER
HIGHCROSS
LEICESTER


HIGHCROSS
LEICESTER
TORTILLA
TORTILLA

Sporting & Cultural City


MONEY
TORTILLA


Riders
Jaison
Glencar
CONSTRUCTION
Spire
Leicester Hospital


LEICESTER TIGERS


BOX

Connected Centre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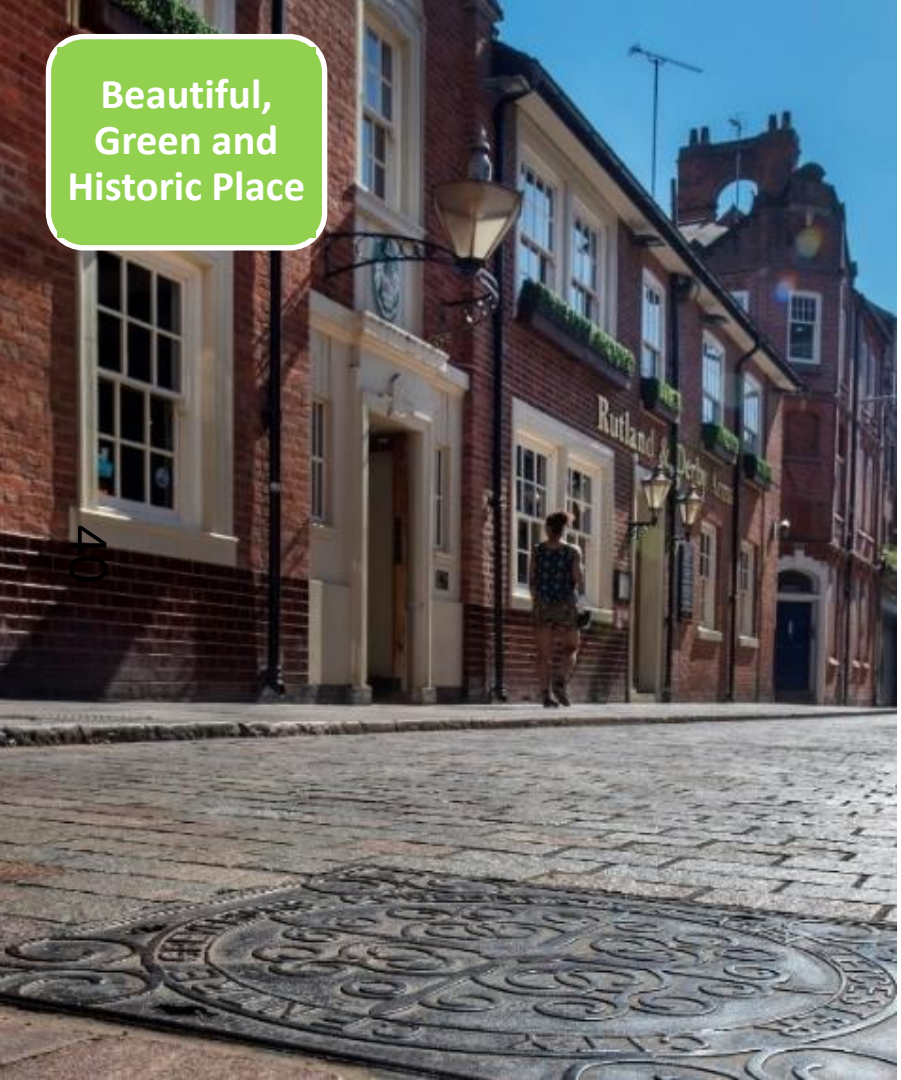
GIVE
WAY


LEICESTER STATION
BUS STOP
BUS LANE
A594

Beautiful, Green and Historic Place




Look right


Willi Canes
King St


44
KØBEN
ESPRESSO BAR
KØBEN
ESPRESSO BAR
MONMOUTH
NOW OPEN
NEAPOLITAN
PIZZA
@doughwhatpizza


St Martin


PERONI
NASTRO AZZURRO
PERONI
NASTRO AZZURRO

High Street: 1978 - 2024

Welcoming City

HEART OF LEICESTER

A TEN YEAR PLAN.

leicester.gov.uk/heartofleicester

Record of Market Place Meeting – 4 Dec 24

Market Place additional Scrutiny meeting 04/12/2024

Attendance: Cllr Waddington (Chair), Councillor Dr Barton (Vice Chair), Councillors Bajaj, Batool and Sigh Sangha.

Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment, Head of Economic Regeneration, Senior Governance Officer (EB), Governance Officer (JB).

Apologies: Cllrs Osman and Rae Bhatia.

The chair explained that the reason for reconvening the meeting was to give scrutiny to the Market Place item which had originally been on the agenda for the 6th November EDTCE meeting. It had not been possible to give full consideration to the item previously, due to issues arising in the public gallery.

Public consultation on the matter would conclude on the 9th December so it was necessary for the item to come to scrutiny before then.

The Director of Tourism - Culture & Inward Investment provided an overview explaining that during a period of renovation, it had been noted that the market place area could have further potential and might be utilised in a more flexible manner.

- The Market had relocated to Green Dragon Square whilst work took place and currently remained in that area. Every trader wishing to remain trading was accommodated at Green Dragon Square.
- Engagement with the market traders had been ongoing and the matter had been brought to scrutiny.
- Four options had been considered initially. The recent proposal was not an initial consideration. The Market Traders had wanted to return to their previous location, and this is what the current proposal allowed for.
- The latest proposal would leave a large space next to the market, which could be adapted and utilised in a flexible manner. Pop-up stalls and celebratory events could be held there.

The Head of Economic Regeneration provided an update on the consultation, advising that:

- There had been around 1600 responses so far, 60% of which were in support of the proposal although the consultation had not yet closed.
- It would take some time to process the results as there was an open comments box and responses would need to be analysed. This analysis was likely to be completed by the New Year.
- The scheme could only be fully costed when the final option was confirmed .

The Commission was invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- The new proposal would focus on food stalls, with an emphasis on foods reflecting the communities of Leicester.
- 48 stalls would be created meaning there would be space to accommodate the same number of food traders in the new scheme.
- It was noted that the average age of the traders meant that some were due to retire or had already done so. The requirement for market stalls was not as substantial as in previous decades. Prior to the relocation to Green Dragon Square, a significant proportion of stalls in the previous market had frequently been unoccupied. One of the reasons for the vacancies being previous market traders retiring.
- Under the new proposal, the market would focus on food and non-food items classed as ‘dry goods’ would not be prioritised. All traders, including dry goods traders could remain at Green Dragon Square for a two-year period with discounted rents. This would provide time for each trader to consider other options. The current layout in Green Dragon square had container units for dry goods. The new proposed scheme would not include permanent units. The unit traders had varying needs and were being engaged with so that they could decide what is best for their business. Some may want to retire, some may want to find new premises, for example in nearby empty shops or arcades.
- Committee members discussed the benefits of having a diverse range of stalls and some felt that it would be more beneficial for the dry goods traders to be accommodated. Some members stated that the vibrancy of the market could be lost if the stalls were entirely food based. Others mentioned rent prices, questioning whether the dry good traders would be able afford to rent spaces within the arcades after the two-year period had expired. In answer to this, The Head of Economic Regeneration advised that circumstances would be assessed on a ‘case by case’ basis. It was also mentioned that there could be opportunity for the dry goods traders to sell at pop-up markets. Some traders were not currently operating at Leicester Market on a daily basis so pop-up stalls might provide a good working solution. These considerations were similar to the ones faced when the old market hall was demolished – dry goods traders were consulted and, some moved to the arcades or other retail areas within the city centre. Some traders had retired. A concern was raised

that under the current proposal, some traders could be forced to retire earlier than planned as their only experience was trading in dry goods.

A discussion took place as to whether or not the dry goods traders would be allocated a permanent stall if they requested one. Some committee members stated that this should be the case. The Chair raised concern about the lack of certainty for dry goods traders.

- In response to a point made about the historical significance of the market, and the interest that different generations would have regarding the market, it was noted that a mural had been put in place by Town Hall Square that celebrated the history of the Market. Further to this it was planned that through the redevelopment, the online offer would be improved. It was noted that other markets around the country had good online information and that people often research markets online before visiting them. Improving the online offer could also help celebrate the history and heritage of the market. It was further suggested that the newly created event space in the proposed option could provide an opportunity to celebrate the history and heritage of the market through festival and event activity.
- It was noted that whilst market trade was something that was important to the city, the role of the market had changed over the years and would change again in the future. It had been noticed that many markets across the country had a focus on food and more traditional dry goods had often shifted elsewhere. It was suggested that the reality was that lots of shopping people had done for dry goods was done in places other than a market, including online. In the longer term, the most profitable and attractive market would be food-based as a core offer, but other things could also be brought in to add to this.
- Concern was raised that if dry goods/unit traders were moved to other premises, they could struggle with high rents that could jeopardise their survival.
- Open space was supported as there was the potential for companies investing in delivering events in the city.
- The existing temporary market in Green Dragon Square would continue whilst the market development took place, but once this was done, it would return Green Dragon Square to an open space. Having both the new event space in front of the Corn Exchange and Green Dragon Square would allow things to be done on a bigger scale, for example hosting the Christmas market currently on Gallowtree Gate.
- Concern was raised that not all market traders could be accommodated in the proposed scheme. It was clarified that traders often had more than one stall. It had been calculated in terms of stalls open on different days and the number of stalls taken up during the week that on the old market there were 215 stalls occupied by permanent traders and 35 by casual traders across the week, and on Green Dragon Square there were currently 254 stalls occupied across the week. In the new market, based on 48 stalls operating over 6

days, there would be a maximum of 288 stalls across the week, but this did not include units.

- It was noted that there had previously been empty shops near the clock tower that had contained stalls selling dry goods.
- Concern was raised that the positioning and design of the planned structure was not used to the best advantage in terms of improving the view of historical buildings. In response to this it was explained that the scheme had been a compromise between creating event space and keeping trading space and also respecting views of the historic Corn Exchange Building. It was further clarified that the traders had generally approved of the proposed structure that had demountable stalls inside so that the space inside could also be used to support events. The placement of the structure was close to the popular food hall which could help attract further trade for stalls in the new structure. In terms of the design of the roof of the proposed structure, there were pros and cons for different designs. It was also clarified that if the proposed structure was on the other side of the site, it would obscure the view of the Corn Exchange when approaching from Granby Street, which could potentially draw people into the market.
- The Chair stressed that it was important for other design options to be considered and that alternative designs should be produced for consideration.
- It was clarified that the choice of porphyry flooring was favoured by traders due to ease of cleaning. The previous flooring had been flagstones.
- It was suggested that the recent Christmas Market had shown that there was demand for a diverse range of goods. It was further stressed that it was important to consider the needs of consumers as well as traders, particularly with regard to the cost-of-living crisis. The market was a source of cheap diverse goods which people could find cheaper than those available in shops.
- With regard to a query about a charter for the market, it was clarified that Leicester City Council holds market rights under the Food Act 1984, which grants the Council rights to operate a market, but did not specify the commodity. This was a licencing policy, and anyone operating a separate market required a licence.
- It was aimed to mitigate Anti-Social Behaviour by having most stalls occupied in the day and having shutters drawn at night.

RECOMMENDAIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:

The Chair summarised the points made through the following recommendations and observations for officers and the executive to consider:

- There was no opposition to part of the market area being open for events.
- Whilst the proposal for 48 stalls equated to the current level of the lettings of stalls, there was concern around the exclusion of dry goods sales from the stalls. It was believed that diversity of goods had not been considered in the

proposals, and it was requested that this be looked at again, taking into account concerns that dry goods traders may not be able to find shops to trade from due to high rents.

- It would be beneficial to have a diverse range of goods in one place, as with the old market. There should be diversity in the new offer.
- There was concern about the uncertainty of the future for dry-goods traders.
- Clarity was needed over whether dry goods traders could make a case to operate from a stall in the proposed structure.
- Other design options should be considered and that alternative designs should be produced for consideration, with particular regard to the aesthetics of the structure.

Appendix B

Revenue Budget 2025/26

Decision to be taken by: Council

Date of meeting: Draft for 19 February 2025

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Catherine Taylor/Mark Noble
- Author contact details: amy.oliver@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the City Mayor's strategy for balancing the budget for the next 3 years and to seek approval to the actual budget for 2025/26. The strategy includes the use of one-off money, additional borrowing to pay for committed capital spending, savings in previously approved capital programmes and reductions in annual service spending. It is designed to ensure we remain financially sustainable until at least 2027/28. Some of the necessary approvals are included in the capital programme report, which is elsewhere on your agenda; the rest are contained in this report.

1.2 Whilst the strategy is intended to keep us sustainable until 2027/28, we will need to make further, deep spending reductions by 2028/29 unless the Government finds sufficient additional resources to rescue the sector from its current plight. The City Mayor will continue to make these points to the Government.

1.3 The proposed budget for 2025/26 is described in this report, subject to any amendments the City Mayor may wish to recommend when he makes a firm proposal to the Council.

2. Summary

2.1 As members will be aware, the medium-term financial outlook is the most severe we have ever known. Like many authorities, we face increasing difficulties in being able to balance our budget. Some authorities have already reached this position and been forced to issue a formal report under section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. In previous years, we have used a "managed reserves policy", by which specific reserves have been set aside to support budgets and buy us time to make cuts. The available resources for this are rapidly running out.

2.2 The background to this severe outlook is set out in section 4 of this report, as well as actions that have already been taken in response.

2.3 At the time of writing, we do not have the local government finance settlement for 2025/26, so this draft budget report is based on estimates of income. However, previous announcements strongly imply that our estimates are unlikely to change significantly, and therefore we will still have a substantial gap between our annual spending and income. The report will be revised before full Council in February.

2.4 The overarching strategy to ensure financial sustainability is outlined in section 5. It is aimed at maximising one-off resources to buy time, controlling costs in demand led services and making savings to other services. If it succeeds, we will not face a section 114 report in the next 3 years. There are, nonetheless, risks which are set out in paragraph 16. Given the savings we have had to make in the last decade, the task of finding more is becoming increasingly difficult.

2.5 The report proposes a council tax increase of just under 5%, which is the maximum we believe we will be allowed to set without a referendum.

2.6 The medium-term outlook is attached at Appendix 4 and shows the escalating scale of the financial pressures facing the council.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Council is recommended to:

(a) approve the three year budget strategy described in this report;

(b) approve the proposed budget and council tax for 2025/26, including the recommendations in the formal budget resolution, subject to any changes proposed by the City Mayor when he makes his final proposal to the Council;

(c) approve the budget ceilings for each service, drafts of which are shown at Appendix 1 to this report;

(d) approve the scheme of virement described in Appendix 2 to this report;

(e) approve the use of the £90m capital fund to support the revenue budget strategy (dependent on decisions taken in respect of the capital programme for 2025/26, which is elsewhere on your agenda);

(f) approve the changes to earmarked reserves to support the overall strategy as described in Appendix 5;

(g) note my view on the adequacy of reserves and the estimates used in preparing the budget;

(h) note the equality implications arising from the proposed tax increase, as described in paragraph 15 and Appendix 3;

(i) note the medium-term financial strategy and forecasts presented at Appendix 4, and the significant financial challenges that lie ahead;

(j) approve the capital receipts flexibility policy at Appendix 7.

3.2 In relation to Council Tax on empty properties, Council will be recommended to approve the premiums and discounts outlined in Appendix 6 (to follow).

4. Background

4.1 The background to our financial predicament is:

(a) a “decade of austerity” between 2010 and 2020 in which services other than social care had to be reduced by 53% in real terms. This has substantially reduced the scope to make further cuts;

(b) the covid-19 pandemic where we set “stop gap” budgets whilst we dealt with the immediate emergency. Budgets in 2021/22 to 2022/23 were therefore supported by reserves;

(c) recent cost pressures, shared by authorities across the country. These include pressures on the costs of children that are looked after and support for homeless households, as well as the long-standing pressures in adult social care and the hike in inflation after the invasion of Ukraine. The budgets for 2023/24 and 2024/25 were supported by a further £34m and £61m of reserves respectively;

(d) an anticipated new round of funding constraint. This was implied by the former Government’s spending plans; plans published by the new Government in the Chancellor’s October budget also imply unprotected services such as local government will be subject to restraint (although we won’t get detail about the position for 2026/27 and 2027/28 until spring 2025);

4.2 The previous Government’s chosen measure of a council’s ability to spend was “core spending power” which has, in fact, recently been increasing faster than inflation. It is not, however, increasing as fast as spending need. Core spending power increased by £29.1m in 2024/25 (8.1%); £71.5m of pressures were built into the budget.

4.3 Core spending power is not the same as Government grant funding. Most is raised locally, through council tax and business rates. Only a small element consists of government grant.

4.4 It is worth commenting that the previous Government’s “fair funding” review of grant allocation was continuously delayed, and leaves us to provide services to a population far in excess of our last needs assessment (population has grown faster than elsewhere in the country, so an equitable system would ought to give us a greater share of the national pot). The new Government has promised to complete a review in time for the 2026/27 finance settlement, although full implementation is expected to take several years.

4.5 The Council has already made substantial cost savings since 2010/11. Decisions we have already made include:

(a) reducing senior management numbers (including the post of Chief Executive) by 45, saving over £5m per year;
(b) investing in environmentally efficient street-lights, saving over £1m per year;
(c) closure of the Council's 8 elderly persons' homes, saving over £3m per year;
(d) saving £1.5m per year from parks and open spaces, including a reduction in maintenance frequency and sale of some sites;
(e) a 50% reduction in the youth budget;
(f) remodelling children's early help, closing or transferring 11 buildings, saving £3.5m per year;
(g) reduction in opening hours of libraries, relocation of libraries with the least use, and cessation of the library minibus service;
(h) a rolling programme of closures and transfers of community centres;
(i) increases in car parking and leisure centre charges; and
(j) introduction of bus lane enforcement.

4.6 Since 2010/11, some 2,000 staff have been made redundant, largely as a consequence of spending cuts.

4.7 The overall impact of changes between 2010/11 and 2020/21 (the decade of austerity), and then subsequently, can be seen from the tables below:

Budgeted Spending in cash terms	**2010/11** £m	**2020/21** £m	**2024/25** £m
Spending on children's and adults' social care	128.5	197.2	295.8
Spending on other services	192.3	108.7	157.0
Centrally held budgets	37.2	10.1	11.2
TOTAL	**358.0**	**316.0**	**464.0**

*Budgeted Spending in real terms**	**2010/11** £m	**2020/21** £m	**2024/25** £m
Spending on other services	282.7	132.3	157.0
Cumulative Cuts since 2020/21		**53.2%**	**44.5%**

*Prices updated using CPIH indices

4.8 Whilst spending on other services has increased since 2020/21, in no small part due to pressures on the homelessness service, it is important to recognize that

this additional spending has had to be funded from our own reserves. Minimal reserves were used in 2010/11 or 2020/21. **Without the £61m reserves budgeted for use in 24/25, funding available for other services would have fallen to £96m, a real terms cut of two thirds since 2010/11.**

4.9 We have reached a stage where any further cuts are bound to be painful and leave discretionary services stretched to the limit. This is what we are now compelled to contemplate.

5. Financial Strategy for 2025/26 to 2027/28

5.1 As noted above, the medium-term financial outlook is the most severe we have ever known.

5.2 The budget approved by the Council in February contained the following projections of income and expenditure:

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
Expenditure	429.0	462.3	490.7
Minus income	(368.0)	(371.9)	(378.8)
Budget gap	**61.0**	**90.4**	**111.9**

5.3 The previous Government did not publish any spending plans for periods beyond 2024/25, so the figures for 2025/26 and 2026/27 were necessarily based on assumptions. The new Government published its budget on 30th October, which contained an aggregate spending total for local government in 2025/26 and total figures for all public spending in 2026/27 and 2027/28. Our local figures for 2025/26 will not be available until shortly before Christmas. The new government is expecting to publish more detailed 3 year plans in spring, but the indications are that there will be modest additional support for deprived local authorities in 2025/26, and continuation of spending restraint in 2026/27 and beyond. It is unlikely that we will see the substantial additional support we require from the Government in the next 3 years. Indeed, the Government itself has stated (28/11/24): "*Our fiscal inheritance means that there will be tough choices on all sides to get us back on the path to recovery, and it will take time. There is no magic wand. It will be a long, hard slog to work with councils to rebuild from the ground up, to deliver the services taxpayers need and deserve*."

5.4 Past budgets have been supported by our "managed reserves strategy" under which we planned permanent reductions and used reserves to buy time, avoiding crisis cuts. More recently, the amount of reserves required to balance the budget has grown significantly so that £61m was required to balance 2024/25 when we set the budget in February.

5.5 Like many authorities, we face the real prospect of not being able to balance our budget in future years, necessitating a formal report under section 114 of the

Local Government Finance Act 1988. If such a report is issued, we run the risk of Government intervention with the running of the Council being effectively determined in Whitehall.

5.6 The size of the problem is so severe that bridging the gap in one year is an impossibility. The proposed strategy is therefore as follows:

(a) **Strand One** - Releasing one off monies of £110m to buy time:

- All the Council's earmarked reserves have been reviewed, and it is recommended to release £20.3m on the basis that maintaining the Council's solvency takes precedence over most of the reasons for which money has previously been set aside.
- (As described in the capital programme report elsewhere on your agenda) it is proposed to release a £90m revenue reserve held to support capital (the "capital fund"). This, however, will leave a gap in the funding for previously approved capital schemes, requiring borrowing to fill it.

(b) **Strand Two** – Reductions of £13m in the approved capital programme, as described in the capital programme report, which will reduce the borrowing required. The additional borrowing will nonetheless increase the size of the annual budget gap by an estimated £5m per year from 2026/27 (in effect, we would be borrowing money to provide short term support to the revenue budget, which can only considered because the situation is so dire);

(c) **Strand Three** - Embark on an ambitious programme to sell property, with the aim of securing an additional £60m of one-off monies. The receipts cannot be used to support the revenue budget without permission from the Secretary of State (such permissions are being used by the Government as a tool to deal with immediate budget challenges). Current projections suggest that we will need to seek consent before 2027/28. This is further discussed at para. 14 below. **The Government will expect a credible savings plan before a permission will be granted**;

(d) **Strand Four** – Continue taking steps to constrain growth in those statutory services that are under demand led pressure (i.e. adult and children's social care services, and homelessness). As a consequence of work already done, the budget for social care services in 2025/26 is forecast to be over £20m less than envisaged in February;

(e) **Strand Five** - Make ongoing savings to the revenue budget of £20m per year. Expected savings have been built into the budget ceilings for

each department. Further savings of £2.4m per year will be achieved if Council approves a proposed new council tax support scheme in January. These savings do not come close to balancing the budget on a recurrent basis. **The level to be achieved has been deliberately set at a low level to provide scope to respond to Government plans as they emerge.** Nevertheless, we still expect to have to make considerable additional savings after the three year plan has expired.

5.7 If successful, implementation of the strategy would result in revised budget projections of:

	2025/26 £m	**2026/27** £m	**2027/28** £m
Expenditure	429.5	459.0	495.8
Plus prudential borrowing costs:			
- to release the capital fund	3.0	5.0	5.0
- for the 2025/26 capital programme	1.4	2.5	2.6
Minus income	(387.2)	(400.1)	(413.5)
Equals Recurring Budget Gap	**46.7**	**66.4**	**89.9**

Revised projections of reserves are:

	2025/26 £m	**2026/27** £m	**2027/28** £m
At the beginning of the year	**53.5**	**123.1**	**56.7**
Plus earmarked reserves	20.3		
Plus capital fund	90.0		
Plus capital receipts (if permission granted)			60.0
Other	6.0		
Minus budget gap	(46.7)	(66.4)	(89.9)
At the end of the year	**123.1**	**56.7**	**26.8**

5.8 Detailed medium term forecasts are provided at Appendix 4. Members are asked to note that forecasts assume the Council will continue to set the maximum council tax permitted by the Government's referendum rules – currently assumed to be 3% from 2026/27.

5.9 Clearly, as expenditure will continue to exceed income, further action will be needed to balance the budget in 2028/29 unless the Government has provided substantial additional resources by that time. Government grant income in 2024/25 was £74.5m. To eliminate the budget gap in 2027/28, all other things being equal, government grant income would need to increase to £180m on current assumptions compared to our forecast of £90m.

6. 2025/26 Budget Overview

6.1 The table below summarises the proposed budget for 2025/26 (projections for a full three-year period are included in the medium-term strategy at Appendix 4):

	2025/26 £m
Expenditure:	
Net service budget (before savings)	447.5
Less savings and cost constraint (see para. 10.4)	(50.9)
Net service budget	***396.6***
Provisions for pay inflation (including 24/25)	14.0
Provisions for other inflation	0.4
Corporate budgets (including capital finance)	7.9
Demographic contingency	2.0
Homelessness provision	11.0
General contingency for risk	2.0
Expenditure total	**433.9**
Income:	
Council tax	165.9
Business rates (including top-up grant)	141.4
Revenue Support Grant	36.2
Social Care Grant	41.7
Other grants	2.0
Income total	**387.2**
Recurring budget gap	**46.7**

7. Construction of the 2025/26 Budget and Council Tax

7.1 By law, the Council's role in budget setting is to determine:

(a) The level of council tax;

(b) The limits on the amount the City Mayor is entitled to spend on any service ("budget ceilings") - proposed budget ceilings are shown at Appendix 1;

7.2 In line with Finance Procedure Rules, the Council must also approve the scheme of virement that controls subsequent changes to these ceilings. The proposed scheme is shown at Appendix 2.

7.3 The budget is based on a proposed Band D tax for 2025/26 of £2,020.85, an increase of just under 5% compared to 2024/25. This is the maximum which will be permitted without a referendum. It is noted that some taxpayers will experience a different increase as a result of changes to the council tax support scheme (if approved).

7.4 The tax levied by the City Council constitutes only part of the tax Leicester citizens have to pay (albeit the major part – 84% in 2024/25). Separate taxes are raised by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Combined Fire Authority. These are added to the Council's tax, to constitute the total tax charged.

7.5 The actual amounts people will be paying, however, depend upon the valuation band their property is in and their entitlement to any discounts, exemptions or benefit. Almost 80% of properties in the city are in band A or band B, so the tax will be lower than the Band D figure quoted above. The Council also has schemes for mitigating hardship.

7.6 The Police and Crime Commissioner and Combined Fire Authority will set their precepts in February 2025. The formal resolution will set out the precepts issued for 2025/26, together with the total tax payable in the city.

8. Departmental Budget Ceilings

8.1 Budget ceilings have been prepared for each service, calculated as follows:

(a) The starting point is last year's budget, subject to any changes made since then which are permitted by the constitution (e.g. virement);

(b) An allowance is made for non-pay inflation on a restricted number of budgets. Our general rule is that no allowance is made, and departments are expected to manage with the same cash sum that they had in the previous year. Exceptions are made for the budgets for independent sector adult social care (2%) and foster care (2%) but as these areas of service are receiving growth funding, an inflation allowance is merely academic (we pay from one pot rather than another). Budgets for the waste PFI contract have been increased by RPI, in line with contract terms.

(c) Unavoidable growth has been built into the budget. This has been mitigated by action that has already been taken to control costs in demand-led areas, as detailed in paragraph 9 below.

(d) Savings being sought, totaling £10.7m in 2025/26, are deducted from budget ceilings. (The expected figure rises to £20.4m by 2027/28).

8.2 The proposed budget ceilings are set out in Appendix 1.

8.3 In recent years, the pay award for local government staff has not been agreed until part way through the financial year. A central provision is held to fund the 2025/26 pay award, forecast at 3%. Additionally, a further £2m has been set aside in a central provision for demographic changes, which will only be released if needed.

8.4 For this draft budget, the provision to fund the 2024/25 pay award agreed in October is still held centrally whilst the impact is being calculated – it will be allocated to budget lines before the final budget is set in February. No adjustment has yet been made for changes to National Insurance Contributions announced at the Autumn Budget statement and due to commence in April 2025: additional funding has been promised by government to meet NI costs relating to our own staff but not those of providers (see paragraph 12 below).

8.5 The role of the Council is to determine the financial envelopes within which services are delivered. Delivering the services within budget is a function of the City Mayor.

9. Constraining Growth in Service Demand (Strand 4 of the Budget Strategy)

9.1 As can be seen from the background section, one of the chief reasons for our budget gap is growth in the costs of statutory services, particularly social care (and, more recently, homelessness), which have outstripped growth in our income.

9.2 The budget for **adult social care** approved in February provided for substantial growth, both in 2024/25 and 2025/26. This can be seen from the following table:

	2024/25 £m	**2025/26** £m
Underlying budget	155.9	155.9
Growth	17.5	34.4
TOTAL	**173.4**	**190.3**

9.3 Growth in the cost of adult social care arises from growth in the numbers of people needing support (who can be older or working age people), together with cost increases arising from increased packages of support to those already receiving care. The budget also included an additional "demographic contingency" of £8m per year to cater for volatility of demand – not exclusively for adult care.

9.4 The department has embarked on a comprehensive savings delivery programme, coupled with enhanced operational control mechanisms. Underlying the programme are measures aimed at creating a new culture, with more focus on supporting independent living and less reliance on expensive care packages. The department sought to secure savings of £30m per year by 2025/26, but has succeeded in making savings estimated at £48m. Some of

these savings were anticipated when the 2024/25 budget was set; some will reduce the budget further.

9.5 The savings delivery programme includes 4 workstreams:

(a) **Reducing growth in the costs of care** (minimising "double handed" care; reducing reliance on taxis; reducing residential costs to the levels of comparator authorities; finding alternatives to existing low level care packages; increased technology enabled care; new approaches to falls management; reviewing the use of direct payments; and a dedicated team to review the quality and cost of high-cost packages);

(b) **Reducing new entrants, and management of demand** (developing the preventative care offer; enhancing digital support; and reviewing our information and guidance);

(c) **Improving efficiency** (increasing the number of occupational therapy assessments; reducing duplication and overlaps in provision of care; and increasing capacity to manage overdue reviews of clients' needs);

(d) **Partnership working** (addressing imbalances between LCC & NHS contributions to packages of care; retendering the model of delivery of the Approved Mental Health Practitioner service; more effectively supporting transitions from childhood to adulthood; and advertising the passenger transport fleet to generate income).

9.6 Tightening operational control mechanisms include:

(a) **Better management of the commissioning cycle** from initial needs analysis through to market management, procurement and ultimately contract management;

(b) new tools and mechanisms for **improving social work practice**, in order to prioritise alternatives to care packages and to ensure consistency of approach.

9.7 Whilst it is difficult to say which changes have resulted in the majority of savings (which would involve asking the counter factual question of what would have happened if they hadn't been made) it is believed that tightening operational control mechanisms has been the most significant contributor.

9.8 An external review was commissioned from Catherine Underwood, former strategic director of people at Nottingham City Council. The review provides assurance that Adult Social Care are optimising opportunities for cost reductions.

9.9 The department has made savings over and above those expected last February of:

	£m
2024/25	17.1
2025/26	22.5

9.10 The budget provides for cost increases expected as a consequence of the Autumn budget, particularly the increase in providers' NI costs. The Government has now been very clear that they will not reimburse any additional NI costs other than those of our direct employees.

9.11 The table below shows the ASC budget for 2025/26 as it is now, compared with the expectation when we set the budget for 2024/25:

	Estimate in Feb. 2024 (£m)	**Now (£m)**	**Change (£m)**
ASC budget	190.3	177.6	
Contingency (also available for children's care)	8.0	2.0	
TOTAL	**198.3**	**179.6**	**18.7**

9.12 The budget for **Education and Children's Services** approved in February also provided for cost growth, both in 2024/25 and 2025/26. This can be seen from the following table:

	2024/25 £m	**2025/26** £m
Underlying budget (including SEN transport)	98.1	98.1
Growth	17.5	21.1
TOTAL	**115.6**	**119.2**

9.13 The budget reflected growth in the cost of children's care placements in 2023/24 and assumed further cost growth in 2024/25 and beyond. The majority of the increase reflects growth in the number of extremely high-cost individual residential placements rather than an increase in numbers per se. This can be seen in the average cost of a placement:

(a) In the 4 years from 2019/20 to 2022/23, average costs for new entrants reduced from £44,000 to £40,000.

(b) In 2023/24, average new entrant costs rose to £78,000 per annum.

9.14 The total budget assumed completion of work to deliver early help differently (including the outcome of a children's centres consultation, a youth services

resource review, and mental health post reductions). This work is on course to save £2m per year.

9.15 Action continues to take place to reduce placement costs:

(a) Work is taking place to develop a **placement strategy**. There is no indication that the Council is an outlier in the number of children in the care system, or in the weekly cost – rather, high cost is an indicator of a broken market with a small number of large providers making profits significantly higher than would be the case if the market was working well. Work will take place to secure sufficiency of supply which will seek alternatives to the current suppliers. Work will also take place to address a perceived shortfall in contributions to placement costs received from the NHS;

(b) Work is taking place to reduce our reliance on **agency social workers** by developing multi-disciplinary teams (where staff who are not registered can play a greater role); implementing plans to grow our own social workers; and improving what we can offer to social workers joining the council (improving conditions and professional development opportunities).

9.16 The department has made savings in the costs of children's care (compared to last year's of expectations) of:

	£m
2025/26	2.4
2026/27	1.4

9.17 The delivery of savings in social care will be monitored through a suite of management information dashboards, which can also be shared with the scrutiny function. We are already seeing results in 2024/25 with reductions in average placement costs.

9.18 Work has also taken place to reduce pressure on budgets for **transport** of children with education, health and care plans, including proposals to change the policy for post 16 children (subject to consultation) and to encourage the use of personal transport plans. Demand for transport is already falling for post 16 children, but costs and demand continues to rise for other children. A pressure of £0.8m is built in to the 2025/26 budget, rising to £1.8m by 2027/28.

9.19 A further increase to the budget of £1m per year has been made in respect of other pressures – legacy costs from the city catering service and cost pressures in the disabled children's service.

9.20 As a consequence of the above measures, the demographic contingency has been reduced to £2m per year. This does carry some risk in the event of an unexpected rise in demand.

9.21 The budget for **homelessness** is under severe pressure due to increased numbers of households presenting as homeless. This national issue arises from a shortage in the availability of affordable housing, compounded by housing benefit not having kept pace with rising rents, and the impact of the previous Government accelerating asylum decisions. The Council has invested in new housing in order to provide better (and cheaper) alternatives to hotel accommodation; nonetheless we are currently estimating that growth of £11m will be required in the 2025/26 budget. Nonetheless, activity to date is estimated to have avoided £45m of additional cost by 2027/28.

10. Savings Programme (Strand Five of the Strategy)

10.1 The strategy will require achievement of savings totalling £23m by 2027/28:

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	Full Year £m
Departmental savings	10.7	18.8	20.4
Council Tax Support Scheme*	2.2	2.2	2.4
TOTAL SAVINGS	12.9	21.0	22.8

*The proposal to save £2.4m per year from the current council tax support scheme was the subject of a public consultation which closed on 10th November. This will lead to a full Council report in January. Its effect, if we go ahead as proposed, would be to increase our total council tax income.

10.2 The departmental savings can be achieved from efficiency savings and income generation which directors can action under delegated authority (indeed it is believed a significant proportion can be found in this way); or following an Executive decision on conclusion of a service review. Service reviews may require a public consultation in some cases.

10.3 The budget ceilings at Appendix 1 include the reductions implied by these savings. The savings required are summarised in the table below:

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	Full Year £m
Estates & Building Services	2.3	2.8	2.8
Housing	0.7	1.0	1.0
Neighbourhoods & Environmental Services	3.0	6.7	7.2
Planning, Development and Transportation	1.9	3.9	4.0
Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment	1.5	1.9	2.3
Corporate Services	0.9	1.6	2.0

Financial Services	0.4	0.9	1.1
TOTAL	**10.7**	**18.8**	**20.4**

10.4 It is worth noting the scale of savings activity which has taken place since the budget was set in February. This can be seen in the table below:

	2025/26 £m	**2026/27 £m**	**2027/28 £m**
Savings in provisions for cost growth in Adult Social Care	22.5	22.5	22.5
Reductions in amount required for unbudgeted growth in social Care	6.0	6.0	6.0
Reduction in provisions for cost growth in children's placements	2.4	1.4	1.4
Cost reduction measures in homelessness services	6.0	27.0	45.0
Savings approved prior to this report	1.1	1.1	1.2
Savings proposed in council tax support	2.2	2.2	2.4
Savings proposed in this report	10.7	18.8	20.4
TOTAL	**50.9**	**79.0**	**98.9**

11. Corporately held Budgets and Provisions

11.1 In addition to the services' budget ceilings, some budgets are held corporately. These are described below.

11.2 A provision has been set aside for **pay awards**. The 2024/25 pay award has now been agreed, and this provision will be distributed to service departments before the final budget is set in February.

11.3 The budget for **capital financing** represents the cost of interest and debt repayment on past years' capital spending, less interest received on balances held by the council. The net budget has improved recently due to increasing interest rates leading to better returns on balances (while the majority of our borrowing is on fixed rates and is not affected by interest rate variations in the short term). As we spend our reserves, however, interest on balances will fall and we will need to borrow money. Decisions to borrow money to fund capital expenditure (elsewhere on your agenda) have led to an increase in the budget (£5m in a full year through refinancing the 2024/25 programme to release the capital fund; £2.6m to fund the 2025/26 capital programme).

11.4 **Miscellaneous central budgets** include external audit fees, pension costs of some former staff, levy payments to the Environment Agency, bank charges, general insurance costs, money set aside to assist council taxpayers suffering

hardship and other sums it is not appropriate to include in service budgets. £0.25m has been added to the budget for discretionary council tax relief in 2025/26 and 2026/27, to help mitigate the impact on those whose support will decrease. Miscellaneous central budgets are partially offset by the effect of recharges from the general fund into other statutory accounts of the Council.

11.5 A contingency has been set aside for **demographic pressures,** which will be allocated only if necessary.

12. Resources

12.1 The majority of the council's core funding comes from business rates; government grant funding; and council tax. Service-specific sources of funding, such as fees & charges and specific grants, are credited to the relevant budget ceilings, and are part of departmental budgets.

12.2 At the time of writing this report, we have only limited information about government funding expected in 2025/26, and this draft budget is necessarily based on an estimate. The provisional settlement, which will give us figures for the major funding streams, is expected shortly before Christmas.

12.3 Resource estimates in this draft budget are based on assumptions from the government's Autumn Statement. Key assumptions include:

- Additional funding will be received to meet the cost of changes to National Insurance Contribution in respect of our own staff;
- Additional Social Care grant funding of £5m per year is received;
- Other funding streams remain largely unchanged.

Business rates and core grant funding

12.4 Local government retains 50% of business rates collected locally, with the balance being paid to central government. In recognition of the fact that different authorities' ability to raise rates do not correspond to needs, there are additional elements of the business rates retention scheme: a top-up to local business rates, paid to authorities with lower taxbases, and Revenue Support Grant (RSG).

12.5 Government decisions in recent years have reduced the amount of rates collected from businesses, by limiting annual increases in the multiplier used to calculate rates and by introducing reliefs for various classes of business. The government's practice is to compensate authorities for lost income due to changes to the scheme. So many changes have been made in recent years that by 2023/24 compensation made up around a third of the "rates" income received by the Council. The complexity of these changes, and the fact that a single ratepayer may be affected by several overlapping changes, makes it difficult to accurately estimate rates income; the estimates in this draft report are the best

we can make at present. In practice, we believe that the system of business rates is becoming unsustainable in its current form.

12.6 The figures in the budget assume no significant growth or decline in "rates" from the current position, apart from inflationary increases. The largest element of uncertainty in the forecasts relates to the impact of appeals by businesses against the ratable values determined by the Valuation Office.

Council tax

12.7 Council tax income is estimated at £166m in 2025/26, based on an assumed tax increase of just below 5% (the maximum we believe will be allowed to set without a referendum). The 5% limit will include a "social care levy" of 2%, designed to help social care authorities mitigate the growing costs of social care. Since our tax base is relatively low for the size of population, the levy raises just £3m per year.

12.8 The estimated council tax base has remained largely flat since last year's budget; this appears to be the result of slower housebuilding numbers, and a growing number of exempt properties (mostly student accommodation).

12.9 The budget includes the impact of extended council tax premiums on long-term empty and second homes, as set out in Appendix 6. This report seeks approval for a change to second homes premia such that unfurnished empty properties will be subject to the premium as soon as they become empty, rather than after a month's grace period (this brings them into line with furnished properties, and – to the extent that it doesn't have the hoped for impact of speeding up the turnaround of properties – should raise an estimated £0.6m per year). A change is also sought in respect of charges for empty, furnished properties ("second homes") to reflect guidance received from the Government in November 2024.

12.10 If the Council makes a decision to change the council tax support scheme in January, the amount of support awarded will reduce. This is reflected in an estimated additional £2.4m of council tax income.

Other grants

12.11 The majority of grant funding is treated as income to the relevant service departments and is not shown separately in the table at paragraph 6. The most substantial grant held corporately is the **Social Care Grant**, which has been provided each year since 2016/17 to reflect national cost and demographic pressures. It has been increased several times since 2016 and is now a significant amount. In 2024/25, our share of this funding was £36.7m; a further increase is expected, but has not yet been announced for the 2025/26 financial year.

12.12 The majority of other funding streams in previous budgets, including the New Homes Bonus and Services Grant, have been sharply cut in recent years. There

is no clarity on the future of these funding streams, and no income has been assumed for 2025/26.

Other corporate income

12.13 From 2025/26, a new funding stream relating to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for waste packaging is expected. At the time of writing, no information was available other than a national estimate of income amounting to £1bn. No information was available on additional costs likely to be incurred. An estimate of £2m per year (net income) has been included in this draft budget. More information has been received from Defra on 30th November, which we are still assessing. Regardless of the position, we expect waste costs to increase by up to £3m per year when there is a new contract in May 2028.

Collection Fund surplus / deficit

12.14 Collection fund surpluses arise when more tax is collected than assumed in previous budgets. Deficits arise when the converse is true.

12.15 The Council has an estimated **council tax collection fund deficit** of £0.6m, after allowing for shares to be paid by the police and fire authorities. This largely relates to numbers of exempt properties being higher than expected when the budget was set.

12.16 The Council has an estimated **business rates collection fund surplus** of £0.8m. Because of changes to reliefs in recent years that were funded by government grants, the actual collection fund position is distorted and various technical accounting adjustments (that will balance out over the years) are required.

13. Earmarked Reserves (Strand One of the Financial Strategy)

13.1 Earmarked reserves have been set aside for specific purposes by departments. These have been reviewed, with the aim of maximising resources for the budget strategy by diverting reserves where there is no immediate need for the money, or a commitment to a third party. Appendix 5 shows the outcome of the review, which will increase resources for the strategy by £20.3m. This report includes a recommendation to put these changes into place.

14. One-Off Resources (Strands One and Three of the Financial Strategy)

14.1 Since 2013, the Council has employed a managed reserves strategy, contributing money to reserves when savings are realised and drawing down reserves when needed. This policy bought time to more fully consider how to make the cuts which have been necessary in nearly every budget year.

14.2 In the last few years, the amount of reserves required to balance the budget has grown significantly so that £61m was required to balance 2024/25 when we set

the budget (although ongoing work to control costs and identify savings has since reduced this figure).

14.3 The forecast amount available at 1st April 2025 is £53.5m. The review of earmarked reserves is contributing a further £20.3m, and the capital programme report for 2025/26 (elsewhere on your agenda) proposes to release a further £90m (**strand one**).

14.4 It is intended to further increase our one off money by selling property (**strand three**). Monies received from property sales are capital receipts, and can normally only be used for capital expenditure, or to repay debt. They cannot be used to support the revenue budget. However, the Secretary of State has power to give directions such that capital receipts can be used to support the revenue budget. The Government is using directions as a tool to deal with the most pressing budget problems in local government, and informal discussions have taken place with civil servants – we will not be seeking a direction just yet, but this does not prevent us from selling property now (we will be able to use the receipts once we have the direction).

14.5 **The Secretary of State will not give a direction unless we have a credible savings programme.** We may be advised that further savings are required, over and above those anticipated in the current plan.

14.6 A sales programme has been identified, focussed on assets with a ready market, with low public impact, low strategic importance and which currently secure low returns. We are seeking to achieve £60m (net of costs of sale).

14.7 The total use of one off money to support the budget strategy is shown at paragraph 5 above, and at Appendix 4.

14.8 The Secretary of State has issued a general permission to all authorities enabling them to capitalise revenue expenditure which generates savings (this is quite separate from the £60m). A condition of using it is the submission of a strategy, a draft of which is included at Appendix 7 for your approval. This is not factored into our financial strategy, and would not increase our overall resources, but is another tool we could use to increase our options.

14.9 The Council has long held a £15m minimum working balance of reserves. This remains available as a “last resort” to fund future budget shortfalls.

15. Budget and Equalities (Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer)

15.1 The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for its residents; both through its policies aimed at reducing inequality of outcomes, and through its practices aimed at ensuring fair treatment for all and the provision of appropriate and culturally sensitive services that meet local people’s needs.

15.2 In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must "have due regard", when making decisions, to the need to meet the following aims of our Public Sector Equality Duty :-

(a) eliminate unlawful discrimination;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;

(c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

15.3 Protected groups under the public sector equality duty are characterised by age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

15.4 When making decisions, the Council (or decision maker, such as the City Mayor) must be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, it must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the recommendation; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact.

15.5 The budget does not propose any service changes which will have an impact on residents. Where appropriate, an individual equalities impact assessment for any service changes will be undertaken when these decisions are developed.

15.6 The budget does recommend a proposed council tax increase for the city's residents. The City Council's proposed tax for 2025/26 is £2,020.85, an increase of just below 5% compared to 2024/25. As the recommended increase could have an impact on those required to pay it, an assessment has been carried out to inform decision makers of the potential equalities implications. This includes the potential impacts of alternative options.

15.7 A number of risks to the budget are addressed within this report (section 16 below). If these risks are not mitigated effectively, there could be a disproportionate impact on people with particular protected characteristics and therefore ongoing consideration of the risks and any potential disproportionate equalities impacts, as well as mitigations to address disproportionate impacts for those with particular protected characteristics, is required.

16. Risk Assessment and Estimates

16.1 Best practice requires me to identify any risks associated with the budget, and Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires me to report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of estimates.

16.2 Assessing the robustness of estimates requires a judgement to be made, which is now hard given the volatility of some elements of the budget. The most significant individual risks are described below.

16.3 Like most (probably all) upper tier authorities, we run the risk of further demand and cost increase in adults' social care and children's placements. Furthermore, the cost of SEN transport is met from the General Fund and has been under pressure due to increasing numbers of children with education, health and care plans; and prices charged by taxi providers.

16.4 In addition to the above, we have a cumulative overspend of £9.7m on the schools' "high needs" block, which we have not had to write off against general fund reserves due to a special dispensation given by the Government. It is expected to increase to £26m this year. This is a common national issue. The dispensation is time limited, and currently due to expire on 31st March 2026. If this happens, we will have an immediate "hit" on the reserves required for this strategy, though the deadline has previously been extended and the risk of it being allowed to expire does not appear to be high.

16.5 Like many housing authorities, we run the risk of further cost pressures from homelessness. These costs are vulnerable to Government decisions about affordable rents which can be supported from the local housing allowance, national decisions about asylum policy, and continued increases in market rents.

16.6 We are also exposed to any further inflationary cost pressures, which may result from world events.

16.7 Finally, we are at risk if we fail to deliver the savings in this strategy – a key task over the coming months will be to progress these to the point of decision, and then ensure we have robust delivery and monitoring plans. As stated in paragraph 1, even if implemented the plan is only sufficient to balance the budget as far as 2027/28 (on current estimates). Unless the Government finds significant additional money by then, we will face major cuts in subsequent years: at present, we do not have a plan which is sustainable in the long term. If income in excess of our forecasts is received as a consequence of the local government finance settlement, it is not going to fundamentally change our plans. We have a substantial recurrent budget gap, forecast to be £46.7m in 24/25 rising to £90m by 27/28. We are not going to come close to bridging this.

16.8 The Overview Select Committee will clearly play an important role in monitoring the plan. At each stage of monitoring during the year (at periods 3, 6, 9 and the outturn) savings decisions made in the previous quarter will be reported and an update on progress provided. Any areas of concern will be brought to the committee's attention. Individual service scrutiny commissions may wish to receive the same information for their own portfolios.

16.9 It is also worth noting that, because of the key role of one-off monies in this strategy, there is a multiplicative effect of any risks which crystallise into annual cost pressures. For instance, an additional £5m per year of unavoidable cost will, all other things being equal, use £15m of reserves by the end of 2027/28.

16.10 Subject to the above comments, I believe the estimates made in preparing the budget are sufficiently robust to allow the budget to be approved.

16.11 The risks are mitigated in 2025/26 by the substantial level of our reserves, once the capital fund has transferred. This means that for this one year I would regard our reserves as adequate: there is limited risk of being unable to balance the budget in 2025/26 even if reserves are used in substitution for any savings which cannot be made, including those where consultation has provided reasons to pursue alternative courses of action. However, this would make it even more difficult to balance future years of the strategy, and would bring forward the point at which we would have to make further deep cuts. It is noted that there is also a £2m contingency in the 2025/26 budget and an additional contingency for demographic pressures.

16.12 If a departmental savings project fails, we would expect alternative savings to be found from within the overall departmental budget. Under the scheme of virement, the City Mayor is able to increase the relevant budget if this is not perceived to be acceptable at the time.

17. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

17.1 Financial Implications

This report is exclusively concerned with financial issues.

17.2 Legal Implications (Kamal Adatia, City Barrister & Head of Standards)

17.2.1 The budget preparations have been in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules – Council's Constitution – Part 4C. The decision with regard to the setting of the Council's budget is a function under the constitution which is the responsibility of the full Council.

17.2.2 At the budget-setting stage, Council is estimating, not determining, what will happen as a means to the end of setting the budget and therefore the council tax. Setting a budget is not the same as deciding what expenditure will be incurred. The Local Government Finance Act, 1992, requires an authority, through the full Council, to calculate the aggregate of various estimated amounts, in order to find the shortfall to which its council tax base has to be applied. The Council can allocate greater or fewer funds than are requested by the Mayor in his proposed budget.

17.2.3 As well as detailing the recommended council tax increase for 2025/26, the report also complies with the following statutory requirements:-

(a) Robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations;
(b) Adequacy of reserves;
(c) The requirement to set a balanced budget.

17.2.4 Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, places upon local authorities a duty to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers before setting a budget. There are no specific statutory requirements to consult residents.

17.2.5 The discharge of the 'function' of setting a budget triggers the duty in s.149 of the Equality Act, 2010, for the Council to have "due regard" to its public sector equality duties. These are set out in paragraph 15. There are considered to be no specific proposals within this year's budget that could result in new changes of provision that could affect different groups of people sharing protected characteristics. Where savings are anticipated, equality assessments will be prepared as necessary. Directors and the City Mayor have freedom to vary or abort proposals under the scheme of virement where there are unacceptable equality consequences. As a consequence, there are no service-specific 'impact assessments' that accompany the budget. There is no requirement in law to undertake equality impact assessments as the only means to discharge the s.149 duty to have "due regard". The discharge of the duty is not achieved by pointing to one document looking at a snapshot in time, and the report evidences that the Council treats the duty as a live and enduring one. Indeed, case law is clear that undertaking an EIA on an 'envelope-setting' budget is of limited value, and that it is at the point in time when policies are developed which reconfigure services to live within the budgetary constraint when impact is best assessed. However, an analysis of equality impacts has been prepared in respect of the proposed increase in council tax, and this is set out in Appendix 3.

17.2.6 Judicial review is the mechanism by which the lawfulness of Council budget-setting exercises are most likely to be challenged. There is no sensible way to provide an assurance that a process of budget setting has been undertaken in a manner which is immune from challenge. Nevertheless the approach taken with regard to due process and equality impacts is regarded by the City Barrister to be robust in law.

17.3 **Climate Change Implications**

To follow

Budget Ceilings

[to follow]

Scheme of Virement

1. This appendix explains the scheme of virement which will apply to the budget, if it is approved by the Council.

Budget Ceilings

2. Directors are authorised to vire sums within budget ceilings without limit, providing such virement does not give rise to a change of Council policy.

3. Directors are authorised to vire money between any two budget ceilings within their departmental budgets, provided such virement does not give rise to a change of Council policy. The maximum amount by which any budget ceiling can be increased or reduced during the course of a year is £500,000. This money can be vired on a one-off or permanent basis.

4. Directors are responsible, in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Mayor if necessary, for determining whether a proposed virement would give rise to a change of Council policy.

5. Movement of money between budget ceilings is not virement to the extent that it reflects changes in management responsibility for the delivery of services.

6. The City Mayor is authorised to increase or reduce any budget ceiling. The maximum amount by which any budget ceiling can be increased during the course of a year is £5m. Increases or reductions can be carried out on a one-off or permanent basis.

7. The Director of Finance may vire money between budget ceilings where such movements represent changes in accounting policy, or other changes which do not affect the amounts available for service provision. The Director of Finance may vire money between budget ceilings to reflect where the savings (currently shown as summary figures in Appendix One) actually fall.

8. Nothing above requires the City Mayor or any director to spend up to the budget ceiling for any service. At the end of the year, underspends on any budget ceiling shall be applied:

   (a) Firstly, to offset any overspends in the same department;

   (b) Secondly, to the corporate reserve for future budget pressures.

Corporate Budgets

9. The following authorities are granted in respect of corporate budgets:

   (a) the Director of Finance may incur costs for which there is provision in miscellaneous corporate budgets, except that any policy decision requires the approval of the City Mayor;

   (b) the Director of Finance may allocate the provision for pay awards and other inflation;

(c) The City Mayor may determine how the demographic pressures contingency and homelessness provision can be applied.

Earmarked Reserves

10. Earmarked reserves may be created or dissolved by the City Mayor. In creating a reserve, the purpose of the reserve must be clear.

11. Directors may add sums to an earmarked reserve from a budget ceiling, if the purposes of the reserve are within the scope of the service budget.

12. Directors may spend earmarked reserves on the purpose for which they have been created.

13. When an earmarked reserve is dissolved, the City Mayor shall determine the use of any remaining balance.

14. The City Mayor may transfer any sum between earmarked reserves.

Other

15. The City Mayor may amend the flexible use of capital receipts policy, and submit revised policies to the Secretary of State.

Equality Impact Assessment

1. **Purpose**

1.1 The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget each year. There remains a difficult balance between funding services for those most in need, maintaining support for most vulnerable and the investment required to ensure the effective delivery of universal services. Council Tax is a vital funding stream for the Council to fund essential services. This appendix presents the draft equalities impact of a proposed 4.99% council tax increase.

1.2 The alternative option for comparison is a freeze on council tax at 2024/25 levels. It would of course be possible to set a council tax increase between these two levels, or indeed to *reduce* the Band D tax.

2. **Who is affected by the proposal?**

2.1 As at October 2024, there were 132,696 properties liable for Council Tax in the city (excluding those registered as exempt, such as student households).

2.2 It is assumed, for the purpose of this draft EIA, that changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) are approved in January. This has been the subject of a separate consultation and equality assessment.

2.3 Under the proposed new CTSS scheme, vulnerable households will be eligible for up to 100% support. Other households will be eligible for up to 75% support, limited to a Band B property.

2.4 Council tax support for pensioner households follows different rules. Low-income pensioners are eligible for up to 100% relief through the CTSS scheme.

3. **How are they affected?**

3.1 The table below sets out the financial impact of the proposed council tax increase on different properties, before any discounts or reliefs are applied. It shows the weekly increase in each band, and the minimum weekly increase for those in receipt of a reduction under the CTSS for working-age households who are not classed as vulnerable.

3.2 Due to the changes to the CTSS scheme (if approved), this does not show the differences between 2024/25 and proposed 2025/26 amounts payable. It compares the 2025/26 proposed amount payable with the alternative option of a council tax freeze, but assuming the CTSS changes are approved.

Band	No. of Properties	Weekly increase (£)	Minimum Weekly Increase under CTSS (£)
A-	378	1.03	0.26
A	78,159	1.23	0.31
B	26,685	1.44	0.36
C	15,353	1.64	0.56
D	6,552	1.85	0.77
E	3,384	2.26	1.18
F	1,537	2.67	1.59
G	606	3.08	2.00
H	42	3.69	2.61
Total	**132,696**		

3.3 In most cases, the change in council tax (around £1.44 per week for a band B property with no discounts; and just 36p per week if eligible for the maximum 75% reduction for non-vulnerable households under the CTSS) is a small proportion of disposable income, and a small contributor to any squeeze on household budgets. A council tax increase would be applicable to all properties - the increase would not target any one protected group, rather it would be an increase that is applied across the board. However, it is recognised that this may have a more significant impact among households with a low disposable income.

3.4 Households at all levels of income have seen their real-terms income decline in recent years due to cost-of-living increases, and wages that have failed to keep up with inflation; although inflation has fallen more recently. These pressures are not limited to any protected group; however, there is evidence that low-income families spend a greater proportion of their income on food and fuel (where price rises have been highest), and are therefore more affected by price increases.

3.5 A 1.7% uplift to most working-age benefits, in line with inflation, will come into effect from April 2025, while the State Pension and pension-age benefits will increase by 4.1%. The main exceptions are Local Housing Allowance rates which will be maintained at their 2024/25 levels. [NB council and housing association tenants are not affected by this as their rent support is calculated differently and their full rent can be compensated from benefits].

4. Alternative options

4.1 The realistic alternative to a 5% council tax increase would be a lower (or no) increase. A reduced tax increase would represent a permanent diminution of our income unless we hold a council tax referendum in a future year. In my view, such a referendum is unlikely to support a higher tax rise. It would also require more cuts to services in later years (on top of the substantial cost savings already required by the budget strategy).

4.2 The budget situation is already extremely difficult, and it seems inevitable that further cuts will have severe effects on front-line services. It is not possible to say precisely where these future cuts would fall; however, certain protected groups (e.g. older people; families with children; and people with disabilities) could face disproportionate impacts from reductions to services.

5. Mitigating actions

5.1 The Council has a range of mitigating actions for residents. These include: funding through the Household Support Fund (now extended until March 2026), Discretionary Housing Payments, direct support through Council Tax Discretionary Relief (which is proposed to increase by 50% from £500,000 to £750,000 from April 2025) and Community Support Grant awards; the council's work with voluntary and community sector organisations to provide food to local people where it is required – through the network of food banks in the city; through schemes which support people getting into work (and include cost reducing initiatives that address high transport costs such as providing recycled bicycles); and through support to social welfare advice services. The "BetterOff Leicester" online tool includes a calculator to help residents to ensure they are receiving all relevant benefits.

6. What protected characteristics are affected?

6.1 The table below describes how each protected characteristic is likely to be affected by the proposed council tax increase. The table sets out anticipated impacts, along with mitigating actions available to reduce negative impacts.

6.2 Some protected characteristics are not, as far as we can tell, disproportionately affected (as will be seen from the table) because there is no evidence to suggest they are affected differently from the population at large. They may, of course, be disadvantaged if they also have other protected characteristics that are likely to be affected, as indicated in the following analysis of impact based on protected characteristic.

7. Armed Forces Covenant Duty

7.1 The Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to 'have due regard' to the principles of the Covenant and requires decisions about the development and delivery of certain services to be made with conscious consideration of the needs of the Armed Forces community.

7.2 We have considered the duty and have not identified any direct impacts on armed forces or their families; but will continue to monitor for specific proposals.

Analysis of impact based on protected characteristic

Protected characteristic	Impact of proposal:	Risk of negative impact:	Mitigating actions:
Age	Older people (pension age and older) are least affected by a potential increase in council tax and can access more generous (up to 100%) council tax relief. However, in the current financial climate, a lower council tax increase would require even greater cuts to services in due course. While it is not possible to say where these cuts would fall exactly, there are potential negative impacts for this group as older people are the primary service users of Adult Social Care. While employment rates remain high, earnings have not kept up with inflation in recent years so working families are likely to already be facing pressures on households' budgets. Younger people, and particularly children, were more likely to be in poverty before the current cost-of-living crisis and this is likely to have continued.	Working age households and families with children – incomes squeezed through reducing real-terms wages.	Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on managing household budgets.
Disability	Disabled people are more likely to be in poverty. Many disabled people will be classed as vulnerable in the proposed new CTSS scheme and will therefore be protected from the impact of a council tax increase. However, in the current financial climate, a lower council tax increase would require even greater cuts to services in due course. While it is not possible to say where these cuts would fall exactly, there are potential negative impacts for this group as disabled people are more likely to be service users of Adult Social Care.	Further erode quality of life being experienced by disabled people.	The proposed new CTSS scheme has been designed to give additional support (up to 100%) to vulnerable households. It also allows support at the level of the band C tax, rather than band B as applies to non-vulnerable households. Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on better managing budgets.
Gender Reassignment	No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic.		

Protected characteristic	Impact of proposal:	Risk of negative impact:	Mitigating actions:
Pregnancy & Maternity	No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic (although see below for childcare costs; and the impacts on lone parents).		
Race	Those with white backgrounds are disproportionately on low incomes (indices of multiple deprivation) and in receipt of social security benefits. Some ethnic minority people are also low income and on benefits.	Household income being further squeezed through low wages and reducing levels of benefit income.	Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises, access to council and partner support for food and advice on managing household budgets. Where required, interpretation and translation will be provided to remove barriers in accessing support.
Religion or Belief	No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic.		
Sex	Disproportionate impact on women who tend to manage household budgets and are responsible for childcare costs. Women are disproportionately lone parents, who are more likely to experience poverty.	Incomes squeezed through low wages and reducing levels of benefit income. Increased risk for women as they are more likely to be lone parents.	If in receipt of Universal Credit or tax credits, a significant proportion of childcare costs are met by these sources. Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises, access to council and partner support for food and advice on managing household budgets.
Sexual Orientation	Gay men and Lesbian women are disproportionately more likely to be in poverty than heterosexual people and trans people even more likely to be in poverty and unemployed. This would mean they are more likely to be on benefits.	Household income being further squeezed through low wages and reducing levels of benefit income.	Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises, access to council and partner support for food and advice on managing household budgets.

APPENDIX 4

MEDIUM TERM PROJECTIONS

1. Summary Forecasts

The table below shows our central forecasts of the position for the next three years, based on the information we have at the time of writing. As funding allocations for future years have not yet been announced, this is necessarily based on some broad assumptions. A local government finance policy statement was published on 28th November; this is still being analysed and the impacts have not been included in the figures below. It now appears likely that the settlement will be slightly more favourable than our central assumptions below; but a substantial budget gap will remain.

We will receive our local settlement for 2025/26 in December; the projections will be updated for the 2025/26 budget report to Council in February. The position for 2026/27 and 2027/28 is unlikely to become much clearer until the Government's spending review is published in spring. **The forecasts are volatile**, and the key risks are described at paragraph 2 below. In particular, because we are relying on one off money to see us through to 2027/28, a change in annual spending requirement will have a multiplicative effect (e.g. an increase in spending of £5m per year from 2024/25 will lose us £20m from reserves by the end of 2027/28, all other things being equal).

	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m
Expenditure:			
Net service budget (before savings)	447.5	493.7	540.8
Less savings and cost control (see para. 10.4)	-50.9	-79.0	-98.9
Net service budget	***396.6***	***414.7***	***441.9***
Provisions for pay inflation (including 24/25)	14.0	20.0	26.0
Provisions for other inflation	0.4	0.4	0.9
Corporate budgets (including capital finance)	3.5	5.8	6.9
Plus additional prudential borrowing	4.4	7.5	7.6
Demographic contingency	2.0	2.0	2.0
Homelessness provision	11.0	12.1	12.1
General contingency for risk	2.0	4.0	6.0
Expenditure total	**433.9**	**466.5**	**503.4**
Income:			
Council tax	165.9	172.3	178.5
Business rates (including top-up grant)	141.4	142.8	145.1
Revenue Support Grant	36.2	36.2	36.2
Social Care Grant	41.7	46.7	51.7
Other grants	2.0	2.0	2.0
Income total	**387.2**	**400.1**	**413.5**
Recurring budget gap	**(46.7)**	**(66.4)**	**(89.9)**

Reserves:	**2025/26 £m**	**2026/27 £m**	**2027/28 £m**
Balance forecast on 1st April	**53.5**	**123.1**	**56.7**
Capital Fund transfer	90.0		
Earmarked reserves review	20.3		
Required to balance budget	-46.7	-66.4	-89.9
Proceeds of asset sales			60.0
Other (Business Rates Pool)	6.0		
Balance forecast on 31st March	**123.1**	**56.7**	**26.7**

2. Assumptions and Risks

The assumptions in the forecast, and the inherent risks, are explained below.

Spending	Assumptions – central scenario	Risks
Pay costs	We assume a pay award averaging 3% each year (in addition to the recently announced award for 2025/26), as general inflation is expected to continue reducing.	Inflation has fallen since its peak of 11.1% in October 2022. It stood at 2.3% in the year to October 2024. Underlying inflation is expected to fall further, although there remains a risk that global events will affect this significantly. Increases in employers' national insurance will add to our pressures, both directly for our own employees and indirectly from our suppliers' prices. The Government intends to reimburse the former in 2025/26 but not the latter. Although energy costs have reduced, a future spike in costs could further impact our budgets.
Non-pay inflation	It is assumed that departments will be able to continue absorbing this. The exceptions are independent sector care package costs, fostering allowances, and the waste management contract; an allowance is built in for these increases.	
Adult social care costs	Demographic pressures and increasing need lead to cost pressures which are reflected in the forecasts. The effect of the mitigation measures is also reflected in the forecasts.	Adult Social Care remains the biggest area of Council expenditure, and is demand led. Small variations have a significant impact on the Council's overall budget. Underlying package costs (before any price increases) are expected to be below the amount assumed when we set the budget for 2024/25.
Other service cost pressures	Contingencies of £2m for demographic growth and £11m for homelessness have been built into the forecasts to provide some cushion against uncertainty. Aside from this, it is assumed that departments are able to find savings to manage cost pressures within their own areas. A planning provision/ contingency of £2.0m has been included for 2025/26 rising to £4.0m by 2026/27 and £6m by 2027/28.	Costs relating to children who are looked after have been increasing nationally, and are a particular risk for future years. Homelessness is also particularly volatile and a significant overspend is forecast in 2024/25. Costs assume the delivery of proposed savings for which delivery plans will be vital. Some are subject to consultation, which may result in a different decision to that currently proposed.
Departmental savings	The budget strategy assumes new savings totalling £23m by 2027/28. See section 10 of the budget report for more details.	Risk that savings are not achieved or are delayed, leading to a greater call on reserves to balance the budget.

Income	**Assumptions – central scenario**	**Risks**
Council Tax	Band D Council Tax will increase by 5.0% in 2025/26, then by 3.0% per year, in line with expected referendum limits. Council taxbase (the number of properties that pay tax) will increase by 500 Band D properties per year.	Further economic downturn leading to increased costs of council tax support to residents on a low income. Conversely, we may be permitted to set a higher tax in 2026/27 and 2027/28 – 5% was permitted in recent years for authorities with social care responsibilities. In future years with lower inflation however, it may not be tenable.
Business rates	No significant movements in the underlying baseline for business rates. Government changes to business rates (e.g. new reliefs) will continue to be met by additional government grant, in line with recent years.	We believe that the national business rates system in its current form is becoming unsustainable. The local government business rates retention system is being "patched up" considerably as a result. Long term stability seems unlikely.
Government grant	Government funding allocations continue to remain broadly flat, with little real-terms growth. In the Autumn Budget, the new government has committed to reviewing the distribution of funding "to ensure that it reflects an up- to-date assessment of need and local revenues". We do not yet have details of what this might mean in practice and in practice expect damping of authorities' gains and losses will be required. Our forecast implicitly assumes a broadly neutral effect of any funding distributional changes. We are also assuming that funding is received for the direct costs of National Insurance changes from April 2025, but not for indirect costs that will be passed on to us from suppliers. An additional £5m per year, each year, is assumed for social care. The Autumn Statement announced £600m of new funding nationally but gave no indication of how this will be distributed. Income (net of costs) from the Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging is estimated at £2m per year, until more details are available.	We do not yet have funding allocations for 2025/26 or beyond. The local government finance settlement (which will provide our own figures for 2025/26) will be announced in December and up to date figures will be included in the budget report to Council in February, together with revised assumptions for 2026/27 and 2027/28. Based on government announcements, the settlement may be better than our previous assumptions to a modest extent. The latest government figures imply that unprotected departments will suffer real terms cuts in budgets of 1.4% per year from 2025/26, according to analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies. This is smaller than in the previous government's plans, but still significant. Local government may (as has frequently been the case in previous years) be treated less favourably than other unprotected departments. The income, and costs, associated with the new waste packaging scheme are highly unclear.

Appendix 5

Earmarked Reserves

1. As part of the overall budget strategy described at paragraph 5.6 of the main report, all earmarked reserves have been reviewed to release funds where possible. It is recommended that earmarked reserves are consolidated, leaving only the following General Fund reserves set aside for specific purposes:

Description of Reserve(s)	Forecast Balance after spending in 2024/25 (£m)	Notes
Departmental ring fenced resources	2.6	Where conditions attach to original grant funding and other contributions
Partnership funding	10.9	Originating from joint working arrangements (often with the health service). While these may be legally part of our reserve balances, there is a clear expectation that they remain within these projects. Diverting these to other purposes would risk our ongoing relationship with partners.
Insurance Fund	3.8	Meets costs of our self-insured insurance claims. Needs to be sufficient for this purpose and is periodically reviewed by actuaries.
Severance Fund	4.7	Meets staff redundancy and other termination costs
Workforce development	4.0	A new reserve, proposed for investment in the workforce, including trainees and apprentices. Despite the budget crisis (or because of it) it is important that we maintain funds for this.
Service transformation fund	7.0	Likely to play a more prominent role in achieving savings through service modernisation. The review has identified additional funds of £1.8m in view of the scale of change required.
Building Schools for the Future	6.4	To manage lifecycle maintenance costs of the schools redeveloped under the BSF programme.

Welfare reserve	1.3	Supports welfare reform and provides welfare support more generally.
Cost of technology	7.2	Required for ongoing investment in ICT systems and development work including the implementation of a new finance system detailed in the capital programme report elsewhere on the agenda.
Elections fund	1.4	Funds future local elections
Waste reprocurement strategy	8.7	To prepare for a new contract, to take effect from May 2028
TOTAL	58.0	

2. The proposals above have identified £20.3m for the budget strategy, in addition we have added £1.8m to the service transformation fund and created a new £4m workforce planning reserve. This will enable departments to access one-off monies to support transformation work, budget savings and support investment in our workforce. A lot of this would have previously been funded from departmental reserves that have now been released to support the corporate budget strategy.

3. Members are reminded that we have a significant negative earmarked reserve. As with most authorities, we spend more than our income on the high needs schools' block. There is a special government dispensation for all authorities to maintain a negative balance, and not write it off to the general fund. Currently, the balance at the end of the year is expected to be minus £26m. The dispensation is expected to come to an end in March 2026. It is difficult to see how the Government would allow this to happen, but it remains a risk.

4. As a result of the review the following reserves will be available to support the budget strategy:

	Forecast (£m)	
Former Managed Reserve	73.8	
Release from capital programme	90.0	See capital programme report.

APPENDIX 6

Council Tax Premiums

[to follow – see para. 12.9]

APPENDIX 7

Flexible Use of Capital Receipts policy

1. The law states that capital receipts can only be used for capital expenditure, or to repay debt. They cannot be used to support revenue expenditure. However, the Secretary of State does have the power to issue directions allowing capital receipts to be used for revenue expenditure. There are two areas where this is used:
   (a) To support Councils who cannot balance their budgets. These are issued specifically to the authority concerned (with conditions);
   (b) To support transformation projects. This is a permission issued to authorities generally – the last such permission covered the period to 2024/25, and we anticipate a similar permission for 2025/26.

2. This report seeks to provide the Council with the authority to use the general permission.

3. If the permission is couched in similar terms to previous years' directions, it will enable us to use receipts to fund expenditure "that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners." Severance costs can also be capitalised.

4. We do not expect to receive the precise terms of the new direction until the 2025/26 local government finance settlement is received in December.

5. Use of the permission requires a plan to be approved prior to the start of the year and sent to the Secretary of State. Once submitted, it can be updated at any time.

6. This policy is not an integral part of our budget strategy, and has been prepared solely to give us another tool to manage the budget during 2025/26. We may, for instance, use it to capitalise some revenue costs in 2025/26 and 2026/27 which would reduce the £60m we would otherwise have to seek permission from Government for to balance the 2027/28 budget. It does not give us any new resources.

<u>The Plan</u>

7. This is the first flexible use of receipts plan submitted by the Council. Consequently, no revenue expenditure has been capitalised using capital receipts prior to 2025/26.

8. Use of the flexibility will have no impact on the Council's prudential indicators, as the receipts to be used have not been factored into any other plan in 2025/26. Use of the flexibility will not affect the Council's authorised borrowing limit or operational boundary in the Treasury Strategy (also on today's agenda).

9. Should funds not be available in the severance fund or the transformation fund, we will consider using capital receipts for the following:

   (a) Development of a corporate operating model, as recommended by a finance challenge review carried out by the LGA - up to £4m;
   (b) Severance costs arising from delivery of the savings described in the budget report (see above) – up to £4m.

10. The scheme of virement (Appendix 2) delegates authority to the City Mayor to make amendments during the year and submit a revised plan to the Secretary of State.

Appendix C

Capital Programme 2025/26

Decision to be taken by: Council

Decision to be taken on: 19 February 2025

Lead director: Amy Oliver, Director of Finance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Kirsty Cowell
- Author contact details: kirsty.cowell@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

1.1 The main purpose of this report is to ask the Council to approve a capital programme for 2025/26**.**

1.2 Unusually, the report also seeks approval to change the way the 2024/25 programme is being paid for. When the programme was approved last February, it was expected that it would be funded from a combination of grants, capital receipts and the "capital fund" – the capital fund is a pot of money we carry forward from previous years to pay for slippage and for approved schemes which have not yet started. The capital fund is technically revenue, and because of the crisis facing the revenue budget it is now planned to use it to meet revenue expenditure. The extent of the crisis, and the full strategy for balancing the revenue budget over the next 3 years, is described in detail in a separate report on today's agenda. However, a critical feature of the revenue strategy is use of the capital fund. Consequently, some schemes in the current capital programme will now need to be financed by borrowing and your approval is sought to this refinancing.

1.3 Capital expenditure is incurred on works of lasting benefit and is principally paid for by grant, tenants' rents, and the proceeds of asset sales (capital receipts). Money can also be borrowed for capital purposes: in the past we have done very little borrowing because of the impact on the revenue budget. Now, however, we need to borrow - not just in substitution for the capital fund, but also to pay for schemes in the 2025/26 capital programme.

1.4 For the past five years the Council has set a one-year capital programme, due to uncertainty over future resources. This uncertainty remains and is unlikely to reduce until the Government publishes its national spending review in the spring.

1.5 We are presenting another one-year programme of limited scale. This will enable capacity to be focussed on key schemes and allow time to see the long-term impact of recent inflation on construction costs. With the need to utilise the revenue "capital fund" for revenue purposes this significantly limits available resources for capital expenditure to any capital grants, and with the use of Prudential Borrowing. Prudential borrowing has a revenue cost which we would want to minimise.

1.6 In addition to the one-year programme any schemes approved and in the current programme will continue into 2025/26 where needed, except the schemes outlined in 4.8, if 2.1(c) is approved.

1.7 The report seeks approval to the "General Fund" element of the capital programme, at a cost of £34.3m. In addition to this, the HRA capital programme (which is elsewhere on your agenda) includes works estimated at £41.3m, £30m of which relates to the affordable homes programme.

1.8 The table below summarises the proposed spending for capital schemes starting in 2025/26, as described in this report:-

	£m
Proposed Programme	
Schemes – Summarised by Theme	
Grant Funded Schemes	13.7
Own buildings	8.3
Routine Works	4.3
Invest to Save Schemes	1.3
Other Schemes & Feasibility and Contingencies	6.7
Total New Schemes	**34.3**
Funding	
Unringfenced Resources	32.4
Monies ringfenced to Schemes	1.9
Total Resources	**34.3**

1.9 The table below presents the total spend on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account schemes:

	£m
General Fund	34.3
Housing Revenue Account	41.3
Total	**75.6**

1.10 The Council's total capital expenditure now forecast for 2025/26 and beyond is expected to be around £315m, including the HRA and schemes approved prior to 2025/26.

1.11 The capital programme is split into two parts:-

a) Schemes which are "**immediate starts**", being schemes which directors have authority to commence once the council has approved the programme. These are fully described in this report;

b) Schemes which are "**policy provisions**", where the purpose of the funding is described but money will not be released until specific spending proposals have been approved by the Executive.

1.12 Immediate starts have been split into three categories:-

a) **Projects** – these are discrete, individual schemes such as a road scheme or a new building. These schemes will be monitored with reference to physical delivery rather than an annual profile of spending. (We will, of course, still want to make sure that the overall budget is not going to be exceeded);

b) **Work Programmes** – these consist of minor works or similar schemes where there is an allocation of money to be spent in a particular year;

c) **Provisions** – these are sums of money set aside in case they are needed, but where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem.

2. Recommended actions/decision

2.1 The Council is asked to:-

(a) Approve the release of the Capital Fund, a revenue reserve, to the Managed Reserve strategy of £90m. (see para 4.4)

(b) Approve the change in financing for the 2024/25 capital programme, to include prudential borrowing (see para 4.5)

(c) Approve reductions to the 2024/25 capital programme as described at paragraph 4.8.

(d) Approve the capital programme, including the prudential borrowing for schemes as described in this report and summarised at Appendices 2 to 5, subject to any amendments proposed by the City Mayor;

(e) For those schemes designated immediate starts, delegate authority to the lead director to commit expenditure, subject to the normal requirements of contract procedure rules, rules concerning land acquisition and finance procedure rules;

(f) Delegate authority to the City Mayor to determine a plan of spending for each policy provision, and to commit expenditure up to the maximum available;

(g) For the purposes of finance procedure rules:

- Determine that service resources shall consist of service revenue contributions; HRA revenue contributions; and government grants/third party contributions ringfenced for specific purposes.

- Designate the operational estate & children's capital maintenance programme, highways maintenance programme and transport improvement programme as programme areas, within which the director can reallocate resources to meet operational requirements.

(e) Delegate to the City Mayor:

- Authority to increase any scheme in the programme, or add a new scheme to the programme, subject to a maximum of £10m corporate resources in each instance and to borrow whilst remaining within the prudential limits for debt which are proposed in the treasury management strategy (elsewhere on your agenda);

- Authority to reduce or delete any capital scheme, subject to a maximum reduction of £10m; and

- Authority to transfer any "policy provision" to the "immediate starts" category.

(g) Delegate to directors, in consultation with the relevant deputy/assistant mayor, authority to incur expenditure up to a maximum of £250k per scheme in respect of policy provisions on design and other professional fees and preparatory studies, but not any other type of expenditure.

(h) Approve the capital strategy at Appendix 6.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

N/A

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

Amendments to 2024/25 Capital Programme

4.1 This report proposes to transfer the capital fund for use in the revenue strategy. We can do this because the capital fund is technically revenue money – how it has arisen is described below.

4.2 As members will be aware, capital resources are ringfenced. Capital grants and capital receipts can only be spent on capital schemes. Revenue monies can, however, be used to support the capital programme. In practice, making a regular contribution to capital from the revenue budget has not been affordable for a long time. We have, though, made one-off contributions over

recent years, the most significant being government covid grants which were set aside to support post-pandemic recovery (these were approved following the capital outturn report for 2020/21). Other occasions have included one-off monies to support the Economic Action Plan in the period up to 2016/17.

4.3 As there is always slippage, and some resources are available before we need to spend them, financing presents us with a choice: what resources do we use and what do we carry forward to meet future commitments? In practice, **we deliberately use the most restricted resources first and carry forward the least restricted**, irrespective of why schemes were put in the programme in the first place. This means that, as revenue is the least restricted, the capital fund is always carried forward to fund slippage – the fund now probably comprises most of the revenue contributions approved over the past 14 years. It is important to recognise, though, that **these monies are fully committed to fund capital schemes members have already approved** and diverting them to the revenue budget has consequences: we will need to borrow to complete the programme. Nonetheless we have deliberately engineered a situation where we have flexibility when it is needed (as it is now).

4.4 The “capital fund” amounts to £103m. Decisions have already been taken to transfer “spare” money of £7m to support the revenue budget as part of the General Fund budget for 2024/25; and an estimated £4m is required to fund current committed costs which could arguably be considered revenue. It is now proposed that remaining £90m is transferred to support the budget.

4.5 This report also proposes reductions to the programme of £13m. This means that £77m will need to be borrowed to fund the remaining 2024/25 capital programme rather than the full £90m which is being transferred. This borrowing will inevitably make the budget gap worse but buys us time to pull the revenue budget into a more sustainable position. The impact is estimated to be an additional revenue cost of £5m per year by 2026/27. This report seeks the necessary change to the financing of the 2024/25 capital programme.

4.6 In addition, this and all future capital programmes are likely to require borrowing, which means every potential capital scheme will need to be considered for revenue affordability.

4.7 As stated above, it is proposed to reduce previously approved capital spending by £13m.

4.8 If capital cost is not reduced then the amount of borrowing would be more and would increase the amount of borrowing cost in the revenue budget. Any reductions in capital cost do not themselves result in more one-off money. The reason they are proposed is to facilitate release of the capital fund described in paragraph 4.4 and 4.5 above. Releasing the capital fund will mean money previously set aside to fund the capital programme is no longer available. To maintain the previously approved level of capital spending would require us to borrow: capital cuts reduce the borrowing required.

Proposed cuts are shown in the table below:

	Current Remaining Budget (£m)	Minus Proposed Saving (£m)	Amount remaining after saving (£m)
Malcolm Arcade – refurbishment scheme will not proceed.	1.3	(1.3)	0
Fleet – reduced programme based on underspends in previous years due to long lead times for delivery and change in policy to retain vehicles for longer due to improvements in vehicle lives.	10.3	(2.0)	8.3
Connecting Leicester – no further city centre improvement schemes to be committed.	4.2	(3.2)	1.0
Operational Estate – reduction has already been achieved.	6.4	(1.0)	5.4
Policy Provisions reduction – New Ways of Working, Strategic Acquisitions, Highways & Transport Infrastructure and Programme Contingency.	25.3	(5.9)	19.4
TOTAL	**47.5**	**(13.4)**	**34.1**

Key Policy Issues for the New Programme

4.9 The key focus of the 2025/26 capital programme is a limited one-year programme due to the resources constraints and its focus is to protect the revenue budget as far as possible.

4.10 The cost of Prudential Borrowing has been calculated for each scheme, and the total is included within the revenue budget report for 2025/26, and the Prudential Indicators included in the Treasury Report 2025/26 found elsewhere on the agenda.

4.11 The programme supports the Council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency, most obviously but not exclusively within the Transport Improvement Works, Operational Estate and Children's capital maintenance programmes.

Resources

4.12 Resources available to the programme consist primarily of Government grant, borrowing and capital receipts (the HRA programme is also supported by tenants' rent monies). Most grant is unringfenced, and the Council can spend it on any purpose it sees fit.

4.13 Appendix 1 presents the resources required to fund the proposed programme, which total some £34.32m. The key unringfenced funding sources are detailed below.

a) £5.04m of general capital receipts. The delivery of receipts from Ashton Green disposals to fund the work to sell/develop by the end of 2025/26;

b) £13.68m of unringfenced grant funding. Some of these figures are estimated in the absence of actual allocations from the Government (the figure for 2026/27 represents a first call on that year to enable school schemes to be planned);

c) £1.00m from the Transformation Fund (Earmarked Revenue Reserve)

d) £1.00m from the ICT Reserve (Earmarked Revenue Reserve)

e) £0.33m of resources brought forward from an insurance claim.

f) £13.27m of borrowing, with an annual revenue cost.

4.14 For some schemes the amount of unringfenced resources required is less than the gross cost of the scheme. This is because resources are ringfenced directly to individual schemes. Ringfenced resources are shown throughout Appendix 2 and consist of government grant and contributions to support the delivery of specific schemes.

4.15 Only funding required to finance the schemes in this capital programme is included.

4.16 Finance Procedure Rules enable directors to make limited changes to the programme after it has been approved. For these purposes, the Council has split resources into corporate and service resources.

4.17 Directors have authority to add schemes to the programme, provided they are funded by service resources, up to an amount of £250,000. This provides flexibility for small schemes to be added to the programme without a report to the Executive, but only where service resources are identified. (Borrowing is treated as a corporate resource requiring a higher level of approval).

Proposed Programme

4.18 The whole programme is summarised at Appendix 2. Responsibility for the majority of projects rests with the Strategic Director of City Development and Neighbourhoods.

4.19 £13.68m is provided for grant funded schemes. These schemes are funded either from unringfenced grant (where we have discretion) and ringfenced resources.

a) £6.00m has been provided to continue with the **Schools Capital Improvements Programme.** This is to add the 2026/27 element as the 2025/26 element was approved in the 2024/25 capital budget. The programme will include routine maintenance and spending and is prioritised to reflect asset condition and risk. This will be a two-year programme to allow for better forward planning. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 5. Detailed schemes will be developed following consultation with schools.

b) £3.26m is provided as part of the continued **Highway Capital Maintenance Programme**. This is a rolling annual programme and spending is prioritised to reflect asset condition, risk and local neighbourhood priorities. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 4.

c) £2.56m is provided in 2025/26 to continue the rolling programme of works constituting the **Transport Improvement Programme**.

Some of the priority areas include:

- Delivering cross cutting cycling, walking and public transport benefits
- Local safety schemes
- Safer Neighbourhoods
- Delivery of the Local Transport Plan

d) £1.86m has been provided for **Disabled Facilities Grants** to private sector householders which is funded by government grant. This is an annual programme which has existed for many years. These grants provide funding to eligible disabled people for adaption work to their homes and help them maintain their independence.

4.20 £8.3m is provided for the Council's own buildings.

a) £1.97m has been provided to support the annual **Operational Estate Capital Maintenance Programme** of works to properties that the Council occupies for its own use. This is a rolling annual programme and spending is prioritised to reflect asset condition and risk. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 3 but may vary to meet emerging operational requirements.

b) £1.36m is provided for the **Corporate Estate** to support the council's property portfolio. Including wall, steps & roof repairs, replacement windows. The council has a statutory responsibility to ensure business property is safe for our tenant and anybody else using the building. This will also ensure income is maintained for the revenue budget.

c) £1.00m has been provided for **Neighbourhood Services Transformation**. This focuses on the centralisation of key services to enable greater access for communities.

d) £3.79m has been provided to support the refurbishment of 86 **Leycroft Road Depot** project following fire damage, which will result in a centralised location for the parks depot.

e) £0.14m has been provided for **Evington Park Depot Staff Welfare Facilities**.

4.21 £4.34m is provided for Routine Works.

a) £3.01m has been made available for the annual **Fleet Replacement Programme.** Wherever possible, ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) will be sought to support the Council's climate emergency response.

b) £0.40m has been provided for **Local Environmental Works** in wards. This scheme will focus on local neighbourhood issues including residential parking, local safety concerns, pedestrian routes, cycleways and community lighting to be delivered after consultation with ward members.

c) £0.15m is provided for **Grounds Maintenance Equipment** This scheme is to replace ageing machinery with up to date, energy efficient models as part of our annual replacement programme.

d) £0.30m is provided to continue the **Flood & Drainage** scheme into 2025/26. The programme supports the local flood risk management strategy and action plan, and the delivery of our statutory role to manage and reduce flood risk in collaboration with the Environment Agency & Severn Trent Water.

e) £0.15m is provided for **Foster Care Capital Contribution Scheme** to support foster carers with alterations to their property to allow fostered children to remain living with their carers or to increase the capacity to look after more children**.**

f) £0.20m has been provided for the **Front Walls Replacement** Scheme and is a continuation of previous schemes. It involves the enclosure of small spaces in front of housing. Enveloping schemes can make a significant improvement to local neighbourhoods and enable occupiers to tend house fronts more effectively.

g) £0.08m has been provided for a **Historic Building Grant Programme**. This will provide match funding to city residents and organisations to support the repair of historic buildings and the reinstatement of lost original historic features.

h) £0.05m is included as part of the continued programme to

refresh **Festival Decorations**.

4.22 £1.30m is provided for Invest to Save schemes.

a) £0.55m is provided for **KRIII Cafe**. Relocating the café within the building to allow additional access and to create a dedicated schools and education hire space. The relocation would allow the café to be open separately to the exhibition and allow additional income to be generated.

b) £0.45m **Street Cleaning equipment**. To provide additional efficient sweepers and street flushers and reduce travel and fuel costs to deliver litter and detritus statutory responsibilities.

c) £0.18m **Public Toilet Automatic Locking.** Installation of an automated system for toilets located on parks and highways in 23 locations.

d) £0.06m **Southgates Underpass Lighting**. To replace fluorescent lighting tubes with LED lighting strips.

e) £0.06m **Trees and Woodland Stump Grinder**. To replace the existing grinder and avoid the need to hire.

4.23 £6.74m is provided for Other Schemes & feasibility and contingencies:

a) £5.04m **Strategic Sites**. To facilitate capital assets disposals, in particular Ashton Green.

b) £1.00m **Finance System Replacement**. To implement a system to replace the Council's existing legacy system. The finance system has come to the end of the contract, and we need to procure a system to ensure financial controls and ensure efficiency.

c) £0.7m is provided for Feasibility Studies. This will enable studies to be done, typically for potential developments not included elsewhere in the programme or which might attract grant support. For example, Gilroes Cemetery and depot modernisation.

<u>Proposed Programme – Policy Provisions</u>

4.24 Policy provisions are sums of money which are included in the programme for a stated purpose, but for which a further report to the Executive (and decision notice) is required before they can be spent. Schemes are usually treated as policy provisions because the Executive needs to see more detailed spending plans before full approval can be given.

4.25 Executive reports seeking approval to spend policy provisions must state whether schemes, once approved, will constitute projects, work programmes or provisions; and, in the case of projects, identify project outcomes and physical milestones against which progress can be monitored.

4.26 Where a scheme has the status of a policy provision, it is shown as such in the appendix.

Capital Strategy

4.27 Local authorities are required to prepare a capital strategy each year, which sets out our approach for capital expenditure and financing at high level.

4.28 The proposed capital strategy is set out at Appendix 6.

5. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

This report is exclusively concerned with financial issues.
Signed: Kirsty Cowell
Dated: 21 November 2024

5.2 Legal implications

As the report is exclusively concerned with financial matters, there are no direct legal implications arising from the report. In accordance with the constitution, the capital programme is a matter that requires approval of full Council. The subsequent letting of contracts, acquisition and/or disposal of land etc all remain matters that are executive functions and therefore there will be the need to ensure such next steps have the correct authority in place prior to proceeding. There will be procurement and legal implications in respect of individual schemes and client officers should take early legal advice.
Signed: Kevin Carter, Head of Law - Commercial, Property & Planning
Dated: 22 November 2024

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions they have to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

People from across all protected characteristics will benefit from the improved public good arising from the proposed capital programme. However, as the proposals are developed and implemented, consideration should continue to be given to the equality impacts of the schemes in question, and how it can help the Council to meet the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The report seeks approval for the capital programme, capital programme includes schemes which improve the city's infrastructure and contribute to overall improvement of quality of life for people across all protected characteristics. By doing so, the capital programme promotes the PSED aim of: fostering good relations between different groups of people by ensuring that no area is disadvantaged compared to other areas as many services rely on such infrastructure to continue to operate.

Some of the schemes focus on meeting specific areas of need for a protected characteristic: disabled adaptations within homes (disability), home repair grants which are most likely to be accessed by elderly, disabled people or households with children who are living in poverty (age and disability).

Other schemes target much larger groups of people who have a range of protected characteristics reflective of the diverse population within the city. Some schemes are place specific and address environmental issues that also benefit diverse groups of people. The delivery of the capital programme contributes to the Council fulfilling our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

Where there are any improvement works to buildings or public spaces, considerations around accessibility (across a range of protected characteristics) must influence design and decision making. This will ensure that people are not excluded (directly or indirectly) from accessing a building, public space or service, on the basis of a protected characteristic.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh

Dated: 22 November 2024

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

The Council has declared a climate emergency and set an ambition for the council and city to achieve net zero carbon emissions. The council is one of the largest employers and landowners in the city, with a carbon footprint of 15,463 tCO2e from its own operations in 2023/24. The council therefore has a vital role to play in reducing emissions from its operations, increasing the energy efficiency of its council housing stock, working with its partners and leading by example on tackling the climate emergency in Leicester. The report notes the importance of tackling the climate emergency through the capital programme, with a number of the projects outlined directly playing a positive role in reducing or mitigating carbon emissions.

There is not sufficient information within this report to provide specific details of climate change implications for individual projects, which may have significant implications and opportunities. Detailed climate emergency implications should therefore be produced for individual projects as and when plans are finalised, and engagement carried out with the council's Sustainability service where necessary. At a high level, there are some general

principles that should be followed during the planning, design and implementation of capital projects, as detailed below. A toolkit is also being developed to support the achievement of reduced carbon emissions in council capital construction and renovation projects.

New buildings should be constructed to a high standard of energy efficiency, and incorporate renewable energy sources and low carbon heating sources wherever possible, with projects aiming to achieve carbon neutral development or as close as possible to this. Maintenance and refurbishment works, including replacement of systems or equipment, should also seek to improve energy efficiency wherever possible. This will reduce energy use and therefore bills, delivering further benefits to the council and other occupants of its buildings. Major projects will also need to meet Climate Change policy CS2 in the Leicester City Core Strategy planning document, which requires best practice in terms of minimising energy demand for heating, ventilation and lighting, achieving a high level of fabric efficiency, and the use of low carbon or renewable sources of energy.

Projects involving procurement, including for construction works, should follow the Council's sustainable procurement guidelines. This includes the use of low carbon and sustainable materials, low carbon equipment and vehicles and reducing waste in procurement processes. Transport projects should seek to enable a greater share of journeys to be safely and conveniently undertaken by walking, cycling or public transport wherever possible, and many of the planned works will directly contribute to this. Flood risk and environmental works are also a key part of increasing resilience to a changing climate in the city.

Signed: Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

Dated: 25 November 2024

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

Policy	Yes	The capital programme is part of the Council's overall budget and policy framework and makes a substantial contribution to the delivery of Council policy.
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	A number of schemes will benefit elderly people and those on low income.

6. Background information and other papers:

Draft Capital Budget 2025/26 presented to Overview Select Committee 30 January 2025.

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 Capital Resources.

Appendix 2a Grant Funded Schemes

Appendix 2b Own Buildings

Appendix 2c Routine Works

Appendix 2d Invest to Save

Appendix 2e Other & Feasibilities Schemes

Appendix 3 Operational Estate Maintenance Capital Programme

Appendix 4 Highways Maintenance Capital Programme

Appendix 5 Children's Capital Improvement Programme

Appendix 6 Capital Strategy 2025/26

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a "key decision"? If so, why?

No – it is a proposal to Council.

Appendix 1

Capital Resources

	25/26 *{£000}*	26/27 *{£000}*	Total *{£000}*
Resources Brought Forward			
Insurance Claim	330	0	**330**
Total One Off Resources	**330**		**330**
Capital Receipts			
General Capital Receipts	5,040	0	**5,040**
Total Receipts	**5,040**	**0**	**5,040**
Unringfenced Capital Grant			
Education maintenance	0	6,000	**6,000**
Integrated Transport	2,576	0	**2,576**
Transport maintenance	3,262	0	**3,262**
Total Unringfenced Grant	**5,838**	**6,000**	**11,838**
Earmarked Reserves	2,000	0	**2,000**
Prudential Borrowing	13,237	0	**13,237**
TOTAL UNRINGFENCED RESOURCES	**26,445**	**6,000**	**32,445**
Ringfenced resources			
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,861	0	1,861
TOTAL RINGFENCED RESOURCES	**1,861**	**0**	**1,861**
TOTAL CAPITAL RESOURCES	**28,306**	**6,000**	**34,306**

Appendix 2a

Grant Funded Schemes

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
			{£000}	*{£000}*	*{£000}*
Grant Funded Schemes					
Children's Capital Maintenance Programme *	CDN (EBS)	WP	6,000	-	**6,000**
Highway Capital Maintenance	CDN (PDT)	WP	3,262	-	**3,262**
Transport Improvement Works	CDN (PDT)	WP	2,556	-	**2,556**
Disabled Facilities Grants	CDN (HGF)	WP	-	1,861	**1,861**
TOTAL			**11,818**	**1,861**	**13,679**

Key to Scheme Types : WP = Work Programme

Summary of Ringfenced Funding

	{£000}
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,861
TOTAL RINGFENCED FUNDING	**1,861**

* For 2026/27 budget

Appendix 2b

Own Buildings

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
			{£000}	*{£000}*	*{£000}*
Own Buildings					
86 Leycroft Road Depot	CDN (NES)	PJ	3,794	-	**3,794**
Operational Estate Maintenance	CDN (EBS)	WP	1,970	-	**1,970**
Corporate Estate	CDN (EBS)	WP	1,358	-	**1,358**
Neighbourhood Services Transformation	CDN (NES)	PJ	1,000	-	**1,000**
Evington Park Depot Staff Welfare Facilities	CDN (NES)	WP	140	-	**140**
TOTAL			**8,262**	**-**	**8,262**

Key to Scheme Types : PJ = Project ; WP = Work Programme

Appendix 2c

Routine Works

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
			{£000}	*{£000}*	*{£000}*
Routine Works					
Fleet Replacement Programme	CDN (HGF)	WP	3,013	-	**3,013**
Local Environmental Works	CDN (PDT)	WP	400	-	**400**
Flood Risk Prevention	CDN (PDT)	WP	300	-	**300**
Front Walls Enveloping	CDN (PDT)	WP	200	-	**200**
Grounds Maintenance Equipment	CDN (NES)	WP	150	-	**150**
Foster Care Capital Contribution Scheme	CDN (ECS)	WP	150	-	**150**
Historic Building Grant Fund	CDN (PDT)	WP	75	-	**75**
Festival Decorations	CDN (TCII)	WP	50	-	**50**
TOTAL			**4,338**	**-**	**4,338**

Key to Scheme Types : WP = Work Programme

Appendix 2d

Invest to Save Schemes

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
			{£000}	*{£000}*	*{£000}*
Invest to Save Schemes					
King Richard III Café	CDN (TCI)	PJ	551	-	**551**
Street Cleaning Equipment	CDN (NES)	WP	445	-	**445**
Public Toilet Automatic Locking	CDN (NES)	WP	176	-	**176**
Southgates Underpass Lighting	CDN (PDT)	PJ	55	-	**55**
Trees and Woodland Stump Grinder	CDN (NES)	WP	55	-	**55**
TOTAL			**1,282**	**-**	**1,282**

Appendix 2e

Feasibilities and Other Schemes

	Division	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
			{£000}	*{£000}*	*{£000}*
Feasibilities and Other Schemes					
Strategic Sites	CDN (PDT)	PJ	5,035	-	**5,035**
Finance System Replacement	CRS	PJ	1,000	-	**1,000**
Feasibility Studies	CDN (Various)	WP	690	-	**690**
TOTAL			**6,725**	**-**	**6,725**

Key to Scheme Types : PJ = Project ; WP = Work Programme

GRAND TOTAL – ALL SCHEMES	**32,445**	**1,861**	**34,306**

Appendix 3

Operational Estate Maintenance Capital Programme

Description	**Amount £000's**
Building Works - Essential maintenance at the Council's operational and investment buildings. Key works include pathway replacements at parks, accessibility works at council buildings and works to heritage sites.	1,176
Compliance Works - Generally consisting of surveys to gain condition data across the estate and works arising from the various risk assessments that are undertaken.	298
Electrical Works – Installation of security gates at the council's depots	124
Mechanical Works - Ventilation systems, building management systems and heating controls.	199
Emergency Provision – Provision for emergency reactive works that could be required across the Council's estate.	173
TOTAL	**1,970**

Appendix 4

Proposed Highways Maintenance Capital Programme

Description	Amount £000's
Principal Roads – Narborough Road, Uppingham Road	315
Unclassified Neighbourhood Roads, Large Area Patching & Pothole Repairs – Target large carriageway defect repairs to provide longer term repairs in readiness for surface dressing.	1,422
Footway Relays and Reconstructions – Focus on neighbourhood street scene corridor improvements in district centres; Narborough Road footways refurbishment, Melton Road uneven footway improvements.	400
Strategic Bridge Deck Maintenance & Replacement Works - Includes feasibility studies and structural surveys to assess St. Margaret's Way half joint replacement and Burleys Way Flyover maintenance.	100
Bridge Improvement & Maintenance Works – Kitchener Road & Chesterfield Road Bridge Maintenance. Various parapet replacements, structural maintenance works and technical assessment review project.	185
Traffic Signal Installations Renewals and Lighting Column Replacements – Signalling Upgrades, Lamp Column Replacements, Illuminated Bollards and Sign Replacements.	240
DfT / Whole Government Accounting Lifecycle Asset Management Development Project – Strategic asset management development, data analysis, lifecycle planning and reporting in support of DfT Challenge Funding bidding linked to asset management performance.	600
TOTAL	**3,262**

Appendix 5

Children's Capital Improvement Programme*

Description	Amount £000's
Building Works - Typical works include roof replacements, sports hall floor replacements, playground resurfacing and window replacements.	3,997
Compliance Works - This work stream will mainly be used to ensure the playing fields and pavilions used by schools are fully compliant with current regulations and to conduct health and safety works.	575
Mechanical Works - schemes being undertaken within the programme typically consist of re-piping heating systems and end of life ventilation replacements.	667
Individual Access Needs Works - This is a provision to allow works to be carried out to enable children with additional needs to access mainstream school.	194
Emergency Provision - This is provision within the programme to allow for emergency unforeseen works to be carried out.	567
TOTAL	**6,000**

*2026/27 budget

Appendix 6

Capital Strategy 2025/26

1. Introduction

1.1 It is a requirement on local authorities to prepare a capital strategy each year, which sets out our approach to capital expenditure and financing at a high level. The requirement to prepare a strategy arises from Government concerns about certain authorities borrowing substantial sums to invest in commercial property, often primarily for yield and outside the vicinity of the council concerned (something the Council has never done).

1.2 There is also a requirement on local authorities to prepare an investment strategy, which specifies our approach to making investments other than day to day treasury management investments (the latter is included in our treasury management strategy, as in previous years). The investment strategy is presented as a separate report on your agenda.

1.3 This appendix sets out the proposed capital strategy for the Council's approval.

2. Capital Expenditure

2.1 The Council's capital expenditure plans are approved by the full Council, on the basis of two reports:-

(a) The corporate capital programme – this covers periods of one or more years and is always approved in advance of the period to which it relates. It is often, but need not be, revisited annually (it need not be revisited if plans for the subsequent year have already been approved);

(b) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme – this is considered as part of the HRA budget strategy which is submitted each year for approval.

2.2 The capital programme is split into:-

(a) Immediate starts – being schemes which are approved by the Council and can start as soon as practical after the council has approved the programme. Such schemes are specifically described in the relevant report;

(b) Policy provisions, which are subsequently committed by the City Mayor (and may be less fully described in the report). The principle here is that further consideration is required before the scheme can start.

2.3 The corporate capital programme report sets out authorities delegated to the City Mayor. Decisions by the City Mayor are subject to normal requirements in the constitution (e.g. as to prior notice and call-in).

2.4 Monitoring of capital expenditure is carried out by the Executive and the Overview Select Committee. Reports are presented on 3 occasions during the years, and at outturn. For this purpose, immediate starts have been split into three categories:-

(a) **Projects** – these are discrete, individual schemes such as a road scheme or a new building. These schemes are monitored with reference to

physical delivery rather than an annual profile of spending. (We will, of course, still want to make sure that the overall budget is not going to be exceeded);

(b) **Work Programmes** – these will consist of minor works or similar schemes where there is an allocation of money to be spent in a particular year.

(c) **Provisions** – these are sums of monies set aside in case they are needed, but where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem.

2.5 When, during the year, proposals to spend policy provisions are approved, a decision on classification is taken at that time (i.e. a sum will be added to projects, work programmes or provisions as the case may be).

2.6 The authority has never previously capitalised revenue expenditure, except where it can do so in compliance with proper practices: it has never applied for directions to do so. The revenue budget strategy, if approved, now envisages applying for permission to capitalise £60m of expenditure, to be funded from capital receipts. It also envisages utilising a general direction to capitalise expenditure that produces revenue savings.

2.7 The table below forecasts the past and forecast capital expenditure for the current year and 2025/26. It therefore, includes latest estimates of expenditure from the 2024/25 programme that will be rolled forward.

Department / Division	**2024/25 Estimate £m**	**2025/26 & Beyond Estimate £m**
All Departments	4.0	3.4
Corporate Resources	0.7	1.0
Planning, Development & Transportation	41.2	30.1
Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment	21.6	15.5
Neighbourhood & Environmental Services	4.1	4.7
Estates & Building Services	14.7	10.3
Adult Social Care	0.0	5.9
Children's Services	18.7	30.7
Public Health	0.0	0.0
Housing General Fund	30.9	34.9
Total General Fund	**135.9**	**136.5**
Housing Revenue Account	46.7	178.3
Total	**182.6**	**314.8**

2.8 The Council's Estates and Building Services Division provides professional management of non-housing property assets. This includes maintaining the properties, collecting any income, rent reviews, ensuring that lease conditions are complied with and that valuations are regularly updated at least every 5 years. A capital programme scheme is approved each year for significant improvements or renovation.

2.9 The Housing Division provides management of tenanted dwellings. Apart from new build and acquisitions, the HRA capital programme is almost entirely funded from tenants' rents. The criteria used to plan major works are in the table below:-

Component for Replacement	**Leicester's Replacement Condition Criteria**	**Decent Homes Standard: Maximum Age**
Bathroom	All properties to have a bathroom for life by 2036	30 - 40 years
Central Heating Boiler	Based on assessed condition	15 years (future life span of new boilers is expected to be on average 12 years)
Chimney	Based on assessed condition	50 years
Windows & Doors	Based on assessed condition	40 years
Electrics	Every 30 years	30 years
Kitchen	All properties to have an upgraded kitchen by 2036	20 - 30 years
Roof	Based on assessed condition	50 years (20 years for flat roofs)
Wall finish (external)	Based on assessed condition	80 years
Wall structure	Based on assessed condition	60 years

3. Financing Capital Expenditure

3.1 For at least the last decade, most capital expenditure of the Council has been financed as soon as it was spent (by using grants, capital receipts, revenue budgets or the capital fund). The Council only incurred spending which could not be financed in this way in strictly limited circumstances. Such spending is termed "prudential borrowing" as we are able to borrow money to pay for it. Due to the parlous financial position we are in, prudential borrowing is now an inevitable requirement if we are to have all but absolutely minimal capital programmes. Capital spending proposals will consequently only be approved in the light of the revenue implications and hard choices need to be made.

3.2 The Council measures its capital financing requirement, which shows how much we would need to borrow if we borrowed for all un-financed capital spending (and no other purpose). This is shown in the table below:-

	2024/25 Estimate £m	**2025/26 £m**	**2026/27 £m**	**2027/28 £m**
HRA	473	493	520	546
General Fund	282	300	323	348

(The table above excludes PFI schemes).

3.3 Projections of actual external debt are included in the treasury management strategy, which is elsewhere on your agenda.

4. **Debt Repayment**

4.1 As stated above, in the past decade the Council has usually paid for capital spending as it is incurred. Prior to this however, the Government encouraged borrowing and money was made available in Revenue Support Grant each year to pay off the debt (much like someone paying someone else's mortgage payments). Now it no longer does so.

4.2 The Council makes charges to the general fund budget each year to repay debt incurred for previous years' capital spending. (In accordance with Government rules, no charge needs to be made to the Housing Revenue Account: we do, however, make charges for newly built and acquired property).

4.3 The general underlying principle is that the Council seeks to repay debt over the period for which taxpayers enjoy the benefit of the spending it financed.

4.4 Where borrowing pays for an asset, debt is repaid over the life of the asset.

4.5 Where borrowing pays for an investment, debt is repaid over the life of the Council's interest in the asset which has been financed (this may be the asset life or may be lower if the Council's interest is subject to time limits). Where borrowing funds a loan to a third party, repayment will never exceed the period of the loan.

4.6 Charges to revenue will be based on an equal instalment of principal, or set on an annuity basis, as the Director of Finance deems appropriate.

4.7 Debt repayment will normally commence in the year following the year in which the expenditure was incurred. However, in the case of expenditure relating to the construction of an asset, the charge will commence in the year after the asset becomes operational or the year after total expenditure on the scheme has been completed.

4.8 The following are the maximum asset lives which can be used:-

(a) Land – 50 years;
(b) Buildings – 50 years;
(c) Infrastructure – 40 years;
(d) Plant and equipment – 20 years;
(e) Vehicles – 12 years.

4.9 Some investments governed by the treasury strategy may be accounted for as capital transactions. Should this require debt repayment charges, an appropriate time period will be employed.

4.10 Authority is given to the Director of Finance to voluntarily set aside sums for debt repayment, over and above the amounts determined in accordance with the above rules, where they believe the standard charge to be insufficient, or in order to reduce the future debt burden to the authority.

4.11 In circumstances where the investment strategy permits use of borrowing to support projects which achieve a return, the Director of Finance may adopt a different approach to debt repayment to reflect the financing costs of such schemes where permitted by Government guidance. The rules governing this are included in the investment strategy.

4.12 The ratio of financing costs to net revenue budget is estimated to be:-

	2024/25 %	2025/26 %	2026/27 %	2027/28 %
HRA	13.3	13.3	13.8	14.2
General Fund	1.5	2.8	3.6	4.3

5. Commercial Activity

5.1 The Council has for many decades held commercial property through the corporate estate. It may decide to make further commercial investments in property or give loans to others to support commercial investment. Our approach is described in the investment strategy, which sets the following limitations:-

(a) The Council will not make such investments primarily to generate income. Each investment will also benefit the Council's service objectives (most probably, in respect of economic regeneration and jobs). It may, however, invest to improve the financial and environmental performance of the corporate estate properties we currently hold;

(b) The Council will not make investments outside of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland area (or just beyond its periphery) except as described below;

(c) There is one exception to (b) above, which is where the investment meets a service need other than economic regeneration. An example might be a joint investment, in collaboration with other local authorities; or investment in a consortium serving local government as a whole. In these cases, the location of the asset is not necessarily relevant.

5.2 Such investments will only take place (if they are of significant scale) after undertaking a formal appraisal, using external advisors if needs be. Nonetheless, as such investments also usually achieve social objectives, the Council is prepared to accept a lower return than a commercial funder might, and greater risk than it would in respect of its treasury management investments. Such risk will always be clearly described in decision reports (and decisions to make such investments will follow the normal rules in the Council's constitution).

5.3 Although the Council accepts that an element of risk is inevitable from commercial activity, it will not invest in schemes whereby (individually or collectively) it would not be able to afford the borrowing costs if they went wrong. As well as undertaking a formal appraisal of schemes of a significant scale, the Council will take into account what "headroom" it may have between the projected income and projected borrowing costs. In practice, our ability to carry out commercial activity is now limited by our revenue position.

5.4 In addition to the above, the Council's treasury strategy may permit investments in property or commercial enterprises. Such investments may be to support environmental and socially responsible aims and are usually pooled with other bodies. For the purposes of the capital strategy, these are not regarded as commercial activities under this paragraph as the activity is carried out under the treasury strategy.

6. Knowledge and Skills

6.1 The Council employs a number of qualified surveyors and accountants as well as a specialist team for economic development who can collectively consider investment proposals. It also retains external treasury management consultants (Link). For proposed investments of a significant scale, the Council may employ external specialist consultants to assist its decision making.

Appendix D

Leicester City Council

Ashton Green development update

EDTCE Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 8th January 2025

Lead director: Andrew Smith, Director of Planning, Development and Transportation

Useful information

- Ward(s) Beaumont Leys
- Report author: Geoff Mee
- Author contact details: Geoff.Mee@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: v4

1. Summary

1.1 The report summarises the delivery of the Ashton Green development programme and progress since the last reporting to the Scrutiny Commission in March 2019.

1.2 Over the last 5 years substantial highway infrastructure, both on and off-site, has been delivered, housing Phase A completed, Phase B is 53% occupied, a developer secured for Phase C, further housing land has been brought to the market and developer interest for the remaining phases of large-scale employment land is being sought. The current phasing plan is included in Appendix 1.

1.3 To date circa 262 dwellings have completed since securing the first land sale in December 2017 and starting on site in 2018. On average, 37 dwellings per annum have been delivered over the last 7 years since including 57 affordable housing units.

1.4 It is anticipated the Phase C (440 dwellings) will secure reserved matters planning approval in early 2025 for a start on site in the spring/summer. The scheme will include 30% affordable housing (132 dwellings).

1.5 Bids for the purchase of phases D and E (circa 525 dwellings) were received in mid-December 2024 and will be followed by a bid evaluation process.

1.6 The report also includes reference to a socio-economic achievements study completed in July 2023, that documents the outcomes over the last 10 years.

1.7 A presentation showing progress and images of the Ashton Green scheme will be shared at the scrutiny meeting.

2. Recommendation to scrutiny:

2.1 The Scrutiny Commission is invited to note and comment on progress of the Ashton Green development programme as set out in this report.

3. Detailed report

Planning

3.1 Ashton Green is a housing led mixed-use urban extension on a 130 ha greenfield north of the city centre. The Council is the principal landowner and has been the master developer / infrastructure enabler delivering infrastructure to allow the development of phases by developers.

3.2 Outline planning permission was original secured in March 2011 for up to 3,000 homes and 5 ha of large-scale employment, then subsequently amended in 2014 to increase the employment land and in 2018 to update the site wide development strategies.

3.3 A current s73 planning application to be determined by the local planning authority (LPA) will secure changes in land uses to the east of Thurcaston Road, to increase the available land for large-scale employment opportunities. The LPA and the Council as land promoter have recently completed the public examination of the Leicester Local Plan (LLP), that is expected to secure the eastern expansion of Ashton Green with land to be allocated for a further 670 dwellings, a 1,200 place secondary school and an additional 4.18 ha of employment land.

Infrastructure Delivery

3.4 The delivery of infrastructure by the council has been critical to the development of previous and planned housing and employment land phases. This included the £25m of works completed since 2013, with £16m of this funded through external grant sources. The enabling works have included;

- Major internal spine roads to access housing Phases C, D & E and highway improvements to the eastern employment land.
- A46/Anstey Lane off-site highway works.
- Bennion Road extension (Employment Land Phase E1).
- Cycling, walking, traffic calming and bus interchange improvements
- Housing Phase A enabling works.

Housing Developer Delivery

3.5 Circa 262 dwellings have been occupied over the last 7 years of housing construction including 57 affordable housing units. This equates to a current sales rate of 37 dwellings per annum. Morris Homes delivered about 33 dwellings a year over Phase A and Tilia Homes (Phase B) are averaging 40 dwellings since 2021.

3.6 Leading property consultants, Savills, have advised that major volume builders are typically achieving sales rates of around 36 dwellings per annum as they recover from the impact of Covid and the Sept 2022 budget. Note this is significantly less than historic assumptions of a typical 50 dwellings per annum build rate.

3.7 The forecast overall average build rate over the anticipated 20 year build period is around 115 dwellings per annum. This rate of delivery can be achieved as more house builders purchase land and become active on site.

3.8 In comparison, the private sector led Thorpebury urban extension (4,500 dwellings) in Charnwood started it's planning journey in 2006. The first infrastructure for Phase 1 (604 dwellings) started in Sept 2021 with the first housing completions in December 2022. As of Sept 2024, total completions stood at 170 dwellings across the 3 house builders, a sales rate of less than 35 dwellings per annum per house builder.

Socio-Economic Outcomes

3.9 In July 2023, Wisher Consulting produced a report 'Ashton Green – Socio Economic Achievements To Date'. The report highlighted why Leicester needs Ashton Green in socio-economic terms together with a summary of the financial investment to date and the associated physical changes and the outcomes from the development. The headline messages were;

- £23m of total public sector capital investment and £45m from the private sector.
- £68m total capital investment.
- 160 new homes generating £4.9m of average annual household expenditure.
- Average of 140 construction jobs sustained over the last decade.
- £7m average annual construction spend.
- 47% of Galliford Try's (main contractor for 2 schemes of c.£21.9m) workforce is has been local with numerous apprenticeships/placements generated through the construction.
- 790 permanent new jobs created at the Samworth's Bradgate Bakery Ashton Green site (the employment land phase E1), with 88% living in Leicester and 21% in the Beaumont Leys and Abbey Wards.
- Fiscal benefits, reported at the time, included £12.3m of land receipts, £0.6m Council Tax, £0.2m New Homes Bonus, £1.2m Business Rates and £1.2m s106 developer contributions.

3.10 The report highlighted future projected outcomes over the life of the development;

- Up to 3,000 homes.
- 22 ha of large scale employment land with circa 70,000 m2 of manufacturing and warehousing floorspace (estimated 1,710 jobs).
- New 1,200 place secondary school (100 jobs).
- A mixed-use local centre to include retail, health, leisure and community uses (300 jobs).
- 7,500 new residents at Ashton Green could equate to annual household expenditure of circa £91m.
- Circa 900 new affordable homes, affordable rent and shared ownership.
- Estimated cost of constructing the remaining development of circa £620m.
- Estimated future Council tax revenues of £49.9m and Business Rates of £24.1m.

Financial Outcomes To Date

3.11 The Ashton Green development programme has successfully bid for and secured £16m of external funding since 2013 and secured £26.7m through agreed development land sales to date.

4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1 Financial Implications

As a general update report, there are no specific financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report. Capital Receipts to date have been used to pay off all borrowing across Ashton Green. Future capital receipts will be available to pay off future capital costs and contribute to the capital receipt target set out within the draft budget report for 2025/26 to 2027/28.

Signed: Stuart McAvoy, Head of Finance

Dated: 13th December 2024

4.2 Legal Implications

The Council must ensure that it complies with conditions imposed by external funding awards at all times, including any changes being assessed against Subsidy Control rules. In addition, all procurements and land transactions within the programme must follow internal rules as well as the applicable statutory regime. Ongoing legal advice should be sought as and when necessary.

Signed: Kevin Carter (Head of Law - Commercial, Property & Planning)

Dated: 13th December 2024

4.3 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't. Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty should be paid before and at the time a decision is taken, in such a way that it can influence the final decision. The PSED cannot be delegated and therefore, the responsibility remains with the authority to put into place mechanisms by which these statutory duties can be stipulated as a requirement and monitored.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. One of the main aims of the NPPF is to increase the delivery of new, good quality homes to meet the needs of a growing and ageing population. Ashton Green aims to make a substantial contribution to the number of new homes needed in Leicester. This report provides a summary on the delivery of the Ashton Green development programme. There are no direct equality implications arising

from this report, however a key consideration in relation to future development of the sites, is accessibility of the space. The design of the space should adhere to accessible design principles in order to ensure that people with different protected characteristic/s are able to access and utilise the space to its full potential.

Signed: Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh Ext 37 4148

Dated: 9 December 2024

4.4 Climate Emergency Implications

Housing and businesses are responsible for a majority of Leicester's overall carbon emission footprint. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, and its aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions for the city and the council, addressing these emissions is vital to meeting this ambition. This is particularly important within projects where the council has the highest level of influence and control, and where new buildings and infrastructure are constructed.

Opportunities to utilise a best practice approach to reduce the energy use and carbon emissions of properties should therefore continue to be identified and implemented as the Ashton Green development progresses, building upon work already delivered. This should be considered from the earliest stages of development of each phase, in partnership with external partners involved in the delivery of the project. Potential measures could include the use of sustainable materials and the diversion of waste from landfill, fitting of high-quality insulation, low energy lighting and efficient appliances and the installation of low carbon heating and renewable energy systems. As well as reducing operational and embodied carbon emissions, improving the energy efficiency of buildings could provide further benefits, such as reducing energy bills and making homes and businesses healthier and more comfortable for occupants.

Any development will nonetheless continue to be required to follow policy CS2 of the Adopted Leicester Core Strategy and relevant building regulations. A toolkit is also being developed to support the achievement of reduced carbon emissions in council capital construction and renovation projects, which could potentially be used to inform future development.

Signed: Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

Dated: 6 December 2024

4.5 Other Implications

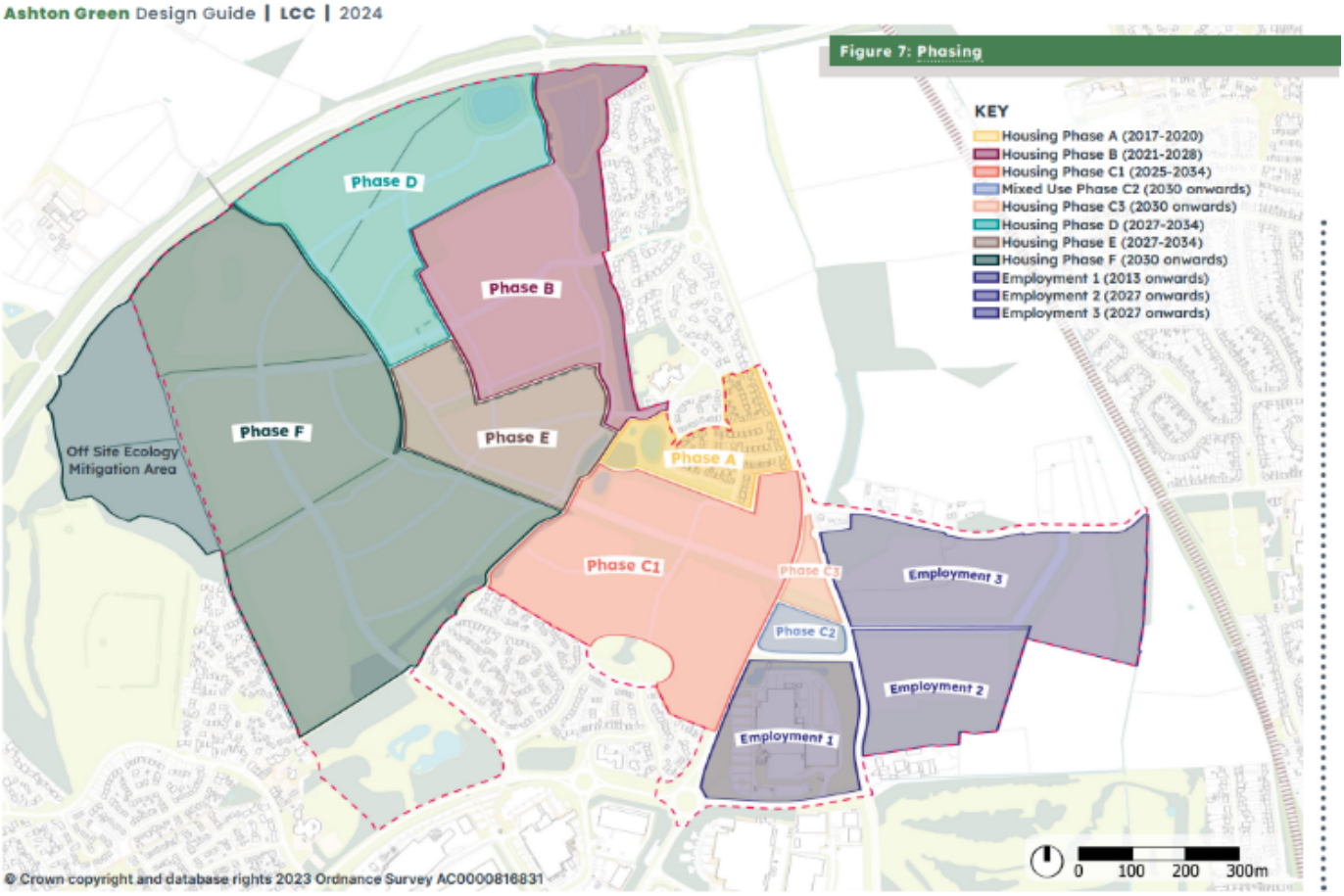
None.

5. Background information and other papers: None

6. Summary of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Ashton Green Phasing Plan 2024

Appendix 1 – Ashton Green Phasing Plan 2024



Scrutiny

Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Review

Examining Bus Lane Operating Hours

A Review Report of the Economic Development, Transportation & Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

September - November 2024

Leicester City Council

Contents

Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

Participating Commission Members

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Barton
Councillor Osman
Councillor Porter
Councillor Rae Bhatia
Councillor Singh Sangha

Evidence to the Commission was provided by:

Andrew L. Smith, Director of Planning, Development & Transportation, Leicester City Council
Daniel Pearman, City Transport Director, Leicester City Council
David R. Bott, First Leicester
Toby France, Arriva
Ross Hitchcock, Kinchbus (Written Representation)
Zina Zelter, Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire (Written Representation)

FOREWORD

I am happy to present this report following the work of the task group reviewing the Council's approach to bus lanes. It has been suggested that increased bus usage can help to alleviate congestion on the roads, and as such by optimising bus lane operation we can improve the travel experience for both bus users and car users alike. In turn, having less congested roads can speed up response times for emergency services. Therefore, by optimising the operation of bus lanes it is hoped that journey times for buses can be sped up, making bus travel more attractive and thus increasing bus use and reducing congestion on the roads. However, it has also been important to consider potential negative impacts of bus lanes on other road users in terms of congestion due to limiting the areas of the road that cars can use.

The review looked at the merits and potential issues caused by 24-Hour Bus Lanes. Particularly the advantages of quicker, more frequent and more reliable bus travel, but also the potential congestion issues that might be caused by 24-hour bus lanes.

Following an initial session in which the group looked at the scope and context of the review, and analysed many of the key issues involved, a second meeting was convened in which representatives from bus operators Arriva and First were able to give their insights, and a written representation from Kinchbus was submitted to give their views on the issue. Further to this, a written representation was sent in by Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire, which highlighted the potential for reducing carbon emissions. The group then considered the evidence and made recommendations based upon it as laid out in this report.

I would like to thank City Transport Director, Dan Pearman, and the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation, Andrew L Smith, for their assistance in helping to explain the issues and present information on the matter, particularly through very telling statistical analysis, and also for their help in reaching out to the bus companies. Without this information we could not have been adequately informed and therefore would not have been able to confidently make the recommendations that we have.

We hope that these recommendations will help bus lane operation to become optimised so as to reduce congestion on the roads as well as reducing carbon emissions.

Councillor Susan Waddington
Chair of Economic Development, Transportation & Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background to the Review

1.1.1 Bus lanes and other priority systems such as bus gates enable improvements to punctuality and reliability for passenger transport users and are a key part to ensuring bus services remain a viable journey choice.

1.1.2 21.9m bus services began within the city boundary in 22/23, and Leicester is ranked eleventh in the country for number of bus journeys. The majority of the network is commercially operated and is supported by a strong partnership between operators and the local authority – Leicester Buses.

1.1.3 Leicester's bus lanes network is found mostly on 13 key transport corridors and supports the 44 main network bus services and other routes including the park and ride services, orbital, and intra-urban routes into county destinations and beyond. Many of these operate for 19 hours a day with recognisable and frequent services.

1.1.4 Scrutiny had previously considered a report on the city's bus lane network on the 18 October 2023. This followed sessions undertaken in 2016 and 2013.

1.1.5 As part of the Commission on 18 October 2023, members of the commission requested that an opportunity be given to review the deployment of bus lanes, specifically 24/7 bus lanes, across the city.

1.1.6 On the 17 March 2024 the Department for Transport published LTN 1/24 Bus User Priority. This is intended to provide best practice for local authorities to ensure that bus priority systems are both effective and efficient. The document covers multiple aspects of public transport infrastructure, with bus lanes being one measure amongst many that can be deployed to improve service quality and uptake. The work undertaken by the city council with the Leicester Buses partnership covers all of these aspects - www.leicesterbuses.co.uk/completed-projects

1.1.7 Support for bus services remains a national policy under the Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the National Bus Strategy. Government investment in the area has included the national £2 bus fare cap (amended to £3 for 2025), the BSIP+ funding to support local services, and further rounds of the ZEBRA fund to promote electrifying vehicle fleets. The

Leicester Buses partnership has taken advantage of all of these opportunities.

1.1.8 On the last review of bus lanes (pre-Covid), the Commission recommended that non-24 hour bus lanes be reviewed. It was noted that it was now probably the case that due to the trends shown, it should be considered as to whether non-24 hour bus lanes should become 24-hour bus lanes. It was suggested that each bus lane should be considered on an individual basis.

1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.2.1 At the informal meeting on 7 November 2024, the following set of proposed recommendations was made:

a) Bus lanes remain an element to support passenger transport, benefitting city residents, businesses and visitors. They remain open to cyclists, Hackney Carriages and emergency vehicles at all times of operation. The use of motorcycles in bus lanes should be reviewed in the context of a forthcoming response by Government to consultation held in 2024.

b) Bus lane design should be bespoke to the local context in terms of the layout and hours of operation. All bus lanes will be subject to public consultation to inform design.

c) New bus lane design and the review of existing bus lanes should take into account the need to deliver smoother reliable journeys for buses and also aim to achieve balance and avoid impact on general traffic.

d) Existing bus lanes should be subject to review in terms of layout and hours of operation, with potential for camera enforcement considered. Priority should be given to locations where there is a negative impact on bus service reliability, or where there is an impact due to congestion outside of peak hours.

e) Visibility of camera enforcement should be maximised within the scope of permissible regulations to avoid unnecessary fines, with reference to best practice.

2. REPORT

2.1 Review Rationale

2.1.1 The scrutiny commission have previously reviewed bus lane operations in 2013 and 2016.

2.1.2 On both occasions, the recommendation from the commission was for bus lanes to continue operating 24 hours a day to maintain consistency of approach, outside of locations that could evidence a specific local need (for example, parking to support local businesses).

2.1.3 Members of the Economic Development, Transport, and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission requested the topic be revisited in 2023. Officers suggested this be deferred whilst awaiting promised government guidance.

2.2 Review Approach

2.2.1 The first session would consist of an introductory presentation (Appendix A) informing members about the background of the issue, including the government guidance, the current situation regarding bus lanes in Leicester, the benefits of bus lanes and the merits of them being designated as such for 24 hours a day. Witnesses and stakeholders were identified to be invited to the following meeting to present evidence.

2.2.2 At the second meeting, evidence was presented from representatives from bus operators Arriva and First Leicester. Additionally, written representations were received from Kinchbus (Appendix B) and Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire (Appendix C). The Director of Planning, Development & Transportation and the City Transport Director attended the meeting to provide further information, and the City Transport Director provided responses to questions raised at the previous meeting (Appendix D). Members took the evidence and information provided into consideration with the intention of making recommendations based on them at the following meeting.

2.2.3 The third meeting was convened to consider recommendations made based on the evidence provided. However, the group were unable to agree recommendations at this meeting, and therefore a fourth meeting was convened to consider recommendations.

2.3 Current Arrangements

2.3.1 The majority of Bus Lanes are found along the 13 key bus corridors in the city.

2.3.2 77 services make use of bus priority at some stage of the route.

2.3.3 There is an award-winning enhanced partnership underpinned by legally binding commitments to invest from both the city council and operators. 94 (of 120) completed to date.

2.3.4 There have been significant improvements in Leicester over the lifetime of the partnership, as laid out in the presentation (Appendix B).

2.3.5 In terms of the effects of bus lanes on punctuality and reliability:

- In the Groby Road corridor there has been a 6% reduction in overall journey times and 30% reduction in journey variance at peak times. Punctuality is now at 81%.
- In the Melton Road corridor, 89% of buses now running to time.
- Overall bus punctuality citywide is 85%.
- Overall bus reliability citywide is 98%.
- 76% of bus users in Leicester were happy with bus punctuality, compared with the England average of 70% (Your Bus Journey – Passenger Focus).

2.3.6 21 mainlines now have a frequency of 15 minutes or better Monday-Saturday.

2.3.7 24-hour bus lanes can still be used by authorised vehicles even when limited services are running. Emergency service vehicles benefit from access to a dedicated lane that can bypass any other traffic on the network.

2.3.8 Cyclists receive safety benefits from having access to a reserved lane with limited risk of vehicles.

2.3.9 Services may expand in future, making use of the bus priority network – there is already one 24hr service looking to improve frequency - Skylink along the A6 corridor.

2.3.10 Operators are beginning to identify evening and later running services as being a potential market, and are slowly expanding commercial networks. For example – new Firstbus 4E, extensions to the 17.

2.4 Evidence Gathering

2.4.1 The scope only includes bus lanes that went with the flow of traffic, those with contra-flow needed to be 24 hours for safety reasons.

2.4.2 Research by the Department for Transport (DfT) identified that priority schemes and the resultant improvements to reliability and punctuality can lead to increase in usage by up to 160% over ten years.

2.4.3 24-hour bus lanes use simpler, clearer signs. These are easier for drivers to understand – particularly new drivers or those unfamiliar with the area and reduces the risk of users inadvertently violating the bus lanes.

2.4.4 Leicester's road network is usually quiet outside peak operating hours (7-7), with little congestion, therefore there is very little benefit to be obtained from opening the bus lanes to general traffic at these times.

2.4.5 Removing or altering existing 24-hour bus lanes would require a considerable investment from the authority given the need to change signage and the legal orders underpinning the bus lanes.

2.4.6 Whilst the new government guidance does not necessarily advocate for a 24-hour approach, other guidance and policy – such as the National Bus Strategy - continues to do so.

2.4.7 Evidence presented by Toby France of Arriva buses included the following:

- The strength of the partnership is due to a strong dialogue between the bus companies and the Council.
- There has been recognition form local leaders on how congestion and air quality have been tackled.
- Bus ridership has continued to grow, which has given the operator the confidence to invest in the fleet. £20m has been invested with over 60 buses going into service. It is hoped for citizens of Leicester to benefit from further investment, and the cooperation of the Council would help with this.
- Increased bus usage reduces congestion on the roads.
- Timeliness is a key priority for bus users. Bus lanes have brought significant improvements in timeliness, which have been of benefit to residents. This includes a 6% reduction in journey times on Groby Road and a reduction in traffic jams.
- The hours when buses are not in operation is limited, as such, Arriva supports 24-Hour Bus Lanes. Additionally, the number of motorists using the roads late at night and in the early hours of the morning (when bus lanes would be open to road users) are limited, and therefore would not benefit from bus lanes being open. There

is a shared aspiration from partnership member on enhancing the service. Arriva now operates late into the evening on most corridors, and First have also extended their operating hours on their network.

- The Bus Service Improvement Plan looks at access to employment and some out-of-town areas had workplaces with late shifts, and as such the operator wished to provide transport for these workers. Therefore, more targeted evening and early morning times are being considered. The opportunity to work with individual employers and add additional journeys was being considered. Work had been conducted with Magna Park, 20 miles from the city centre, which had many late shifts. Buses are now coming from the city centre during these unsocial hours. There are big employment areas around the city, so helping to better connect these areas is a big opportunity.
- Demand is being scoped and numbers of people aggregated in the Bus service Improvement Plan. The plan goes to 2036, and over this timeframe it will be considered as to how demands can be met. City roads and bus lanes need to be considered as part of this. It is aimed to make bus travel more attractive so as to reduce congestion on the roads.
- Bus lanes that are only open for two hours (eg. London Road) at a time are a pinch-point. Travel patterns have changed since the Covid-19 pandemic, and 'rush hour' is now much more spread out over a larger part of the day, so buses being able to offer a speedier journey over these extended times would be beneficial. When bus lanes are only in operation for a certain number of hours, this can be confusing for motorists as to whether they are able to use them. 24-hour operation makes this clearer.

2.4.8 Evidence presented by David Bott of Firstbus buses included the following:

- There has been significant investment in electric buses and infrastructure, with the aim of bus operation becoming fully electric.
- If passengers are confident that buses are reliable and punctual, they will make more use of them.
- Prior to the bus lanes on Abbey Lane becoming 24-hour, the road and the 54 bus route had struggled with congestion. Since bus lanes had been installed, there is a 5-minute time saving compared to previous operation. There has also been a 3-minute saving in Belgrave circle.
- Additionally, prior to the bus lane on Abbey Lane, the empty space had been dominated by parked cars, increasing congestion. This issue was exacerbated when events were held on the park as cars were parked on both sides of the road, with buses and all other vehicles needing to use the remaining space. Now that a 24-hour bus lane is in place, this acts as a deterrent

as cars cannot park on the bus lane. Buses can now operate on the same timetable when events are taking place and bus users can be confident that buses will turn up.

- When bus lanes operate on the basis of a peak cycle, such as Saffron Lane where the inbound operating hours are 7:30-9:30 and the outbound hours are 16:00-18:00, these hours are less fit for purpose as previously due to the change in traffic-patterns caused by changes in work-habits causing an extended peak. It is now the case that peak usage continues past 18:00.
- Outside of operating hours, the bus lanes on Saffron Road are used for parking cars on match days, exacerbating congestion.
- When bus lane operating hours end, car users will often go straight into the bus lanes, slowing up the buses. Timetables can be changed to avoid this, but this is inconvenient and confusing for passengers.
- Similar congestion issues caused by parked cars had been seen prior to the installation of the bus lane on Anstey Lane. Since the bus lane, buses are saving time on the morning peak as the 74 no longer needs to queue, meaning buses can move into the city centre without hold ups.
- The bus lane on Loughborough Road would have benefitted form more enforcement when works were being undertaken on Abbey Lane, due to the increased volume of traffic on Loughborough Road that ensued as a result.
- Drivers become confused on London Road due to uncertainty over when the bus lanes are in operation. Additionally, there is evidence from our bus drivers of cars being parked in some bus lanes during the hours of operation, which meant that our drivers cannot drive in the bus lanes, which exacerbates congestion. Bus gates can act as a deterrent if enforced, but can cause confusion if only used during specific hours, so consistency is important.
- If the bus lane on Saffron Lane was in operation for 24 hours, it would help on matchdays as people would know that the services would be more consistent.

2.4.9 In terms of the effect of bus lanes on reliability, it is thought that 24-hour bus lanes would increase reliability and the decreased journey times mentioned by the bus operators is evidence of this.

2.4.10 In reference to the presentation responding to member questions (Appendix D), the graphs and statistics show that it is only in the early hours that buses are not running, this constrains when bus lane operation could be removed. It is also important to note that outside

bus running-hours, there is still bus-related traffic such as coaches, and buses travelling from their depot to their starting-point before 4am.

2.4.11 Also, in reference to Appendix D the graph showing traffic flow shows that whilst there remained a level of traffic volume through the evening, this was much lower than during the day. This means that during the times when buses are not in operation, there were limited vehicles using the network and little need or benefit to drivers from making bus lanes available.

2.4.12 A government consultation had been undertaken on the use of motorcycles in bus lanes, however the response had been delayed by the general election. It was suggested that any recommendations on this should not be made until guidance was known as it may change the guidance or make it the default to allow motorbikes in bus lanes.

2.4.13 One member suggested that there was little evidence of buses currently running 24 hours (other than the Skylink), and whilst it might be an ambition, it was not currently the case and as such having bus lanes running only in the peak period seemed a sensible option.

2.4.14 Bus patronage in Leicester has improved by 14% over the last year, against a national increase of 6%. It is difficult to attribute this solely to bus lanes as there have been other improvements and schemes such as new bus stations and capped ticketing. However, it is thought that the commitment to network improvement including bus lanes has contributed towards this.

2.4.15 If the existing 24-hour bus lanes were removed, there would be less reliability which could have a cumulative effect and the confidence of bus users would deteriorate. It is important to take notice of what the bus operators say on the issue, as they rely on people travelling on the buses. Further to this, it is important to note that reliability is a criteria which operators are scored on and they can lose their licence if they are found to be unreliable.

2.4.16 It was suggested by a member that some current signs lacked a clear, straightforward message in writing and were small signs with a camera icon, which do not clearly inform motorists about the enforcement. Examples of clear signage were sent to members of the review (Appendix G)

2.5 Review Findings

2.5.1 Improvements to punctuality and reliability can create opportunities to increase route frequency – a key method of attracting new users.

2.5.2 There has been an increase in punctuality since pre-Covid.

2.5.3 Making buses more punctual and reliable would increase bus usage – easing congestion.

2.5.4 Under government guidance (LTN 1/24 7.6),
where there is more than one bus lane along a particular length of road or within the same geographical area, the times of operation should be consistent, where possible, to avoid driver confusion.

2.5.5 Allowing cars to use bus lanes would not help with junction capacity.

2.5.6 Permission would be needed form the Department for Transport to disallow bikes from bus lanes.

2.5.7 In terms of motorcycles, separate consideration could only be made if bus lanes were 24/7 as intermittent hours could pose safety issues.

2.5.8 Guidance states that bus lanes should be wider than normal lanes to allow bikes to pass.

2.5.9 No road traffic collisions had been attributed to bus lanes, but members were asked to refer areas of concern to officers.

2.5.10 The government has issued guidance rather than regulation, so there is a degree of flexibility.

2.5.11 Even if time savings were small, they added up over the course of a day. This made bus travel more efficient in terms of fuel hours and driver hours and also meant that passengers were less likely to experience disruption.

2.5.12 The impact of bus lanes on motorists was examined in terms of traffic modelling and surveys and reviews of data. In the overall picture of congestion, the impact was found to be around junctions. This meant that if a car used a bus lane it would simply be going quicker to a red light.

2.5.13 It was recognised that junctions could only take a certain number of vehicles. This is why buses were prioritised as it encourages people use bikes and busses which alleviate congestion. The alleviation of congestion is a key aim. Therefore, congestion needs to be monitored for some time after a bus lane is installed.

2.5.14 With regard to Fosse Road North, there were early indications that it was now working as intended.

2.5.15 An average bus loading is between 9 and 11 people, so 9 times more than a car on average, and buses only take up 3 times more space than a car, so were more space efficient.

2.5.16 Bus lanes are designed in a way that take local circumstances into account.

2.5.17 It was raised that in some countries there were electric signs that showed when bus lanes were open. In response to this, officers and the bus company representatives explained that this could still lead to confusion if only open on specific times of the day, and drivers may not notice the signs during busy times. Additionally, it does not send the right message and a deterrent against using bus lanes is needed. Further to this, when driving through the city at busy times, there is a lot that drivers need to be aware of in order to be safe, and trying to work out if a bus lane is in operation adds to the many things that drivers need to be aware of. Clarity and consistency is important. Digital signage would create a large amount of visual clutter and drivers would be expected to assimilate a lot of information which would be difficult to do underneath a gantry. Additionally, the regulations in place do not permit this kind of signage and there are few places where the gantries needed could be installed as this would take a lot of space, including in gardens and properties. There are further problems regarding the enforcement of digital signage. It was reported that on smart motorways, there has been only approximately 80% compliance with digital signage, three to four years after it has been rolled out. Enforcement requires pictures of violations of restrictions, signage and a control centre. The cost of installation and operation for the whole system would run into the millions of pounds, and approval would be needed from the DfT.

2.5.18 Bus operators benefit by getting people on to buses and people will be drawn to buses if they are reliable and frequent. Getting people on to buses has a benefit in terms of air quality and congestion, meaning there would be fewer traffic queues as well as less congestion.

2.5.19 There is an enforcement mechanism for both parking and moving violations. The problem becomes compounded as when people park in bus lanes, others think they can do the same and the wardens cannot be everywhere all of the time. Some drivers may even be happy to pay the fine. It is also observed that whilst enforcement is carried out, where the restrictions are clearly set out, and where cameras were installed, drivers tended to follow the rules, so clarity is important. Parking fines are at a fixed level nationally, with a set fee for London and another for all authorities outside of London so may not act as a complete deterrent.

2.5.20 A factor in reduced bus reliability in the past three years has been due to the lack of driver availability as drivers had left the industry to work as HGV drivers and supermarket delivery drivers as the pay had been better. However, driver availability levels were recovering. Research shows that a bus lane improves punctuality and reliability and those two intertwined, then lead to an increase in patronage.

2.5.21 If signage is inaccurate, this can be used as a defence if a motorist uses a bus lane during its operating hours.

2.5.22 A member suggested that it is necessary to look at the impact on the city in terms of economic viability, particularly with regard to car users who wished to access retail and work. Concern was raised that people were being deterred from driving into Leicester for these purposes due to congestion, and were instead using out-of-town retail such as Fosse Park.

2.5.23 A member suggested that the issues surrounding congestion and air pollution should be considered in terms of all constituents and not just bus users.

2.5.24 A member suggested that bus lanes can contribute to unnecessary congestion by limiting highway capacity during off-peak hours when buses aren't even running, which inadvertently increases travel time, emissions and frustration for the majority of road users who rely on cars and vans etc. Given that most journeys in Leicester are made by car, this should be a key consideration in Leicester's bus lane policy.

2.5.25 A member suggested that adjusting to a peak-time bus lane system would provide a balanced approach, enhancing access for all road users while still prioritising public transport during busier hours.

2.5.26 Consideration was given to allowing private hire taxis to use bus lanes.

2.6 Benchmarking

2.6.1 The DfT were approached to collect data for benchmarking as they could access it more readily, however, the DfT have chosen to benchmark all authorities nationally, meaning that the DfT are still reviewing at the time of writing.

2.6.2 Brighton and Hove City Council were approached to gain insight into how their bus lane policy operated. They gave the following information:

- They do not have a blanket policy on bus lane times of operation. In the City Centre (North St) they operate bus lanes from 8am – 6pm to enable loading and servicing of businesses. Other bus lanes on the city's main bus corridors are in operation 24/7.
- 24 Hour bus lanes are run and are subject to camera enforcement. Additionally, camera enforcement is used on the busiest bus corridors where bus lanes are not possible because of space constraints they have recently installed red lines – allowing them to use camera enforcement to deter parking that could delay buses.
- Their policy is pragmatic but the guiding principle is that they want to see improved bus journey times.

2.6.3 Nottingham City Council's (NCC) bus lane policy includes some that operate 24h hrs (at any time) where justification allows, i.e. a service is in operation/outside a hospital. The majority of NCC are peak hours. This is based on DfT guidance and the need to improve the punctuality of buses.

2.6.4 Derby City Council do not have a policy that covers timings as such, beyond the legislation requiring us to make certain that any restrictions on the public highway are necessary, appropriate and proportionate. The majority of Derby's bus lanes/bus gates are 24/7, with very few locations that the buses only restriction operates outside of this. The majority of the city's bus lanes and bus gates are enforced by cameras. Camera enforcement has been based on complaints from bus companies. Lack of compliance when the locations were surveyed and the need to reduce traffic to make an area safer and more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

2.7 Summary of Task Group Conclusions

2.7.1 Bus operators run the vast majority of services – they are clear about the need for bus lanes to have clarity in terms of hours of operation to avoid confusion for general traffic.

2.7.2 They were also strongly of the opinion that existing non 24/7 bus lanes create issues, delaying bus services, both during bus lane operating hours and outside of these hours – examples were given of traffic parked in bus lanes at Saffron Lane, Loughborough Road, Abbey Park Road and London Road.

2.7.3 Operators and officers noted that peak traffic levels have moved from morning and afternoon to throughout the day largely. Also, out of core bus

operating hours additional capacity from an extra lane is not required due to low traffic levels.

2.7.4 Bus services currently run as late as midnight, and Skylink is 24/7 along with some existing and planned coach services, with the prospect of future additional later running services as noted by the bus operators.

2.7.5 DfT guidance indicates bus lane design and their operation need to take into account the local context of the route, and allow for regulating bus service operations without hindrance to general traffic flow.

2.7.6 DfT policy indicates transport authorities should do everything to support and grow bus services, including bus lanes, alongside other measures.

2.7.7 Benchmarking shows a range of different practices with transport authorities generally operating 24/7 unless local suggest otherwise.

2.7.8 Altering existing signs on 24/7 bus lanes would have a significant cost attached.

2.7.9 With regard to proposals to allow private hire taxis in bus lanes, this could cause issues as at first glance they appear to be normal vehicles, which could lead to non-compliance as drivers may think that cars are allowed in bus lanes when they are not, this would lead to unnecessary fines. Additionally, private hire taxis (including Ubers) can be licenced by any authority. This would mean that taxis licenced outside LCC would not be on the database and therefore cameras could pick them up as normal cars and impose a fine, this could in turn be contested, which would be a drain on staff resource.

2.7.10 Pedal cycles are permitted in bus lanes and cannot be restricted without government authorisation.

2.7.11 One member suggested that if there was evidence of congestion, then the need for a bus lane would be apparent, however, bus lanes should only operate when there was congestion for buses.

2.7.12 When new bus lanes were considered, it should be taken into account as to delays in buses caused by other traffic that would not be present if there was a bus lane, but should also take into account the aim to reduce the impact on traffic. Where there was no congestion, the need for change was less evident.

2.7.13 There is a need for visible signage that follows regulations to avoid unnecessary fines for drivers. It was clarified that if signs were not visible that do not follow regulations, they could be challenged by adjudicators, therefore LCC tried to make them as visible as possible.

3 Financial, Legal and Other Implications

1.3 Financial Implications

This report recommends that existing bus lanes be reviewed in terms of layout and hours of operation. Any changes to the existing arrangements will have a cost implication, particularly in relation to road markings and signage and this would need to be considered if any specific proposals were to progress.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance (ext. 37 4004)

2nd December 2024

1.4 Legal Implications

As the report appears to be an update rather than proposing any changes or requesting decisions, there do not appear to be any legal implications.

Zoe Iliffe – Principal Lawyer (ext. 37 2180)

9th December 2024

1.1 Equality Implications

Public Transport plays a valuable role in the city, and nationally, in providing greater mobility and accessibility to all members of the community. Bus lanes and other priority systems such as bus gates enable improvements to punctuality and reliability for passenger transport users from across many protected characteristics and are a key part to ensuring bus services remain a viable journey choice. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. An improved bus network with greater priority for buses is likely to be of particular benefit to people in low income groups, who are less likely to have access to private vehicles.

It is important to ensure that equality considerations are taken into account when looking at future schemes.

Surinder Singh - Equalities Officer (ext. 37 4418)

3rd December 2024

1.2 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

Transport is responsible for around 25% of carbon emissions in Leicester. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency

in 2019, and its aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions, addressing transport-related emissions is a vital part of the council's work. This is particularly important in those areas where the council has the greatest level of influence, including the provision of public transport infrastructure.

Work that enables and encourages increased usage of buses over private vehicles will have positive impacts in terms of reducing transport-related carbon emissions in the city, as well as delivering benefits in terms of air quality, congestion and connectivity. This report sets out the evidence for the positive impact of 24-hour bus lines for the city's bus system, including increased punctuality and reliability and impact on ridership numbers and easing of congestion. Therefore, it is expected that the continued operation of these lanes would contribute to reducing carbon emissions in the city, in line with the council's net zero ambition.

Aidan Davis - Sustainability Officer, (ext. 37 2284)

28th November 2024

2 Summary of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scoping Document

Appendix 2 – Presentation: Overview of Bus Lanes and Benefits

Appendix 3 – Department for Transport: Local Transport Note 1/24: Bus User Priority

Appendix 4 - Representation from Kinchbus

Appendix 5 - Representation from Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire

Appendix 6 - Presentation in response to member questions.

Appendix 7 – Examples of Signage

Appendix 8 - Motorcycles in Bus Lanes Consultation – Note from City Transport Director

3 Officers to Contact

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Senior Governance Officer
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Appendix 1

BUS LANE OPERATING HOURS SCOPING DOCUMENT

EDTCE Scrutiny

Date of meeting: 18 July 2024

Lead director/officer: Daniel Pearman

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All Wards
- Report author: Daniel Pearman
- Author contact details: 0116 454 3061
- Report version number: 01

1.	**Purpose of Report**
1.1	To provide members of the commission with a proposed scope for the review of the operating hours of bus lanes within Leicester.
1.2	To provide members of the commission with the opportunity to comment on the scope for the review, suggest items to include, and consider joining the working group.

2.	**Context**
2.1	Bus lanes and similar priority systems enable improvements to punctuality and reliability for passenger transport users and are a key part to ensuring bus services remain a viable journey choice.
2.2	21.9m bus services began within the city boundary in 22/23, and Leicester is ranked eleventh in the country for number of bus journeys. The majority of the network is commercially operated and is supported by a strong partnership between operators and the local authority – Leicester Buses
2.3	Leicester's bus lanes network is found mostly on 13 key transport corridors and supports the 44 main network bus services and other routes including the park and ride services, orbital, and intra-urban routes into county destinations and beyond. Most of these operate 24/7.
2.4	Scrutiny had previously considered a report on the city's bus lane network on the 18 October 2023. This followed sessions undertaken in 2016 and 2013.
2.5	As part of the session of the 18 October, members of the commission requested that an opportunity be given to review the deployment of bus lanes, specifically 24/7 bus lanes, across the city.
2.6	In the 2 October publication *Plan for Drivers*, the government pledged to provide stronger guidance on the usage of bus lanes to local authorities. Officers recommended any scrutiny review take place after publication of said document.
2.7	On the 17 March 2024 the Department for Transport published *LTN 1/24 Bus User Priority.* This is intended to provide best practice for local authorities to ensure that bus priority systems are both effective and efficient.
2.8	The document covers multiple aspects of public transport infrastructure, with bus lanes being one measure amongst many that can be deployed to improve service quality and uptake. The work undertaken by the city council with the Leicester Buses partnership covers all of these aspects - www.leicesterbuses.co.uk/completed-projects
2.9	Support for bus services remains a national policy under the Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the National Bus Strategy. Government investment in the area has included the national £2 bus fare cap, the BSIP+ funding to support local services, and further rounds of the ZEBRA fund to promote electrifying vehicle fleets. The Leicester Buses partnership has taken advantage of all of these opportunities

3. Scope of the Bus Lanes Review

3.1 The proposed scope of this review is set out below for consideration by the Commission:

- The location and hours of operation of current and future bus lanes within Leicester.
- The impacts associated with the deployment and usage of bus lanes.

3.2 Scrutiny member's comments are requested on the proposed scope of the review.

3.3 Volunteers are sought to attend a working group to carry out the review. This is expected to follow the normal 3 meeting informal scrutiny approach.

3.4 The findings of the review and recommendations will be reported back to the EDTCE Scrutiny Commission for comment and subsequent reference for Executive consideration.

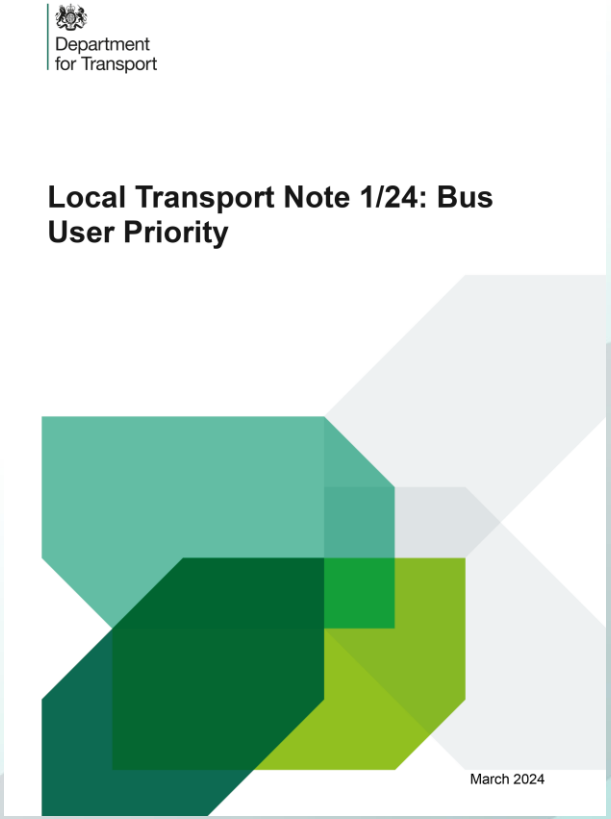
Bus Lanes Session 1
Overview of Bus Lanes and benefits

04 September 2024

Context

- The scrutiny commission have previously reviewed bus lane operations in 2013 and 2016.
- On both occasions, the recommendation from the commission was for bus lanes to continue operating 24 hours a day to maintain consistency of approach, outside of locations that could evidence a specific local need (for example, parking to support local businesses).
- Members of the Economic Development, Transport, and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission requested the topic be revisited in 2023. Officers suggested this be deferred whilst awaiting promised government guidance.

Government Guidance



- In October 2023 the sitting government published its *Plan for Drivers*, which include a commitment to introduce further guidance to local authorities on the deployment of bus lanes.
- This guidance was finally published as Section 7 of Local Transport Note 1/24 *Bus User Priority*, and has been shared with scrutiny members prior to this session.
- The National Bus Strategy maintains that there must not only be a ‘significant increase’ in bus priority, but also that bus lanes should be full-time and continuous

Bus Lanes

- A length of running lane reserved for the usage of authorised vehicles.
- Majority found along the 13 key bus corridors in the city.
- 77 services make use of bus priority at some stage of the route.

leicester buses

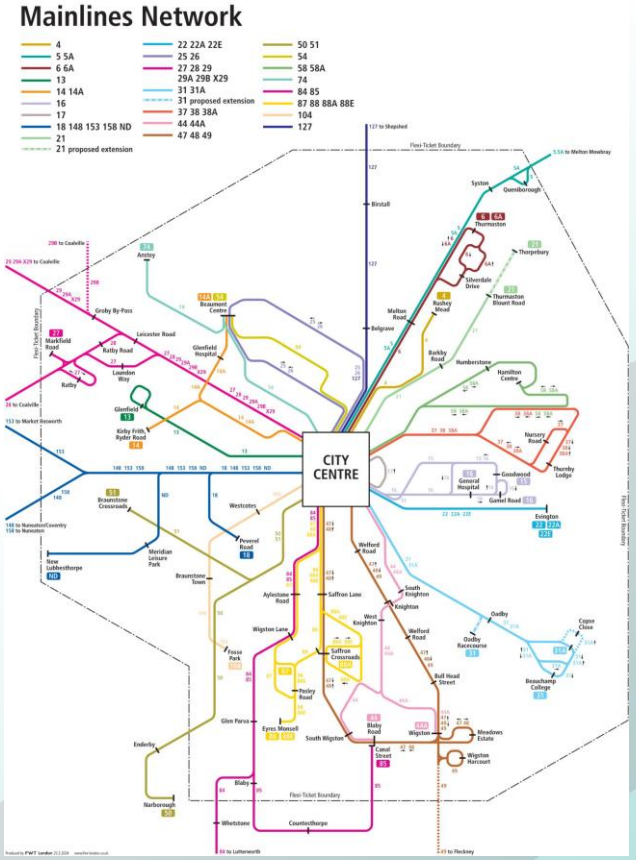
- Award winning enhanced partnership underpinned by legally binding commitments to invest from both the city council and operators. 94 (of 120) completed to date.
- Significant improvements in Leicester over the lifetime of the partnership:
  - Half the bus fleet now electric with **134** electric buses
  - **14%** increase in passenger numbers from 22/23 to 23/24 – now at **97%** of pre-Covid levels, 25m trips within the city each year.
  - Expansion of commercial timetables to provide additional evening and daytime services across the city, **180** hours of extra bus services from Firstbus alone.

BUS LANE BENEFITS

Bus Lane Punctuality and Reliability

- Groby Road corridor - **6%** reduction in overall journey times and **30%** reduction in journey variance at peak times, punctuality now at **81%**
- Melton Road corridor – **89%** of buses now running to time.
- Overall bus punctuality citywide – **85%**
- Overall bus reliability citywide – **98%**
- **76%** of bus users were happy with bus punctuality, England average **70%** (Your Bus Journey – Passenger Focus)

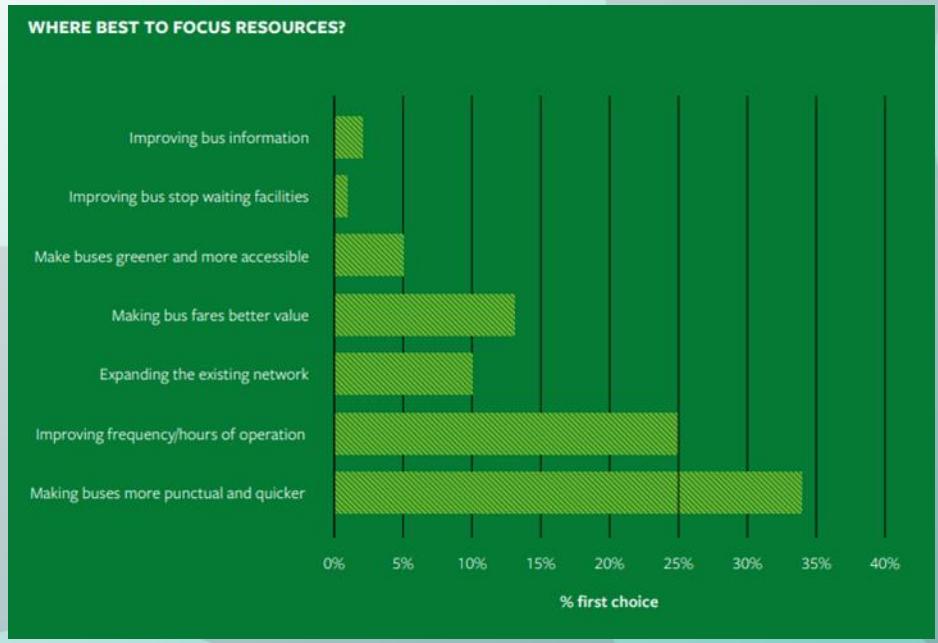
Frequency



- Improvements to punctuality and reliability can create opportunities to increase route frequency – a key method of attracting new users.
- **21** mainlines now have a frequency of 15 minutes or better Monday-Saturday

Usage

- Nearly **35%** of bus users requested funding be directed at making bus services more punctual and reliable
- Research by the DfT identified that priority schemes and the resultant improvements to reliability and punctuality can lead to increase in usage by up to **160%** over ten years.



BENEFITS TO 24/7 OPERATION

Clarity

- 24-hour bus lanes use simpler, clearer signs.
- These are easier for drivers to understand – particularly new drivers or those unfamiliar with the area.
- This reduces the risk of users inadvertently violating the bus lanes.

Capacity

- Leicester's road network is usually quiet outside peak operating hours (7-7), with little congestion.
- There is very little benefit to be obtained from opening the bus lanes to general traffic at these times.

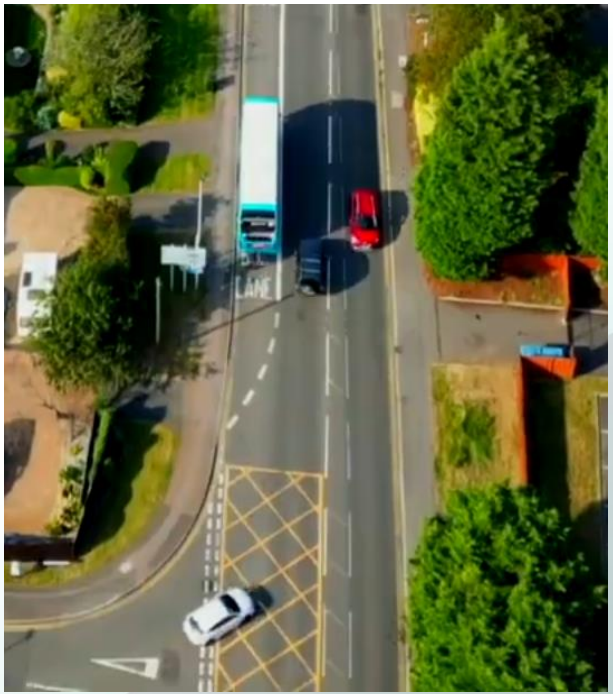
Authorised Vehicles

- Bus lanes can still be used by authorised vehicles even when limited services are running.
- Emergency service vehicles benefit from access to a dedicated lane that can bypass any other traffic on the network.
- Cyclist safety benefits massively from having access to a reserved lane with limited risk of vehicles.

Service Growth

- Services may expand in future, making use of the bus priority network – there is already one 24hr service looking to improve frequency - Skylink along the A6 corridor.
- Operators are beginning to identify evening and later running services as being a potential market, and are slowly expanding commercial networks. For example – new Firstbus 4E, extensions to the 17

Cost



- Removing or altering existing 24-hour bus lanes would require a considerable investment from the authority.
- This would have an opportunity cost against other transport improvements across the city.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Next Session

- 23 September, 2024, 17:00 – 19:00
  - Evidence review
  - Representatives from bus operators
  - Address any further questions raised by members of the commission in the interim.

Appendix 3

Department for Transport

Local Transport Note 1/24: Bus User Priority

March 2024

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

This publication is also available on our website at
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport

Contents

1. Introduction

In March 2021, the Government published the National Bus Strategy (NBS) which set out the Government's vision for bus services in England outside London. The main aim of the strategy is to increase bus journeys, firstly by returning the overall number of journeys made by bus to pre-Covid levels, and then to further grow bus journey numbers. Through Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) and the establishment of statutory Enhanced Partnerships (EPs) or franchising local communities will benefit from the delivery of more services, simpler and cheaper fares, greener and more accessible buses, and appropriate bus priority measures. This approach was developed to increase passenger numbers and help reduce congestion.

While this guidance focuses on improving bus services, it is important to recognise the possible impacts on other road users. The Plan for Drivers, published in October 2023, includes a range of measures to ensure smoother journeys. This guidance delivers the commitment to strengthen guidance to make sure bus lanes help rather than hinder traffic.

As set out in the 2024 BSIP guidance, the NBS states that to increase bus use, buses must become attractive to far more people. The key to doing this is making them faster and more reliable. The NBS therefore expects plans for bus priority on roads where there is a frequent bus service, traffic congestion, and the physical space to install it. Bus lanes should be as continuous as they need to be, and have the hours of operation they need to have, to insulate buses from delays caused by traffic congestion and parked vehicles. The Plan for Drivers confirms that this means bus lanes should be provided only where they are needed and should operate only when buses are running or when traffic is heavy enough to cause delays to buses. Bus priority measures should be developed with full consideration of the impacts on other road users.

Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) across England are now delivering their BSIPs, with LTAs working closely with their local bus operators and stakeholders. This work reflects the role of buses in supporting wider government priorities, including decarbonisation and levelling up.

The role of bus travel is central to delivering on the Government's wider strategic and policy ambition to create a public transport system that is inclusive and able to meet the needs of all people. Buses play an important role as part of an overall journey experience which will also typically include walking, wheeling or cycling to and from a bus stop or interchange. Supporting bus travel through the implementation and management of

appropriate bus priority schemes, initiatives and interventions helps to achieve the objectives outlined in the 2018 Inclusive Transport Strategy.

1.1 Application

The National Bus Strategy, published in March 2021, included a commitment to update technical guidance on providing bus priority. This guidance delivers that commitment by superseding LTN 1/97 Keeping Buses Moving: A guide to traffic management to assist buses in urban areas, which is now withdrawn. This updated guidance applies to schemes across England.

This guidance is relevant to everyone involved in delivering better bus services – local authorities, consultants and other practitioners.

The legislative framework for the planning and delivery of bus priority is governed by various acts and regulations, including the following:

- Road Traffic Act 1991
- Transport Act 2000
- Traffic Management Act 2004
- The Bus Lane Contraventions (Penalty Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Bus Services Act 2017
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016
- Highways Act 1980
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Local authorities are responsible for setting design standards for their roads. This national guidance provides a recommended basis for supporting and prioritising buses and their passengers within an integrated road network. It sets out key design principles and redefines bus priority to focus on the bus user and a whole-journey experience. Local authorities are expected to demonstrate that they have given due consideration to this guidance when designing schemes that qualify for dedicated Government funding. It should also be considered in any broader Government funded schemes.

This guidance covers a broad range of measures as well as providing advice and information on how to take schemes from planning through to successful delivery. It covers the "how" to deliver as well as the "what".

Practitioners should make sure they have the latest version of any documents referenced. This guidance should be read in conjunction with -

- Manual for Streets
- Traffic Signs Manual
- Local Transport Note 1/20: Cycle Infrastructure Design
- Inclusive Mobility
- Network Management Duty guidance 2004
- National Planning Policy Framework guidance

LTAs have a duty under the Transport Act 2000 to produce a statutory Local Transport Plan (LTP). These plans should contain policies, and plans for the implementation of these policies, for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport. Therefore, the measures set out in a BSIP should integrate with, and service the delivery of, a clear overarching vision and objectives for local transport set out in an authority's LTP.

This guidance is intended to support LTAs to plan and deliver bus priority schemes which can support the role buses play in local communities, and improve passenger outcomes, through:

- showcasing integrated design principles
- identifying how to develop an evidence base of benefits to generate support for bus travel
- creating bus services that are accessible by design
- being realistic and recognising that there is no one size fits all approach
- providing practical tools and techniques for all local authorities to follow when consulting on and evaluating the benefits of bus priority schemes
- helping to build local authority internal capability relevant to the range of local situations and challenges they face
- future-proofing bus priority and considering what the future public transport system could offer

Public Sector Equality Duty

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 places the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public authorities. This requires them, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, and to promote equality of opportunity and understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Managing their road network and the bus services which use it is a function to which the PSED applies.

In the context of this guidance authorities should ensure that they consider the equality impacts of respective policies at all stages of their development and identify any steps needed to mitigate potential negative consequences or to enhance positive results. Impacts may not be restricted to passenger-facing aspects of services and might also include factors such as network design and road-space priority.

1.2 Preparation of updated guidance

This Local Transport Note was researched and prepared by Arup/AECOM on behalf of the Department for Transport. The preparation of this guidance included undertaking research to understand and collate examples of bus user priority measures for both infrastructure and technology as well as approaches and processes to support successful planning, delivery and the ongoing operation of bus user priority schemes. The research consisted of a desk-based literature review and primary research through engagement.

The literature review was used to inform wider, primary research into what will work, where, and how. The primary research was used to ascertain capacity, capability, and deeply and widely felt barriers to implementing bus user priority schemes, as well as exploring the reasons for low levels of uptake and implementation of currently available technologies. The primary research also sought to understand how local transport authorities assess the impact of bus priority interventions on local communities and on all road user groups, particularly those with vulnerabilities, as well as how they currently undertake stakeholder engagement for bus user priority schemes.

As part of the development of this guidance a steering group was established to:

- test that the updated guidance reflects the views of a wide range of stakeholders
- help build a clear and up-to-date picture of current bus user priority provision, good practice, and issues
- shape the preparation of updated guidance to improve delivery of bus user priority nationally

Table 1 lists the organisations involved.

(Table 1: steering group members)

Steering group members

Transport for All – Access, Rights, Advice
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
Active Travel England
Logistics UK
Confederation of Passenger Transport
Association of Local Bus Managers (ALBuM)
The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT)
National Traffic Managers Forum (NTMF)
Real Time Information Group (RTIG)

1.3 Structure of this guidance

This guidance is split into two parts:

- part 1 focuses on providing advice and information on **how** to take schemes from planning through to successful delivery

- part 2 focuses on **what** range of measures and techniques can be used to support better bus user priority across the whole passenger journey

Part 1: scheme planning, design and delivery

2. Redefining priority for buses

2.1 Bus user priority

This guidance redefines bus priority to take account of the different factors and features that impact on the bus journey and the importance of the passenger and their experience. Simply focusing on the on-road aspect, and on single measures such as bus lanes, will not achieve the outcomes sought at both a strategic, operational and commercial level. The passenger experience should be at the heart of good bus priority, hence this guidance redefines bus priority to look at the user, not just the vehicle itself.

Bus user priority definition:

Bus user priority is a combination of measures and techniques providing safe, accessible, reliable and efficient bus journeys that are consistent and minimise delay.

It includes not only infrastructure measures that improve journey time and reliability such as bus lanes but also improvements to the passenger experience. These include access to the service, the waiting environment, and technology such as CCTV. In planning, designing and delivering bus service improvements an integrated holistic approach is needed that considers the end-to-end journey and the different aspects of that trip and associated touch points.

2.2 Objectives for bus user priority

In seeking to improve bus services planners and designers should focus on the objectives sought and the types of measures and changes that will achieve them, while also considering the impacts on other road users and local businesses. Objectives will generally include:

- fast or delay-free journey time
- reliable, or consistent journey times
- increased patronage and passenger use
- buses as an attractive and accessible choice for passengers and a genuine alternative to private vehicles

- priority or preference on-road over other modes where appropriate

2.3 Design principles for implementing bus use priority

There are six core principles:

Enable and support passenger access to the bus stop - ensuring passengers can walk or wheel to and from a bus stop safely and comfortably, and cross the road easily and safely. Access routes should be inclusive to facilitate access by different users.

Provide a safe, comfortable and accessible bus stop - a bus stop should provide a safe location both from a road safety and personal safety perspective. Space should be available for passengers to wait. The bus stop kerbside arrangements should enable the bus to safely stop adjacent to the kerb with minimal step height or gap between the vehicle and the kerb, with sufficient space for the wheelchair ramp or lift to be deployed and be able to re-enter the traffic stream with minimal delay. Passengers should be protected from the elements, with seating and information to reduce journey uncertainty.

Minimise interruptions and delay along a route - reducing the time and number of delays caused by interactions with other vehicles or features along the bus route to provide free flow movement. This means identifying what could hold up the bus and seeking to address or minimise the likely delay.

Give the bus vehicle priority - where other measures are unable to eliminate or reduce delays then it may be necessary to give the bus priority through preferential treatment.

Support reliability - passengers rely on timetables and buses should adhere to them, so passengers have confidence in using the service. This supports locks in journey time on a route so that there is resilience, and reduced uncertainty in when the bus will arrive.

Provide accessible information - including audible and visual route information and real time service information. Inclusively designed mobile apps to provide ticket and fare information, and payment methods are also important elements of encouraging greater bus use.

Applying these design principles requires a package of measures and improvements. This guidance provides further information on technical specifications and the benefits and challenges associated with them.

2.4 OpEx savings

When introducing bus priority measures through government funding, LTAs should consider whether these interventions could yield reductions in operator expenditure (OpEx, the total amount it costs an operator to run their services at the specified standard on a particular route), so that those savings do not just benefit the operators in the form of additional profit. Savings could include reductions in vehicle requirements on a certain route if journey time reductions result in less bus journeys for the same period of time to deliver the same service provision. Those savings can then be reinvested through EP

decision making processes into other improvements in the local bus market which further benefit passengers, increase patronage and deliver BSIP objectives.

An OpEx saving mechanism is the method by which financial savings by a bus operator resulting directly from funding are properly calculated so that this saving can be reinvested by the partnership to deliver additional benefits. It is therefore good practice for LTAs to develop an OpEx mechanism in collaboration with their operators as part of an EP scheme or as a separate agreement to run alongside it. The DfT is producing guidance to assist LTAs in developing their OpEx mechanisms.

3. Planning, designing and delivering bus user priority

3.1 Roles and responsibilities for delivering bus user priority

The successful planning and delivery of schemes to support bus user priority involves collaboration between different organisations. Table 2 below summarises the high-level organisational responsibilities held by central government and local authorities in relation to planning and delivering schemes.

(Table 2: organisational responsibilities in relation to planning and delivering schemes to support bus user priority)

Organisation	Roles and responsibilities
Central Government	Creates, reviews and develops legislation and policy for transport. Oversees setting and monitoring of national standards and governance for service provision and vehicles, for example through the Traffic Commissioners, the Vehicle Certification Agency and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency. Develops, communicates and manages performance of national strategies. Identifies and allocates capital and revenue funding to support the bus system.
Local Transport Authorities	Develops, communicates, and manages performance of local transport plans and BSIPs to meet the requirements of national policies and strategies. Oversees establishment of enhanced partnerships and/ or franchising in accordance with the regulatory requirements set out in the Bus Services Act 2017. Identifies and allocates capital and revenue funding to support the bus system, for example through council tax or surplus traffic enforcement income. Collects data and undertakes monitoring of performance to plan changes and improvements to the bus network.
Local Traffic Authorities	Day-to-day running of their local road network, including fulfilling statutory duties such as the Network Management Duty to manage and maintain it for the benefit of all road users. Regulating traffic through use of a range of powers, for example installing traffic signs and making traffic regulation orders (TROs). Undertaking enforcement of parking and moving traffic offences, including bus lane contraventions, where they have taken up the relevant powers.

Local transport authorities will require the support and in some instances approval of wider organisations when implementing bus user priority measures.

Depending on the type of measures or improvements proposed, some organisations will have a statutory requirement to be involved, and for others it will be a matter of good practice to engage with them either as delivery partners or interested parties. Section 3.3 of this guidance covers engagement and consultation in more detail.

3.2 Planning, design and delivery stages

There are four scenarios where bus user priority should be considered:

- an existing bus route which has been identified for improvements or has performance issues
- a corridor, or section of road, or road-based project for other modes that has an impact on buses
- a newly designated bus route
- a new development with provision for buses

The approach to be taken will vary within these scenarios. Where bus improvements are considered on an existing network there are generally three different approaches which can be described as:

- **site specific** - bus user priority measures targeted at specific sites to address specific problems/issues identified through reviewing the network and from feedback received
- **corridor** - this approach identifies particular corridors, generally those with heavy bus usage and then applies a range of improvements targeted along the corridor
- **whole bus route** - similar to the corridor approach, measures are applied along a pre-identified route followed by a specific bus service

A corridor or route-based approach can deliver greater benefits as the combined benefits are greater than an individual scheme or improvement.

Integrating bus user priority in other projects

Any road-based project, particularly those funded by DfT, should consider provision for buses and passengers as an integral part of the schemes.

Existing guidance on planning for buses in new developments

Stagecoach have provided advice in Bus Service and New Residential Developments, available at:

www.stagecoachgroup.com/~/media/Files/S/Stagecoach-Group/Attachments/pdf/bus-services-and-new-residential-developments.pdf

The Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation have also produced guidance in Buses in Urban Developments, available at:

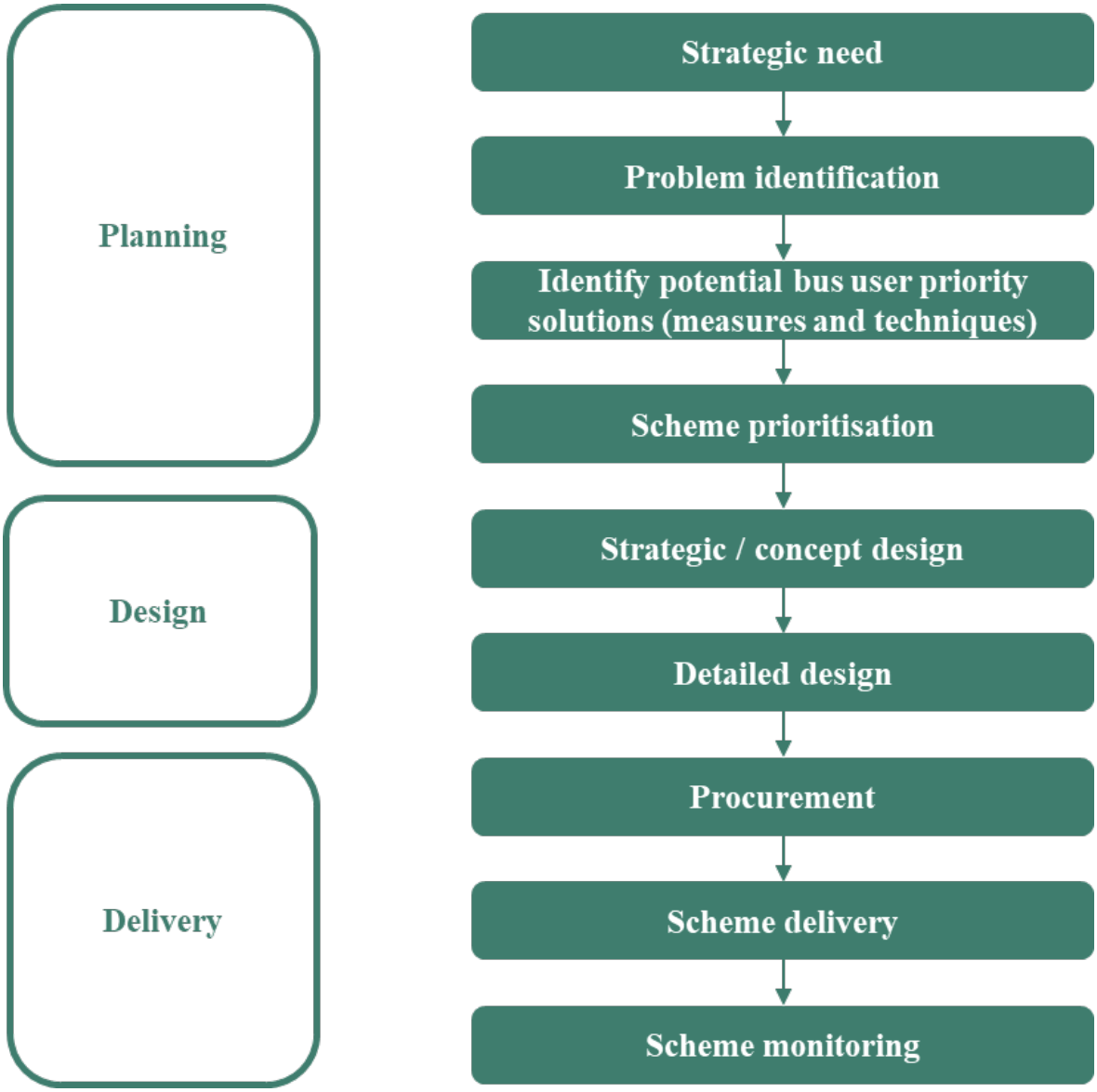
www.ciht.org.uk/media/4459/buses_ua_tp_full_version_v5.pdf

Key requirements to consider are:

- geometric and spatial requirements to accommodate buses within the development
- provision of bus stops and associated infrastructure
- access for all passengers to/from stops
- integration of land use planning and transport

It is also important to consider whether providing routes through a new development is the most appropriate approach. Providing improved, safe quality access to an existing bus service may be a more appropriate response. This could mean considering use of development funding to support improved access to existing bus stop facilities.

For any scenario there are a series of steps to follow to establish the right bus user priority solutions. Figure 1 provides a simple overview of this project lifecycle, from identifying the need to change, through to design, delivery and monitoring of bus user priority solutions.

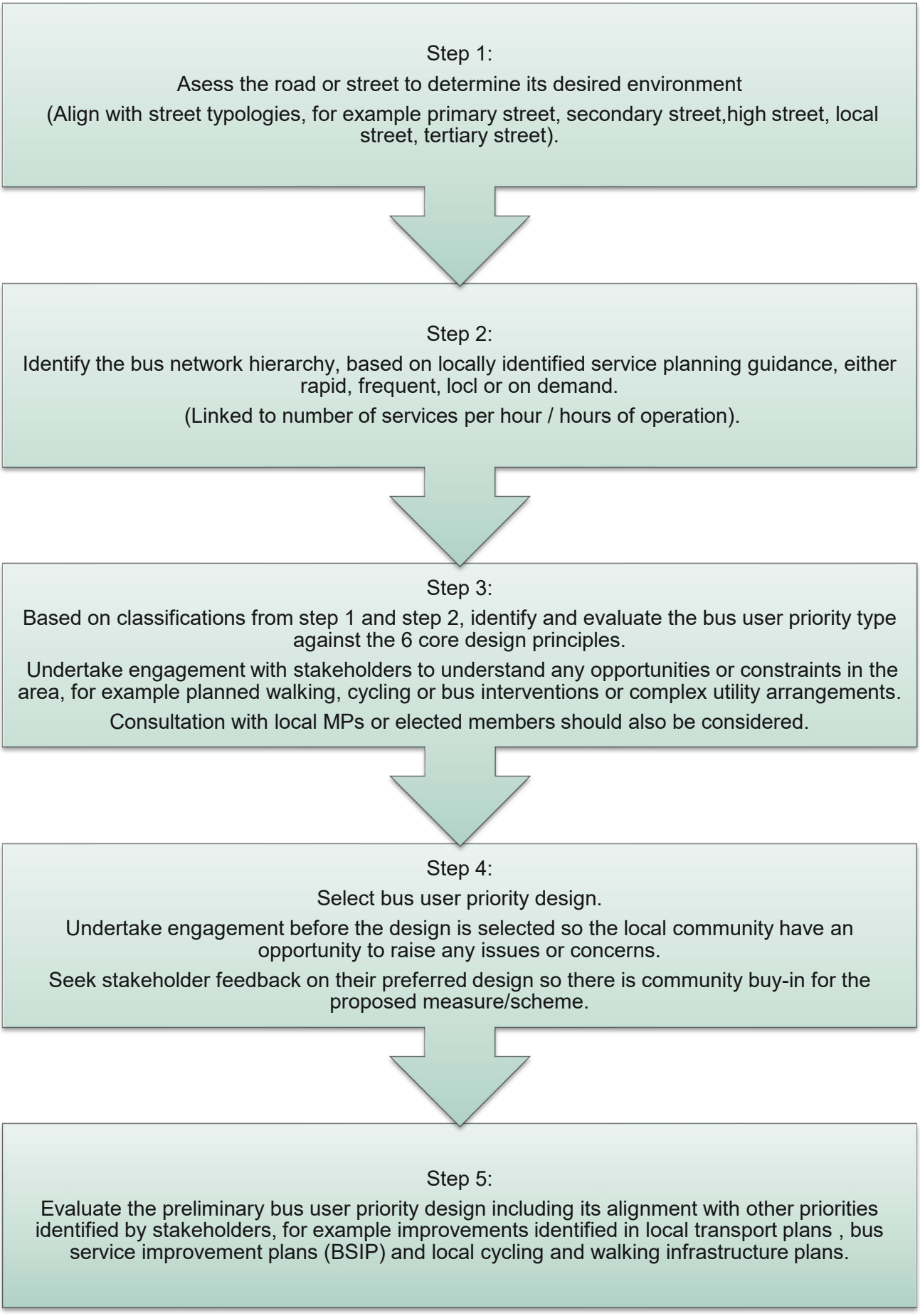


(Figure 1: bus user priority project lifecycle)

Taking a theory of change approach to decision making can aid planning and evaluation of schemes and feeds into the strategic need, problem identification and scheme monitoring project stages shown in Figure 1.

Applying a theory of change approach can help to identify objectives and how bus user priority measures and techniques can best be applied to achieve these. Theory of change is a comprehensive illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It seeks to identify the desired long-term goals and then works back to identify the outcomes that must be in place and the actions that must be taken for the goals to occur. An example theory of change template is set out in appendix A.1.

Once the theory of change process has identified an issue or impetus for change, the decision-making process shown in Figure 2 can be used to determine the most appropriate bus user priority solutions. It also considers when engagement with key stakeholders and the community should take place and how and where any bus user priority measures should integrate with existing BSIPs and local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs). This process can also be used as part of any wider scheme prioritisation process to determine which measures and techniques should be progressed.


Step 1:
Asess the road or street to determine its desired environment
(Align with street typologies, for example primary street, secondary street,high street, local street, tertiary street).
Step 2:
Identify the bus network hierarchy, based on locally identified service planning guidance, either rapid, frequent, locl or on demand.
(Linked to number of services per hour / hours of operation).
Step 3:
Based on classifications from step 1 and step 2, identify and evaluate the bus user priority type against the 6 core design principles.
Undertake engagement with stakeholders to understand any opportunities or constraints in the area, for example planned walking, cycling or bus interventions or complex utility arrangements.
Consultation with local MPs or elected members should also be considered.
Step 4:
Select bus user priority design.
Undertake engagement before the design is selected so the local community have an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns.
Seek stakeholder feedback on their preferred design so there is community buy-in for the proposed measure/scheme.
Step 5:
Evaluate the preliminary bus user priority design including its alignment with other priorities identified by stakeholders, for example improvements identified in local transport plans , bus service improvement plans (BSIP) and local cycling and walking infrastructure plans.

(Figure 2: decision making process)

Completing the design and delivery of any bus user priority scheme will depend on the individual or package of measures and techniques identified for implementation. Part 2 of this guidance provides design and delivery details on the broad range of measures and techniques available.

3.3 Role of engagement and consultation

Stakeholder engagement and public consultation is a key part of the process of introducing change and improvements to bus services. Engagement with stakeholders, particularly local residents and businesses, can help establish user appetite for changes in services and investment in local bus user priority measures. It can help identify the needs of other road users in order that these can be met, and effects on them which may need mitigation. It can also provide an opportunity to help influence new street and/or development design outcomes and highlight opportunities for additional improvements.

Effective engagement with a variety of stakeholders, LTAs, and their partners such as local transport operators can provide a wider understanding of what issues or problems individuals encounter and help get buy-in from users and address their concerns. The aim is to consider the views of different people to ensure the outcomes work for as many people as possible. Some issues could be unique to an individual, whilst some may have a collective impact.

Toolkit for engaging with local communities

The Confederation of Passenger Transport has created a toolkit to help LTAs engage effectively with local communities and present the case for bus user priority measures. It is available at

CPT's Toolkit for Engaging with Local Communities

Areas in which stakeholder input will be needed to help inform the type of priority required could include, but not be limited to:

- local service times and service provision
- connectivity – whether proposals facilitate multi-modal trips. This could be particularly relevant in rural areas
- accessibility requirements for bus stops, bus shelters, buses and service provision
- trip factors – to understand what factors influence decisions to take the bus rather than other forms of transport
- delays to users – to understand congestion hotspots and other factors affecting bus reliability, such as traffic signal delays

Public engagement and consultation enables stakeholders to shape proposals while they are still at a formative stage. By gaining an understanding of what factors can encourage or deter bus patronage, LTAs can identify and allocate resources to help remove barriers.

Travel habits evolve over time and engaging with a variety of user groups can help understand what factors directly influence people's choices. Personal circumstances can have a significant impact on choices:

- **price** – the cost of a particular mode of transport makes it unaffordable compared to others
- **change of location** – moving to a new location may increase the reliance on car travel if there are few established public transport connections at the new location
- **change of employment** – a change of jobs could result in more home working, reducing their need for travel, or increase journeys made due to new commuting patterns
- **change of family structure** – these can have a significant impact on journeys made, particularly as part of chain trips. This may lead to a family either buying a first car, or buying a second if public transport provision doesn't provide an alternative
- **accessibility** – challenges relating to personal mobility or inaccessible infrastructure can be a key factor (see Section 4.4) when making choices on transport provision

3.4 Good practice in engagement and consultation

There are many ways to engage effectively with stakeholders and each approach should carefully consider the following factors:

The purpose of the engagement or consultation – if the objective is to inform stakeholders then this will involve a different approach to gathering feedback. The former might involve public events, websites, virtual events, or brochures. The latter may require tools such as surveys, interactive mapping, site visits or focus groups.

Scale of engagement – is it taking place at a local or regional level? The format chosen should be appropriate to the scale involved.

The stakeholders taking part – depending on the audience, the narrative will need to be aligned accordingly, ensuring key messages are conveyed in a language stakeholders will understand and relate to. Engagement must be representative and inclusive, and all efforts should be made to engage with hard-to-reach groups.

3.5 Accessible and inclusive engagement

Information on inclusive engagement is set out in Chapter 2 of Inclusive Mobility, which should be read alongside this section.

Authorities or other agencies, and their designers and practitioners should carry out appropriately diverse engagement when considering, developing and introducing

schemes. People's needs differ greatly, and engagement should be a constructive process used to ensure that these needs are understood and responded to.

Engagement should include a wide and appropriate range of people who have a protected characteristic defined in the Equality Act 2010. This is likely to be particularly relevant for disabled people, older people and children.

Effective engagement enables designs and schemes to be tested with end-users, maximising inclusivity. Planners and designers should also engage with other key stakeholders, such as local authority access officers, other equality & diversity professionals, engineers, architects, surveyors and transport providers. Engagement should continue throughout a project, contribute to the design, and might include user tests and trials.

Any online engagement or consultation materials should comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 to ensure they are accessible to disabled people. Any events should be arranged to accommodate people's access needs.

3.6 Stakeholders

LTAs should develop an appropriate stakeholder communication and engagement plan for each scheme. Table 3 sets out potential stakeholder groups which it may be relevant to engage with.

(Table 3: summary of potential stakeholder organisations)

Public interest	Delivery partners	Other organisations
Existing bus passengers **Local residents** **Existing and potential passengers with specific access needs and preferences, including disabled people and people with other relevant protected characteristics.** **Local elected members** **Local businesses, local shops and major employers** **Local schools, colleges and universities** **Wider user groups such as Transport Focus, Transport for All, Living Streets, Sustrans**	Adjoining local authorities Bus operators and bus drivers Public health bodies National Highways Network Rail Tourism providers / operators Train operators	Other local authority departments Statutory consultees – for example Active Travel England who are statutory consultees on planning applications for major new developments Emergency services Taxi and PHV drivers, and PHV operators.

Case study: sprint bus priority corridor, West Midlands

Transport for West Midlands' (TfWM) bus priority corridor called Sprint, links Walsall to Solihull via Birmingham City Centre in one continuous route. The project comprises a package of improvement measures that includes the extension of bus lanes and the prioritisation of buses at busy junctions together with upgraded bus shelters and the introduction of zero-emission double decker buses.

TfWM undertook detailed consultation on the proposed design of the Sprint routes which involved engaging with residents, businesses, and community groups through a variety of channels, including conducting on-street interviews at bus stops along the proposed route to capture the views and support of bus users – a group which is traditionally underrepresented compared to other transport modes. The customer intelligence team undertook 527 on-street interviews, comprising 35% of total engagement undertaken for the project.

This engagement approach helped TfWM to better understand how to shape the Sprint scheme in a way which delivers the best outcomes for the maximum number of people and increased overall support for the scheme.

Source: https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/revised-plans-for-a34-sprint-route-through-perry-barr-unveiled/

3.7 Monitoring success

Monitoring the success of any scheme should be inherent in any scheme delivery. As defined in the department's transport analysis guidance (TAG), monitoring and evaluation are generally used in conjunction, with monitoring providing early evidence of outputs while evaluation builds on this to provide a fuller assessment of the outcomes and impacts of an intervention. This can provide evidence that the scheme represents value for money, and that the needs of local communities have been met. More information on TAG can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/transport-analysis-guidance-tag.

As identified in Section 3.2, defining strategic need and implementing the theory of change approach can be used to systematically identify specific targets and outcomes and to evaluate whether these have been met across one or a number of schemes. It also provides an overview of the evidence that needs to be collected. Defining what success looks like at the start of a project will help identify and enable this evidence to be collected which can be used to help inform improvements to existing schemes or help shape future schemes. Understanding passenger satisfaction in regard to bus user priority is fundamental to identifying what success looks like.

Implementing bus priority measures provides the greatest benefits to the people who rely on, and travel by, bus. Measuring and monitoring passenger satisfaction is the primary way to understand and interrogate the success of bus user priority measures. Passenger satisfaction surveys can be used as a mechanism to collect this data and will establish a consistent database of information. It is important to ensure that surveys are undertaken both before and after a scheme has been implemented to fully understand the impact of a scheme on bus passengers.

TAG identifies 'impact evaluation' as one of three main evaluation activities. This type of evaluation aims to identify what difference the intervention has made. This is particularly applicable to understanding the impact on bus passengers. The type of questions that can be answered through this type of evaluation include:

- did the intervention achieve the expected outcome? - to what extent?
- how exactly did the intervention cause the observed impact?
- to what extent can the difference be attributed to the intervention?
- what would have happened anyway (without the intervention)?
- what unintended consequences did the intervention have (positive or negative)?

The questions included in passenger satisfaction surveys should aim to answer one or more of these questions to gain a robust understanding the impact of the scheme that has been delivered.

Part 2: measures and techniques that can be used to support better bus user priority

4. Understanding bus users' journeys

4.1 Passenger experience

To improve bus services, it is necessary to understand what makes up the bus journey and the perspective and experience of the bus user. Without this understanding any improvement measures risk being poorly targeted and not achieving their objectives.

Bus user priority is not just about the time spent on the bus itself. Planners and designers should consider how passengers get to and from bus stops and interchanges and the 'human experience' at bus stops. Improvements in the door-to-door journey experience will make bus travel more attractive, leading to a growth in passenger numbers.

Providing a positive journey experience is key to encouraging more people to use buses. A Transport Focus survey undertaken in 2020 found the top 10 priorities for improvement for existing bus users were:

1. buses running more often
2. buses serving more places
3. more buses on time at the stop
4. better value for money
5. more bus journeys on time
6. more effort to tackle anti-social behaviour
7. faster journey times
8. more stops with 'next bus' displays
9. better quality information at stops
10. more space for wheelchairs and buggies

BSIPs are expected to drive improvements for passengers through the creation of a bus passenger charter (BPC). The BPC sets out commitments between the local authorities and local bus operators to ensure defined standards are met for each journey and to provide a tangible set of outcomes from the BSIP. The standards of service could include matters such as punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, service information, and opportunities for redress. It should also include a commitment on the accessibility of bus services and set out that it has been developed in compliance with the

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The Department's BSIP guidance provides advice on preparing BPCs. In summary, BPCs should:

- make clear which transport authorities and bus operators the charter covers
- involve passenger representatives in the development of the charter

In the main, the charter should:

1. explain what passengers should expect when they travel by bus
2. focus on the things that matter to passengers
3. encourage passengers to feedback if their expectations are not met
4. set out what complainants can expect about the way the complaint will be handled
5. keep the document concise, with links and references to other documents as appropriate
6. be well publicised and promoted in vehicles, bus stops / interchanges, travel shops, and on-line
7. be produced and made available in accessible formats
8. performance against the charter commitments should be regularly reviewed and reported with proposed improvements discussed with passenger representatives

4.2 Journey time

Bus journey times are a key factor in the passenger experience and attractiveness of bus travel, as they determine the duration and reliability of the service to ensure a passenger arrives at their destination on time, every time. Reducing bus journey times makes bus services run faster and more reliably, making them more attractive to passengers.

At its simplest, bus journey time is the total time it takes a vehicle to get from the start to the end of its journey. It can be split into:

- running time (the time the bus spends moving), often described as the time the bus is not at a stop
- stationary or delay time (time the bus spends stopped or delayed)

Buses will be stopped for a variety of reasons, not just at a designated stop, and therefore the stationary or delay time will be made up of all or some of the following:

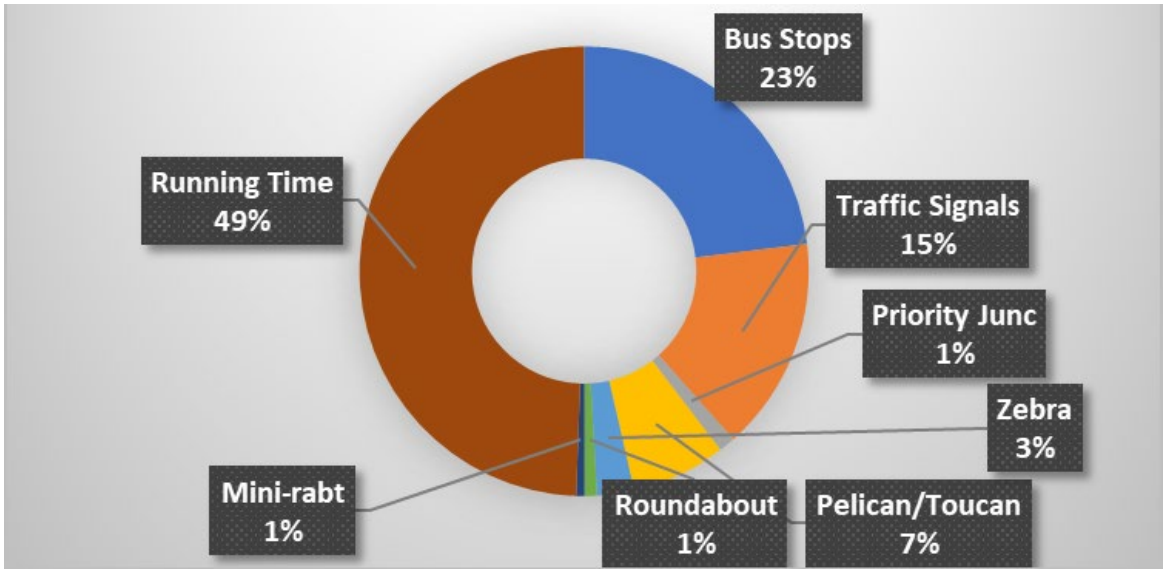
- at bus stops boarding and alighting passengers

- at priority junctions awaiting right of way
- at traffic signal-controlled junctions and crossings
- stopped in traffic queues and congestion
- general delays caused by interaction with other vehicles, such as those accessing parking/loading bays (also known as friction delay)

Delays can be associated with different features along a route, such as bus stops or junctions, with general congestion, or with friction due to interacting with other vehicles, for example at parking bays or where traffic merges from two lanes into one. The congestion and/or friction delay can be expressed as a reduced speed which leads to an increased running time. Once this is known analysis can be undertaken to identify the factors impacting on bus journey time and where improvements should be targeted.

Using surveys or GPS analysis it is possible to breakdown the different components of a bus journey. In this way the total bus journey time for a route will be made up as follows:

Running time + feature delay (e.g. junctions) + bus stop delay = journey time.



(Figure 3: sample of route bus journey time components as a % of overall trip)

Figure 3 above shows a typical breakdown of a bus journey taken from on-board surveys on a route in an urban area. The breakdown shows time spent delayed at key features along the route such as traffic lights, and the time allowing passengers on and off at stops, as well as the time “moving”. Whilst this is based on one route these figures generally reflect the balance between delay, boarding/alighting and running time on routes without significant bus user priority.

There are a few key points to note -

- running time - the time the bus is generally moving may be less than half the total journey time - this indicates that measures to reduce delay for buses, such as bus lanes, are unlikely to be the sole measures required to achieve the objectives

- bus stops make up almost a quarter of total running time - this indicates that both the number and design of bus stops can have an important impact on the journey time

- certain junction types can have more of an impact depending on their frequency along a route

Detailed analysis of the bus journey is important to understanding the actual issues along a route. Surveys on-bus as well as GPS surveys should be obtained as understanding this journey time breakdown is important in then developing improvements.

4.3 Importance of reliability

Bus reliability and punctuality is key to building passenger confidence and increasing usage. A reliable bus service also reduces operating costs by reducing the number of vehicles required and ensuring efficient running of individual vehicles.

Data analysis and observations

Understanding how a bus route operates, the time it takes to travel, the delays and friction points, and how passengers access bus stops are important in developing bus service improvements. A range of approaches should be taken to obtain data to inform this.

Site visits and trips on the bus are strongly recommended. This provides a true user experience from the passenger point of view, including aspects of the journey that can make the trip uncomfortable, such as ride quality and road layouts.

A route drive on a bus with a route operator may also be useful - many operators are supportive of this as it enables them to provide their input to help identify problems. It allows exploration of aspects such as problematic geometric and discussion with drivers.

Data on route travel times and delays can be obtained from a variety of sources including GPS and ticket machines, or via on-board surveys. Relevant data will include:

- **total journey time** - the travel time duration from start to finish

- **delays** - features along a route that slow journey progression i.e. junctions or congestion

- **bus stop dwell time** - time taken for passengers boarding and alighting at a stop

- **reliability** - the likelihood and frequency of a service arriving as per the scheduled timetable

4.4 Passenger access

The positioning of bus stops and access to them is critical in encouraging increased patronage. Poor access creates barriers which can have a detrimental impact on a person's individual experience and for some, it may mean their transport choices are limited. Access improvements can include the following:

Passenger crossing points – These should be positioned upstream of bus stops so passengers are not encouraged to cross the carriageway in front of the bus, once they disembark, where sight lines may be adversely affected. People's destinations may be on the other side of the road to the stop, and dropped kerbs and associated tactile paving should be provided to enable accessible crossing facilities.

Pavement access / maintenance of hedges, trees etc – Footways leading to and from bus shelters should be accessible at all times. Restricted width can prohibit access for some disabled people, particularly mobility impaired people, people with assistance dogs, and people with buggies. Surfaces which are uneven and poorly maintained can pose a safety issue alongside accessibility and drainage issues.

Street lighting provision – the positioning of street lighting should consider any mature trees along the bus route, to avoid a significant reduction in light provision at street level. Well-lit areas provide a heightened perception of security and safety, encouraging usage during hours of darkness and reducing the barriers to use some people can experience.

Drainage – the location and positioning of bus shelter(s)/boarding and alighting area should consider the potential for ponding, with designers establishing if there is a history of issues with surface water/runoff, particularly from the carriageway. If this is identified, appropriate remedial measures should be considered.

Inclusive mobility – to help facilitate journeys for everyone, footways should provide:

- appropriate dropped kerb provision at crossing points, where the carriageway is flush with the kerb-line to facilitate inclusive access
- appropriate unobstructed pavement width to facilitate wheelchair access
- avoidance of steep gradients and sudden changes in levels which could pose an issue for mobility impaired people and wheelchair users
- appropriate consideration when positioning street infrastructure on pavements, to help ensure accessibility is maintained for those walking and wheeling
- avoidance of steep camber on the approaches and routeways to the bus stop which could prevent mobility impaired people and wheelchair users from accessing the stop

For further guidance refer to ‘Inclusive mobility: a guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure’. Figure 4 shows how narrow footways and intrusive vegetation can create access difficulties for some people.

(Figure 4: narrow footways and intrusive vegetation can cause a barrier to access)

4.5 Personal security

The personal safety of a bus journey is as important as road safety. If a potential passenger is fearful of travelling, they are unlikely to use the service irrespective of how quick or reliable the service is. This means designers should consider the personal safety of routes to and from stops, and the waiting time at the bus stop or interchange. Enhanced personal safety features can help to remove barriers to women using buses, as well as helping to prevent security concerns faced by other groups such as racist, homophobic, transphobic and hate crimes. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to exercise their function with due regard to the likely effect on crime and disorder It may be appropriate to undertake a crime and disorder assessment for new bus stops and shelters.

4.6 Design Advice

When considering personal safety on buses, the following factors are likely to be relevant:

Design and Layout: The layout and design of the bus stop and shelter should ensure good sight lines from all directions with minimum blind spots, so that passengers feel safe. A design which promotes natural surveillance prevents criminal activity and improves the sense of security for all users.

Lighting: A well-lit environment during hours of darkness will enhance visibility and provide a sense of safety for passengers waiting at bus stops /shelters / platforms.

Surveillance and monitory system: Strategic deployment of CCTV systems at bus stop/shelters/platforms can help deter criminal behaviour.

Panic buttons: Installing alarm buttons at bus stops and shelters can provide an extra layer of personal safety and security. Panic buttons allow all users to quickly and discreetly alert relevant authorities in the event of emergency or threatening situation, enabling a quick response and assistance.

4.7 Operation and maintenance

Bus infrastructure which is poorly maintained and in disrepair can lead to negative perceptions of security and safety which detract from the travel experience. Evidence of antisocial behaviour, including graffiti and broken glass, can lead to more vulnerable users choosing alternative modes of transport due to safety concerns, particularly when travelling alone or at night. Bus infrastructure should be subject to regular maintenance checks to ensure infrastructure is fit for purpose and operational, contributing to a safe environment for both passengers and drivers.

Bus operators should also have clearly defined emergency procedures in place to respond quickly and effectively to unforeseen situations to ensure the safety of all passengers.

5. Types of measures

Bus user priority measures can be considered as a toolkit. They can be categorised as:

- **direct priority**: examples include bus lanes or bus gates where the priority element is obvious in the infrastructure
- **indirect priority**: where the measure supports the outcomes but the infrastructure is not obvious - examples include waiting restrictions to keep routes clear of parked vehicles, or traffic signal priority within a signal junction
- **complementary or supporting**: measures or activities that support other measures, such as enforcement or routine maintenance

Part 2 focuses on these measures and techniques in more detail. Table 4 identifies different types of measures, and where more information can be found.

(Table 4: bus priority toolkit)

	Type			
Measure / technique	Direct	Indirect	Support	See Chapter
Bus stop	Y			Chapter 6
Bus shelter	Y			Chapter 6
Panic button			Y	Chapter 4 & 6
Passenger information		Y		Chapter 11 & 12
Mobility hub		Y		Chapter 6
With-flow bus lane	Y			Chapter 7
Priority vehicle lane	Y			Chapter 7

Contra flow bus lane	Y			Chapter 7
Segregated busways	Y			Chapter 14
Bus only street	Y			Chapter 8
Bus gate	Y			Chapter 8
No waiting restrictions		Y		Chapter 9
No loading restrictions		Y		Chapter 9 & 13
Red routes / urban clearways		Y		Chapter 9
Controlled parking		Y		Chapter 9
Loading bays		Y		Chapter 9
Inset parking/loading areas		Y		Chapter 9
Turn bans		Y		Chapter 10
Bus turn exemptions	Y			Chapter 10
Side road closures		Y		Chapter 10
Amending junction right of way		Y		Chapter 10
Technology	Y	Y		Chapter 11
Controlled pedestrian crossing		Y		Chapter 11
CCTV			Y	Chapter 11
Enforcement			Y	Chapter 13
Network management			Y	Chapter 12
Cashless ticketing			Y	Chapter 12

An integrated design approach will bring together a package of measures. It also provides a range of options as there is no one size fits all approach and the types of treatments required vary depending on context, scale of issue, and outcomes sought. The toolkit can be applied to both urban and rural situations.

Measures should be selected based on the context of the road they are being applied to. Where one treatment may be applicable to a highly trafficked street, another may be wholly inappropriate for that street type. The road classifications suggested in Appendix A.2 provide a robust overview of the function and context of a street and can be used to determine appropriate bus user priority treatments, as outlined in Table 5. Treatments should be considered in context and as part of a suite of measures to improve bus user priority.

(Table 5: bus treatment matrix)

Measure / technique	Primary Street	Secondary Street	High Street	Local Street	Tertiary Street
Bus stop	x	x	x	x	Unlikely to recommend bus user priority measures on this street type due to width and purpose / use of street
Bus shelter	x	x	x	x	
Passenger information	x	x	x	x	
Panic button	x	x	x	x	
Mobility hub	x	x	x		
With-flow bus lane	x	x	x		
Priority vehicle lane	x		x		
Contra flow bus lane	x		x		
Segregated busways	x				
Bus only street		x		x	
Bus gate		x	x	x	
No Waiting restrictions	x	x	x	x	
No loading restrictions	x	x	x		
Red routes / urban clearways	x	x	x		
Controlled parking	x	x	x	x	
Loading bays	x	x	x		
Inset parking/loading areas	x	x	x	x	

Turn bans	x	x	x		
Bus turn exemptions	x	x	x		
Side road closures	x		x	x	
Amending junction right of way		x		x	
Technology (TBC)	x	x	x	x	
Controlled pedestrian crossing	x	x	x	x	
CCTV	x		x		
Enforcement	x	x	x	x	
Network management	x	x	x	x	
Cashless ticketing	x	x	x	x	

6. Bus stop facilities (stops and interchanges)

6.1 Importance of bus stops

The bus stop is the key interface between the bus service and the passenger. The location and design of a bus stop and how it is accessed can be critical in the success of a bus service. If a bus stop is not accessible, well placed or safe then passengers are far less likely to use the service, reducing the effectiveness of any other measures.

This guidance focuses on the design of on-street bus stops. Advice on the accessibility aspects of the design of interchanges and bus stations is available in Inclusive Mobility.

6.2 Design advice

The guidance on bus stop design provided by Transport for London (https://content.tfl.gov.uk/bus-stop-design-guidance.pdf) provides comprehensive advice and information on bus stop design with a series of proposed layouts, and key geometric and physical characteristics for planners and designers to consider.

Key features of bus stops are:

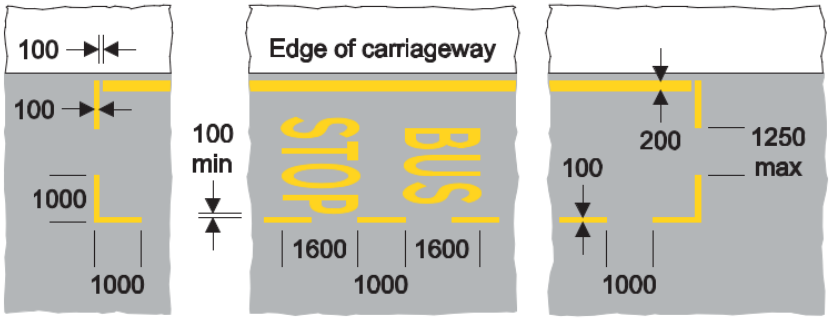
- design that minimises the time buses spend entering and leaving the stop to where passengers board and alight - ideally the goal is between 20-30 seconds or less

- passengers need to be able step easily on and off the bus - the stop needs to accommodate step free and ramp access for mobility impaired people, layouts that require passengers to step down into the road, or board in the traffic stream, are less likely to enable access for all

- Critical to this is the bus stop cage - **the size of this cage area should be designed to provide exclusive access by the bus so it can approach, manoeuvre, stop alongside the kerb, and then safely exit, not just cover the space where it is stationary at the kerbside.**

Bus stops are indicated by the marking to TSRGD diagram 1025.1, as shown in Figure 5. This is a clearway restriction which may operate at all times, or at specific times indicated by an accompanying upright sign. A TRO is not required for this restriction.

Diagram 1025.1
Clearway at which, as described in paragraph 1 of Part 6, vehicles must not stop (exceptions apply for buses and taxis)

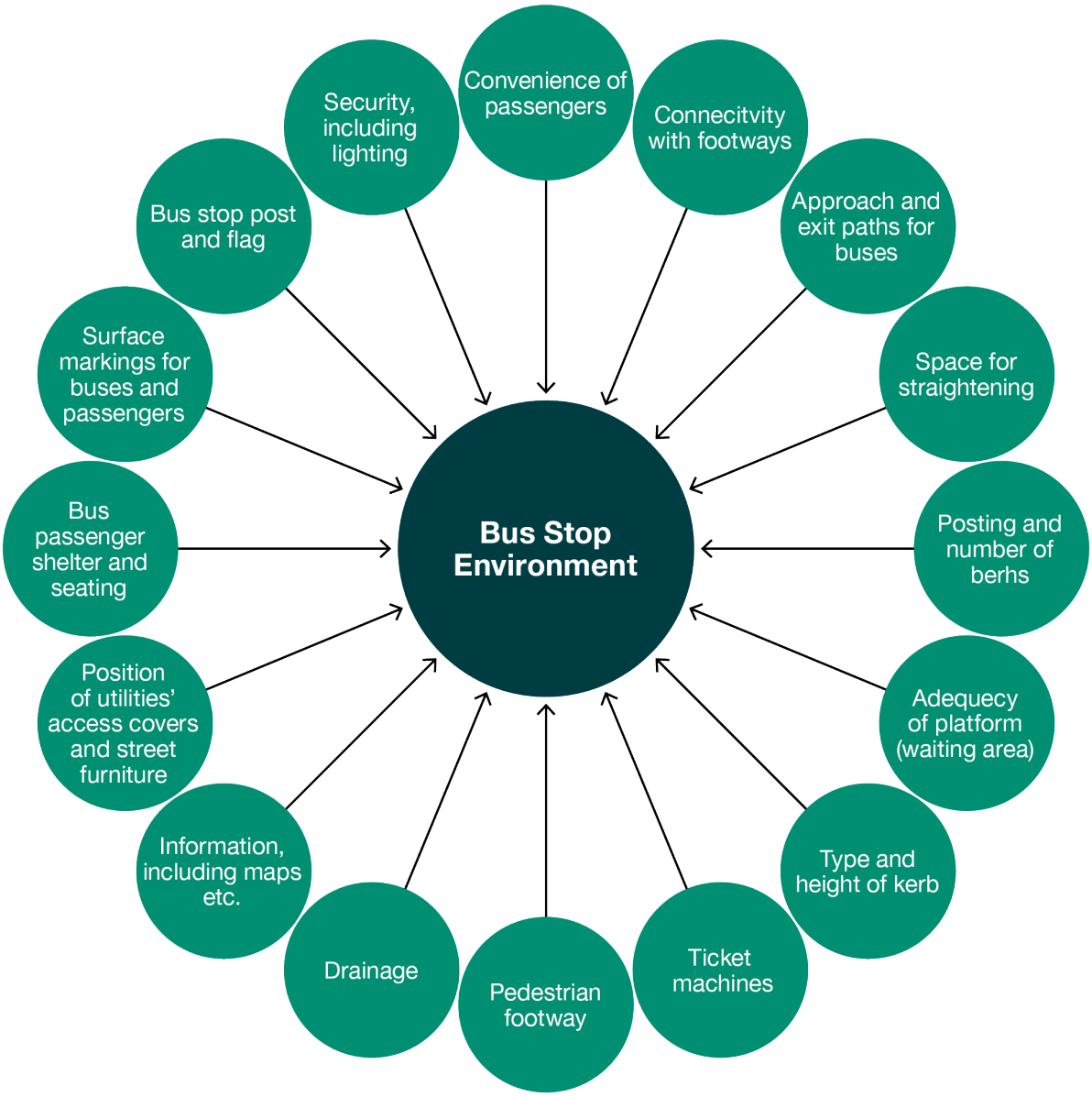


(Figure 3: bus stop marking (TSRGD diagram 1025.1))

For full details of road marking and signing requirements refer to Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual.

6.3 Components of a bus stop

A high-quality bus stop environment is comprised of many different components, as outlined in Figure 6.



(Figure 4: features of a bus stop environment (TfL accessible bus stop design guidance 2006))

6.4 Location and spacing

There are many elements to consider, as outlined in Figure 7. Bus stops should be spaced approximately 400m apart in urban areas, creating a walking time of about 5 minutes for non-disabled people between stops. In rural areas spacing may be significantly greater as bus stops should be located near to destinations that both generate and attract flows. More frequent spacing should be avoided as frequent stops increases journey time due to the bus accelerating and decelerating, which stops it reaching cruising or maximum speed. Stop/start activity can also lead to poor ride quality for passengers.

Stops should be paired so the passenger start and end point for trips is similar. This also allows sharing of facilities such as crossings.

Stop locations and spacing should be reviewed to identify changes that will improve journey times.

Depending on local circumstances, stop relocation or consolidation (for example merging two stops into one halfway between the two) may help ensure bus stops are optimally located. It may also enable provision of higher quality supporting infrastructure by reducing the number to be provided for. However, this should be considered carefully as increasing walking and wheeling distances, and changes in routes, may cause problems for some disabled people. This is the type of issue that can be considered through an equality impact assessment.

(Figure 5: considerations for bus stop locations (TfL accessible bus stop design guidance 2006))

6.5 Bus stop configurations

There are four main types:

Kerbside bus stop (Figure 8): these can be located along a link or associated with a junction or controlled crossing. The size of the bus cage area will depend on possible obstructions to the entry/exit areas. Placing the bus stop on the exit side of a junction or a controlled crossing utilises the junction space or controlled areas as an approach area, reducing the amount of space needed. Exit side arrangements also encourage passengers to walk to the rear of the bus thereby facing oncoming vehicles which is safer for crossing movements when they walk to their destination. Where a bus stop and crossing are located close together, any impact on sight lines and forward visibility for the crossing should be considered to ensure safety is not compromised. There is an exemption in TSRGD for buses to stop on the white zig-zag markings on the exit side of a crossing.

(Figure 6: example of kerbside bus stop)

Bus boarders (Figure 9): this is a full width (standing out from the kerb) or half width (partial) buildout from the kerb creating a platform and dedicated area for buses to stop and passengers to wait. By building out into the carriageway, the bus can easily stop by the kerbside which requires less space. The size of the platform length will vary depending

on the vehicle configurations, whether other street furniture is to be located on it, the frequency of buses using it and associated numbers alongside at any one time.

Boarders are a useful way of providing space for bus shelters, seating, etc where footways are narrow. As the bus does not have to deviate from the general traffic flow, exiting the stop is relatively easy, reducing delays.

Buses stopped in the carriageway will prevent overtaking by other vehicles. If this is likely to be problematic, a half width boarder may be more suitable. This creates some footway space, reduces the bus stop length, keeps the bus partially in the traffic stream making re-entry easy but may enable overtaking without moving into the opposing traffic stream.

Boarders can discourage illegal parking/stopping as they sit in the traffic stream.

Variations of boarders with angled entry can be useful in some circumstances where entry and exit tapers may be reduced due to obstruction.

(Figure 9: example of a bus boarder)

Bus bays or laybys (Figure 10/Figure 11): this is an inset area set into the footway enabling the vehicle to get out of the main traffic stream and stop. A bus layby needs to be large enough for the vehicle to wholly enter, align with the kerbside and exit.

Within urban or built-up areas, where the speed limit is less than 40 mph, laybys should not be used, for the following reasons:

- buses may have difficulties re-entering the traffic stream which can cause unnecessary delays compromising bus priority

- unless a bus stop clearway or other parking restriction is provided and enforced, there is a tendency for other vehicles to park there, creating access issues for the bus and passengers

- whilst other vehicles may be delayed it sends a strong message about the importance of the bus in the modal hierarchy

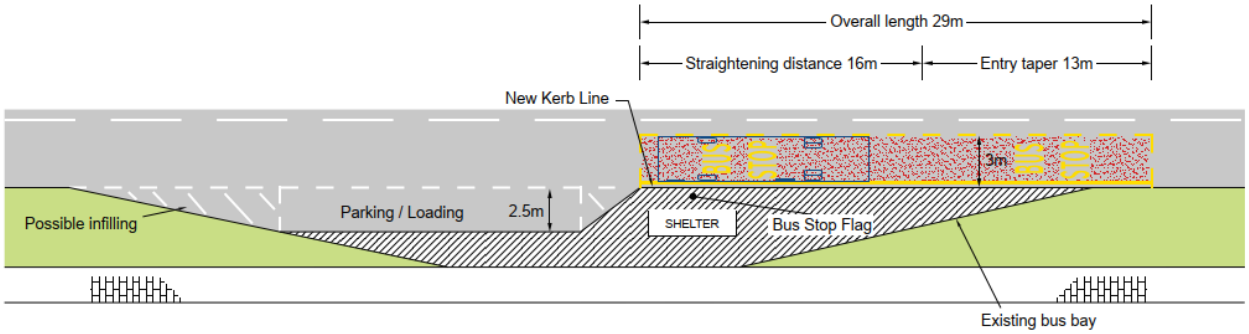
Laybys should be avoided in new developments.

It is strongly recommended that laybys on existing routes be filled in wherever possible. If a layby is retained, it can be partly infilled, or changes made to make it easier to enter/exit. Examples are provided in the Transport for London accessible bus stop guidance.

Lay-bys may be appropriate where the bus will wait or stop for extended periods such as at a timing point, end of route, or crew change location. In this case the 'Bus Stand' variant of the bus stop cage marking should be used.

On roads with traffic speeds greater than 40 mph designers will need to consider the safety aspects and risk of rear end shunts when deciding whether a layby or kerbside type arrangement is more appropriate.

(Figure 10: example of bus bay / layby)



(Figure 11: example of bus bay / layby)

6.6 Kerb heights

A key consideration in stop design is to minimise the step distance between the footway and the bus. Step-free access should be the norm. This is particularly important for mobility impaired people but is also helpful for people with pushchairs or heavy luggage. Step-free access will make boarding and alighting quicker for all users.

All new bus stops should enable step free access.

Standard kerbs with heights of 125 to 140mm may require deployment of a ramp, and for the bus to actively kneel, all of which creates additional delay.

Bus stop kerbs designed to facilitate the tyre and bus pulling in as close to the kerb as possible are recommended. As shown in Figure 12, these have a greater height of 160mm and can be used in the boarding/alighting area to minimise the area of footway impacted by raising kerb heights. Footway gradients and cambers should also be accessible for wheelchair users, and drainage should be adequate where heightened kerb upstands may lead to a backfall.

Further guidance is given in Inclusive Mobility and TfL's bus stop accessibility guidance.

(Figure 7: raised kerb for ease of boarding and alighting)

6.7 Bus stops and cycles

When designing bus stops, the interactions between the bus infrastructure and adjacent cycle lanes/tracks are to be carefully considered to ensure the safety and comfort of cyclists, pedestrians and passengers boarding and alighting.

In the absence of dedicated off-carriageway cycle facilities, cyclists will be travelling within the carriageway. Bus stops pose a potential conflict point for cyclists riding in the nearside secondary position due to the movement of buses moving kerbside to allow for bus passenger boarding and alighting.

There are several options for providing cycle facilities at bus stops. However, these options may introduce potential barriers for some disabled people, particularly visually impaired people. The Government takes seriously the issues raised in some parts of the country around safety risks to pedestrians. Therefore, at the time of writing, research is ongoing into these measures. As the results are not yet known, this guidance does not make recommendations as to the appropriateness of these for different situations. They are described below for information only.

If they are being considered, early engagement with relevant interested parties should be undertaken, including those representing disabled people, and pedestrians and cyclists generally. The public sector equality duty should also be considered, with particular focus on groups such as children, older people and disabled people. Further information is given in LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design.

Bus stop bypass – a separate cycle track which is taken around the rear of a bus stop that allows cyclists to continue their journey without interruption. Bus stop bypasses can be designed with the cycle track at carriageway or footway levels, both requiring clear forms of demarcation to minimise potential conflict and severance for pedestrians. Access to and from the floating island will need careful consideration due to the need for pedestrians to cross the cycle track.

Shared use bus boarder – a facility where a footway level cycle track is positioned between the footway and bus cage. Shared use bus boarders introduce an area of shared use directly at the point where bus passengers will be boarding and alighting.

Shared use cycle tracks – a facility where the footway is converted into a cycle track, shared with pedestrians. The use of short sections of unsegregated shared use may be preferred in and around bus stops where cyclists would otherwise by positioned towards the front of footway within a segregated facility. This could potentially pose a conflict point with passengers boarding and alighting, as well as any infrastructure positioned at the front of the footway, such as bus a shelter and flag.

Active travel can also be encouraged through the provision of secure cycle storage at bus stops, providing a smooth transition between cycling and using the bus service, as shown in Figure 13. There are various options for implementing these facilities, such as secure bike racks, cycle hangers, cycle lockers and cycle hubs. However, the provision of cycle storage facilities should be assessed based on location suitability, anticipated usage, cost of implementation and its effectiveness. Advice is given in LTN 1/20.

(Figure 8: integration of cycle parking and bus stop facilities at a rail station)

6.8 Bus stops and traffic signals

Efficient traffic signal coordination can significantly improve bus travel times and reliability. Systems like transit signal priority (TSP) can change signal timing by giving priority to bus movement by increasing green signal durations or offering dedicated signal phases for buses.

Advanced pre-emption systems enable buses to seek priority at traffic signal junctions, allowing them to move rapidly through busy and crowded locations. Furthermore, coordinating, and synchronising signal timing through the bus route/corridors reduces stops and delays, providing green signal wave that keeps buses moving at a constant pace. This can also benefit general traffic travelling on the same route. More information is in Chapter 9.

6.9 Bus stop capacity

The number and arrival pattern of buses using a stop should determine the size of the cage. As the bus stop cage facilitates manoeuvring as well as stopping, the length should allow for more than one vehicle accessing a stop at any one time. This is dependent on frequency, headway between services and average dwell times. A “single” stop is generally sufficient for a frequency of between 15 and 45 buses per hour (bph). Over 45 bph, space should be provided for more than one bus to access and serve the stop at the same time.

Arrival patterns, dwell times and existing behaviour should be factored in where a stop is being upgraded.

6.10 Passenger waiting area

The passenger waiting area, adjacent to the bus stop area is critical infrastructure which contributes to overall functionality and accessibility for a bus stop, and the user experience and is shown in Figure 14. This should provide the following facilities:

- weatherproof shelter - protection from wind and rain and shade from the sun
- seating - to let passengers wait comfortably, especially mobility impaired people
- a wheelchair space within the shelter
- real time information, preferably in both audible and visible formats - confidence on bus arrival times improves the passenger experience and not all users have access to online applications, audio next stop announcements triggered by a fob or similar device are in place in a number of cities and can ensure access to information for the majority of passengers

- lighting - to support personal security and access
- timetables and route maps; ensures passengers know range of services they could use and options for future trips
- waste bins
- accessible ticket facilities - pre-boarding ticketing can help reduce boarding time
- security and surveillance systems - CCTV to observe behaviour in the area, with potential information / panic buttons for passengers
- accessible ramps - ensuring passengers can reach the stops, and easily navigate the environment

A waiting area should be large enough to accommodate the expected number of users and the needs of a diverse range of bus passengers including disabled people, taking in to account the location and passenger traffic. Sufficient seating should be provided and clear signing. The area should be designed to give people waiting a clear line of visibility to oncoming buses and traffic. It should also give bus drivers a clear view of waiting passengers, noting that not all passengers can signal to the driver.

(Figure 9: high quality accessible bus shelter)

6.11 Future proofing

Bus stop design should consider future challenges and trends in transport. For example, the increasing use of green roofs on bus shelters can add a bio-diversity element and add to the visual amenity associated with the bus stop.

This can be reflected in bus stop planning and design requirements by considering the following:

- number and geographical coverage of bus stops that satisfy likely future demand
- infrastructure for future bus electrification or passive provision
- smart grid integration to accommodate electric bus charging infrastructure
- up to date technological solutions to fulfil the advancement in future bus priority systems
- integration of other renewable energies such as hydrogen fuel cell buses
- space for expansion to incorporate mobility hub components such as cycle hire and parcel lockers

6.12 Mobility hubs

Mobility hubs are integrated and strategically designed interchanges bringing together different modes of transport. They serve as a central point where different forms of transport modes intersect, allowing easy transitions and reducing travel times. Mobility hubs vary but can offer access to a range of transport modes and services. Size and scale will vary by location, and they can be integrated into existing interchanges such as rail or bus, or be more localised in nature in both urban and rural situations. Rural mobility hubs enable greater catchment for public transport by providing active travel connections.

Assuming a bus stop component a mobility hub could include:

- cycle, e-scooter1 and mobility scooter parking
- access to shared mobility including cycle, e-bike, e-scooter and car (preferably electric)
- accessible toilet facilities
- cargo lockers
- commercial activities such as a café, cycle shop, post office, etc

[1] At the time of writing, only e-scooters provided as part of a designated trial are lawful in England.

- public realm or placemaking provision such as seating, pocket parks, and so on

By integrating different modes of transport, providing a comfortable environment, and promoting sustainable travel choices, mobility hubs help reduce congestion and elevate the importance and role of buses within this approach.

When planning a mobility hub, consider the following:

- site requirements - mobility hubs should be in strategic locations easily accessible by the public and within reasonable walking and wheeling distance
- current and future demand for the mobility options to be provided
- other related services and infrastructure that would bring additional value
- commercial viability of services
- future maintenance arrangements

Advice and further information can be found from CoMoUK at https://www.como.org.uk/.

Milton Keynes central interchange

This interchange serves as a centre point where different modes converge, including trains, buses, taxis, and cycles. This allows users to undertake muti-leg journeys with ease and provides connectivity within and beyond Milton Keynes. The hub has a range of amenities including ticketing facilities, a waiting area, information boards, shops, cafes and accessibility features.

Manchester Piccadilly

Located in the centre of Manchester, Manchester Piccadilly serves as a gateway to the city and surrounding areas. Trains, tram services and local buses all converge here. The interchange includes ticketing facilities, waiting rooms, shops, cafes, toilets and Wi-Fi access.

Park and ride

Park and ride schemes allow people to park their cars in a designated car park and continue their journey by bus. An example in Chelmsford is shown in Figure 15. They can also act as mobility hubs and can include parking facilities for different modes of transport. They have commonly been provided on the edge of urban areas where parking is limited, or vehicle access restricted, for example in historic towns and cities.

Park and ride facilities can help reduce urban congestion and vehicle-related pollution. They can support bus use by providing cheaper, faster and more convenient alternatives to town and city centre parking. To be effective, park and ride facilities should offer dedicated and frequent bus services, making them an attractive alternative to city or town centre parking.

As well as commuter or shopper access to towns and cities, park and ride facilities can be used to enable access to heavily trafficked tourist areas, reducing congestion and the associated negative impacts. There are examples in Cornwall where provision enables tourist access to towns and villages with restricted roads and heritage layouts. Park and ride facilities can form an important part of any town or city access strategy.

Changes to work patterns have meant that the viability of park and ride facilities as a purely commuter focused provision has changed. As in Cornwall, they have the potential to effectively relocate town or city centre parking to less central locations, enabling space taken by car parking to be used for placemaking or other uses.

(Figure 10: Chelmsford park and ride)

Truro

Located outside Truro, the park and ride at Langarth, shown in Figure 16, serves as provision for bus access to the nearby hospitals and the centre of Truro. This reduces vehicle trips to both the hospital, and to the historical and constrained centre of Truro.

(Figure 11: Truro park and ride)

7. Priority lanes

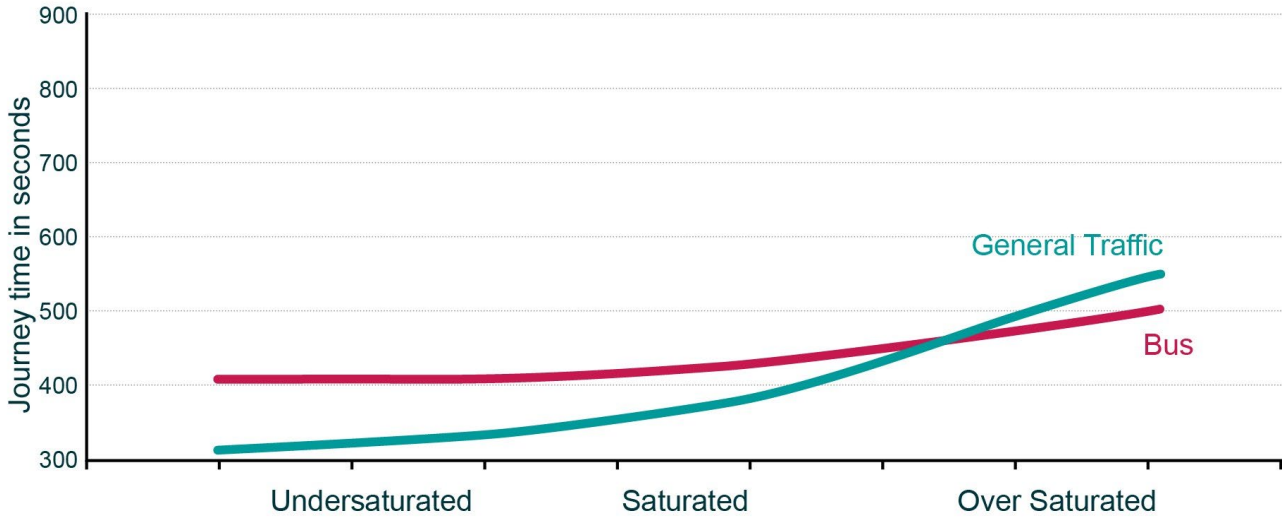
7.1 Overview

A priority lane restricts access to a section of the carriageway to certain identified modes. A bus lane is the most common form; it enables buses, and permitted other modes, to bypass vehicle traffic queues and typically results in journey time savings and greater reliability for bus passengers.

In the Plan for Drivers, the government made a commitment to strengthen guidance to make sure that bus lanes help rather than hinder traffic, by operating only when buses are running, or when traffic is heavy enough to cause delay to buses. With this in mind, this chapter is intended to promote best practice in the use of priority lanes to facilitate smoother journeys for buses without hindrance to general traffic flow. Where used, priority lanes should be developed alongside other measures as a package. Without a whole-route approach, priority lanes in isolation will only improve the easiest sections of the journey, meaning no benefit to overall user journey times, with possible negative impacts to general traffic. This chapter covers the different types of lane, the benefits, and other considerations.

A bus lane provides a dedicated lane that operates without congestion and flows freely to substantially remove delay to buses. Restricting access to buses, and limited other modes, manages flows such that delay caused by congestion is not experienced. Bus lanes may be with-flow, with buses travelling in the same direction as general traffic, or contra-flow, with buses travelling against general traffic flow.

It is important for designers to be aware that the expected benefits of bus lanes in terms of improved speeds and greater reliability are only provided if there is congestion in other traffic lanes.



(Figure 12: comparison of general traffic vs bus journey time with varying flows)

Figure 17 illustrates this. It compares journey times of general traffic against a bus in a bus lane. The x axis indicates the level of congestion in the general lane. The bus is slower if there is no congestion, due to stopping to pick up/drop off passengers. However, as congestion increases in the general traffic lane, journey time for buses within a bus lane improves as network congestion increases. Bus lanes provide the greatest benefits to buses when the network is oversaturated, mitigating general congestion, and making the bus faster than other vehicles.

In the absence of congestion a bus lane will only offer limited speed or reliability benefits, therefore bus lanes should not be used in areas where conditions are free flowing, or where such conditions can be maintained by other means.

Hours of operation should be chosen to coincide with peak hours when buses will gain maximum benefit. Bus lanes should not operate when no bus service is running, or when general traffic is light enough not to cause delay to buses. For example, bus lanes should only be 24 hour when there are night buses in operation and where there is significant congestion. If there is not significant congestion, the bus lane should not be 24 hours.

Authorities need to be satisfied that where bus lanes operate for time periods that include quieter times of day (for example, 7am to 7pm, or 24hr) that the case for doing so – such as to support bus journey times - is well-evidenced and the impacts on other road users are properly considered and mitigated.

A traffic regulation order must be made to identify the length of the bus lane and to limit its use to those types of bus and other vehicles which the authority wishes to allow. The restriction must be indicated using the prescribed signs and road markings in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions.

7.2 Other permitted vehicles

A range of other modes can be permitted within a bus lane. Pedal cycles (as defined in Schedule 1 of TSRGD) are permitted to use with-flow bus lanes by default as this is more likely to be safer for them than riding in the main traffic lane with buses passing on their nearside.

Other permitted vehicle classes typically include solo motorcycles, taxis (hackney carriages) and private hire vehicles (PHVs; indicated on the traffic signs as 'authorised vehicles'). The bus lane can be reserved for local bus services only or all buses. A lane for local buses would exclude coaches, or other privately chartered bus or coach services.

Emergency vehicles on call and cleaning or maintenance vehicles are typically permitted to use a bus lane by the TRO, but these exceptions are not signed as these vehicles are easily identifiable for enforcement purposes. Other vehicle types, such as non-emergency patient transport vehicles, can be allowed to use bus lanes in the same way.

There are two factors to consider when deciding whether to allow other modes to share a bus lane. Firstly, will doing so negatively impact on the performance of the lane for the bus? If free flow conditions are maintained, low numbers of other modes will not affect performance. This will need consideration not only of the link flow but also implications at junctions. A bus lane setback should enable a bus to get through a set of signals within a single cycle. Filling a lane with non-bus vehicles that inhibits this queue discharge does not support bus priority. It is likely flows of 200-300 vehicles would still enable a bus lane to operate effectively.

The second issue is lane occupancy and compliance. A lane that is perceived as “empty” by other users may lead to compliance issues, and negative public perception. Having a level of lane occupancy where bus frequencies are low can negate such concerns.

Any additional vehicles allowed to use a bus lane should be easily identifiable, both for enforcement purposes and to make their status clear to other drivers, increasing understanding and compliance. The following should also be considered:

- impact on road safety
- potential for delays to other traffic
- the hierarchy of road users and integration with the wider network
- equalities considerations
- the impact on modal split

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/24: Motorcyclists using bus lanes is clear that wherever it is appropriate to do so, local councils should allow motorcyclists to use bus lanes, using their existing powers. The Plan for Drivers includes a commitment to consult on making motorcycle access to bus lanes the default position, rather than at local authorities'

discretion. Depending on the outcome of that consultation, this guidance will be updated as necessary.

Studies indicate that allowing cycles to share with-flow bus lanes has no detrimental effect on bus journeys unless bus average speeds exceed 20 kph and the other lanes are congested, preventing overtaking of cycles2. However, local authorities must take care not to let the provision of cycling in bus lanes detract from better, safer, cycle provision, as they do not provide an environment attractive to a wide range of people and should therefore not be regarded as inclusive.

Where pedal cyclists use bus lanes, the lane should be at least 4m wide, and preferably 4.5m, to enable buses to pass cyclists with sufficient room. Bus lanes less than 4m in width are not recommended and widths between 3.2m and 3.9m wide should not be used as these have the potential to encourage unsafe overtaking of cyclists within the lane.

For cyclists, sharing a bus lane with motorcycles can have a detrimental effect on perceived safety unless the lane is more than 4.5m wide. Sharing of bus lanes with powered two-wheelers may also confuse pedestrians, who will not be expecting the smaller vehicles when preparing to cross.

Permitting taxis to share bus lanes may have an impact on bus speeds and could discourage cycling. Even where they may not drive in a bus lane, picking up and setting down of passengers can still be accommodated. Any vehicle may enter a bus lane to stop, load or unload where this is not prohibited and exemptions from any stopping or loading restrictions can be provided. This is an important accessibility benefit, particularly for some disabled people who may rely on taxi services.

Freight or priority vehicle lanes

Allowing other vehicles into bus lanes can enable road space to be used more effectively. A managed or priority lane approach can be tailored to different configurations. This can be particularly relevant where bus frequencies are low, generally less than 10 buses per hour.

One option is to permit heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) in a bus lane, as shown in Figure 18. An HGV is easily identified by the rear markings. Permitting HGVs into bus lanes can support the movement of freight as well as bus users. This type of lane may be appropriate in some locations where bus movements are low, but the road has an important strategic role such as an arterial road and is subject to congestion.

[2]Rotherham Borough Council, 2003

(Figure 13: examples of bus lanes which allow HGV use)

Regulatory requirements

(Table 6: shows vehicle class descriptions and whether they can be accommodated in priority lanes without additional DfT authorisation)

Vehicle Class	Vehicle Class Description	Can be Included in without additional DfT authorisation?				Comments
		With-flow bus lanes	Contraflow bus lanes	Bus only streets	Bus gates	
Bus	A motor vehicle constructed or adapted to carry more than 8 passengers (exclusive of the driver); including minibuses or a local bus (see below).	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Local bus	A public service vehicle used for the provision of a local service not being an excursion or tour.	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Cycles	All types of pedal cycle including hand-cranked cycles and cycles that conform to the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle Regulations 1983 (as amended). It does not include mopeds, e-scooters or other powered two-wheeled vehicles.	Y	Y	Y	Y	DfT authorisation required if cycles are to be excluded from a with-flow bus lanes. Where road width is minimum 4.0m. At indicated times if they are shown on the sign. Contraflow: at local authority's discretion
E-scooters	Two wheeled vehicle with an electric motor,	Y	Y	Y	Y	At the time of writing, e-scooters

	capable of carrying a single rider.					are only lawful in designated trial areas.
Solo motorcycles	Includes solo motorcycles, scooters and mopeds	Y		Y		At local authority's discretion. If so, the symbol will be shown on the sign.
Taxis	In England and Wales, a vehicle licensed under— (i) section 37 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847(a); or (ii) section 6 of the Metropolitan Public Carriage Act 1869(b); or under any similar enactment;	Y		Y	Y	Hackney carriages only, at local authority's discretion. Will be shown by the word 'taxi' on the signs.
Private hire vehicles (PHVs)	A vehicle not licenced to collect passengers from ranks or to be hailed in the street but licensed only to be hired by prior arrangement.	Y		Y	Y	At local authority's discretion. Identified on the signs as 'authorised vehicles'.
Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)	Vehicles constructed for transporting goods and with a gross weight over 3.5 tonnes.	N	N	N	N	Requires DfT authorisation for the signs to incorporate the relevant symbol
Emergency vehicles	A vehicle used by the emergency services, including ambulances, vehicles used at the request of NHS ambulance services, police vehicles and fire and rescue service vehicles.	Y	Y	Y	Y	Permitted at local authority's discretion within the TRO, without need for additional symbols on signs. Access may be when on emergency call only, or for general use.

7.3 Waiting and loading

A bus lane creates a prohibition on driving within the lane, but any vehicle may still enter it to stop, load or unload where this isn't prohibited. Waiting should always be prohibited within a bus lane during its operational period. The need for access to the kerb to enable the setting down and picking up of disabled passengers and Blue Badge holders should be borne in mind. Signs and markings indicating the duration of the prohibition should be provided in accordance with the TSRGD and Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual. Where waiting is prohibited at all times, and the bus lane operates for a shorter period, double yellow line to diagram 1018.1 should be placed.

Loading should also normally be prohibited during the operational hours, although there may occasionally be reasons why it needs to be allowed, such as off-peak loading in a 24-hour bus lane. Any prohibition of loading, whether during or outside the hours when the lane is in force, should be indicated with signs and markings in accordance with the TSRGD and Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual.

7.4 With-flow bus lanes

With-flow bus lanes are the most common form of bus priority measure. They are indicated by a continuous white line road marking and associated traffic signs which reserve a traffic lane, typically nearside, for the use of buses. With-flow bus lanes may be:

Static: continuously operational as a bus lane only.

Dynamic: operational only during peak hours and further sub-categorised as:

-
- intermittent bus lane - a bus lane which cars are permitted to share at junctions and where space is restricted
-
- bus lane with intermittent priority - a general traffic lane which can be converted to an exclusive bus lane on demand

7.5 Dimensions

Recommended dimensions for with-flow bus lanes are set out in Table7

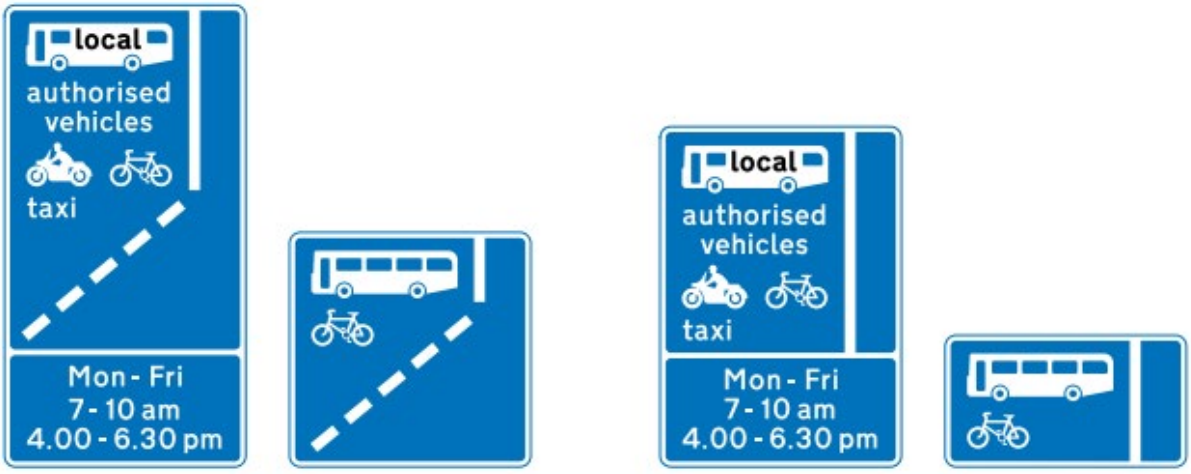
(Table 7: dimensions for with-flow bus lanes)

Bus Lane Type	Desirable Minimum Width	Absolute Minimum Width
Bus only	3.2m	3.0m
Bus & pedal cycles	4.5m	4.0m

The desirable minimum width for a with-flow bus lane is 3.2m, giving clearance between vehicles, and improved ride quality. This also reduces maintenance issues associated with the wheel track and gullies in the kerbside.

7.6 Signing and road markings

Guidance on signing and road markings is given in the Traffic Signs Manual. The times and days of operation can be varied. Examples are shown in Figure 19. Where there is more than one bus lane along a particular length of road or within the same geographical area, the times of operation should be consistent, where possible, to avoid driver confusion.



(Figure 19: signing for with-flow bus lane ahead (alternative types))

The end of a with-flow bus lane will usually be obvious through the termination of the diagram 1049A marking. If considered necessary due to observed driver behaviour, an upright sign to diagram 964 may be provided as shown in Figure 20. The lane should normally terminate short of the stop line at signal-controlled junctions.

(Figure 14: sign indicating the end of a bus lane)

7.7 Contraflow bus lanes

A contraflow bus lane is effectively a one-way road with a bus lane running in the opposite direction. They can help buses avoid unnecessary diversions and maintain route patterns when new one-way streets are introduced. They are typically used by buses only, but pedal cycles may also use the lane were permitted by the order. Contraflow bus lanes normally operate at all times.

Contraflow bus lanes, in the direction of travel along the lane, should always be provided on the nearside; an off-side lane would result in traffic travelling on the wrong side of oncoming traffic. Even if the lane were physically segregated, the effect would be disconcerting to drivers and at night dipped headlights might result in dazzle. Cycles can be allowed to use contraflow bus lanes, but consideration needs to be given to interaction at junctions and stops to ensure cyclist safety is not compromised and buses delayed. Unlike with-flow bus lanes, other classes of vehicle are not permitted to use contraflow bus lanes without special signs authorisation.

Pedestrian safety should be considered at contra flow lanes with low flows as this may result in pedestrians failing to be aware of traffic coming from an unexpected direction.

Appropriate pedestrian crossing locations with warning signing and road markings should be provided.

Restriction of kerbside access can pose problems for blue badge holders who rely on having close access to shops and public amenities. Authorities should attempt to maintain kerbside access wherever possible, particularly in areas such as main shopping thoroughfares.

7.8 Dimensions

Recommended dimensions are set out in Table 8.

(Table 7: dimensions for contraflow bus lanes)

Bus Lane Type	Desirable Minimum Width	Absolute Minimum Width
Bus Only	4.0m	3.0m
Bus & cycles	4.5m	4.0m

Contraflow bus lanes should be a minimum of 3m wide, but 3.2m upwards is preferred by operators. Where cyclists are using bus lanes, the lane should be at least 4m wide, and preferably 4.5m, to enable buses to pass cyclists with sufficient room. Bus lanes less than 4m in width are not recommended and widths between 3.2m and 3.9m wide should not be used as they have potential to encourage unsafe overtaking of cycle users within the lane. Care should also be taken to ensure that narrow lanes do not encourage buses to leave the bus lane to pass cyclists, thus increasing the risk of collision with oncoming traffic.

(Figure 15: contraflow bus lane)

Contraflow lanes should incorporate physical segregation at the start and end. Whilst they can reduce journey time, for example at gyratory systems, there can be issues with their operation. The design of the entry and exit needs to be carefully considered to operate

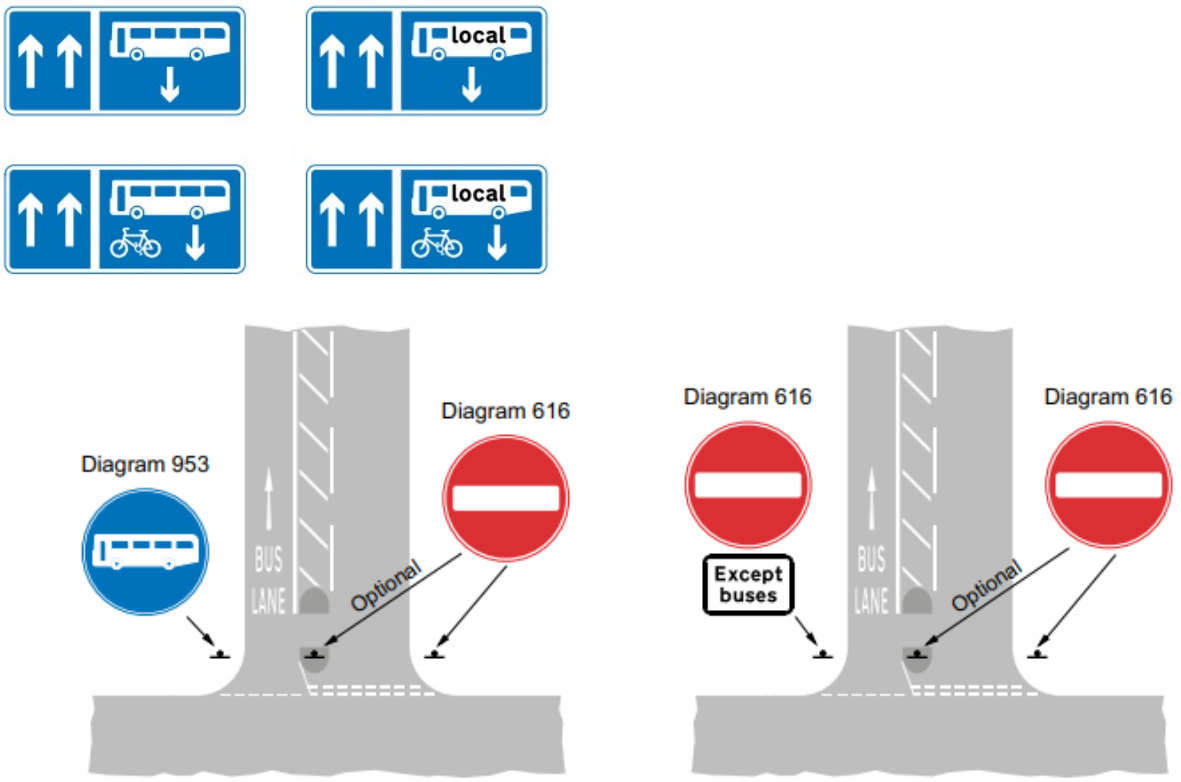
safely. Limited space can also provide safety issues for allowing cycles in the lane. Access requirements to adjacent premises and homes should also be considered.

7.9 Signing and road markings

Detailed guidance on signing and road markings for contraflow bus lanes is available in the Traffic Signs Manual and are summarised in Figure 22. A contraflow bus lane is separated from the rest of the carriageway by a continuous line to diagram 1049A. The marking should be discontinued where it passes a traffic island and angled at an appropriate taper to guide vehicles from each direction past the obstruction.

Signs to diagram 960 should be located at the beginning of the road, in each case on the nearside and on any central refuge. There is no specific requirement to provide repeater signs however it is recommended that signs are placed beyond each side road to ensure that drivers are informed joining or continuing on the road are reminded of the restriction. The number of arrows pointing upwards on the left-hand side of the sign should be varied to indicate the number of traffic lanes available in that direction.

A sign showing both the bus and cycle symbols should be used where the contraflow bus lane is also used by pedal cycles. The legend “local” on the bus symbol indicates that the lane may be used only by those buses operating a local service.



(Figure 16: signing and lining for contraflow bus lanes)

7.10 Bus and priority lanes: other supporting measures

There are other measures which can be implemented to improve understanding of, and compliance with bus lane restrictions. This can help reduce the risk of drivers accidentally entering a bus lane. these can include:

- **colour differentiation of road surface**: coloured surfacing may highlight the presence of the lane and reduce unintentional encroachment by other vehicles

- **full segregation**: a bus lane may be separated by kerbs from the remainder of the carriageway, commonly used with contra–flow lanes - lack of available carriageway width and the need for part time access to the lane may preclude widespread use

- **traffic islands**: islands may make separation of the bus lane from the rest of the carriageway more obvious

See Chapter 11 for further guidance on technology-based enforcement measures.

8. Bus priority access measures

8.1 Bus only street

A bus only street is a section of road to which only buses and other permitted vehicles have access. They can offer buses a more direct route, supporting a more efficient, resilient and reliable network.

Bus only streets can minimise impact from external factors on the bus network. They can also support access to business and shopping areas at times when it is denied to other vehicles. This helps to make bus services a more attractive choice by providing convenient access for bus passengers.

8.2 Other permitted vehicles

As with bus lanes, other vehicles permitted to use bus only streets can include cycles, taxis and solo motorcycles and permit holders. Access or loading requirements can also be permitted. Access for taxis, PHVs and Blue Badge holders should be considered to provide accessibility benefits.

The reduced number of vehicle movements associated with bus only streets can make this a supportive measure for cycles where they are permitted users.

8.3 Signing and road markings

Signing should be provided in accordance with TSRGD to indicate the point from which restrictions apply. Access to bus only streets is signed in the same way as a bus gate, with signs to diagram 619 or 953. A traffic regulation order is also required.

Where a one-way or two-way road is reserved for buses and any other permitted vehicles, the entry points may be indicated in multiple ways. Supplementary plates allow for specification of authorised vehicles and a time period for when bus only street restrictions apply if not continuous. Advice on the use of signs and markings is given in the Traffic Signs Manual.

8.4 Bus gate

Bus gates, are short connector lengths of streets closed to other traffic, as shown in Figure 23 and Figure 24. They effectively create a “no through road” for all traffic other than buses (and potentially cycles) and can be used to control access to bus (and cycle) only streets, or other area wide treatment. The bus gate may be located either at a junction or part way along a road and can be implemented through physical measures such as rising bollards, traffic signals or upright traffic signs and road markings. Signed restrictions will require a TRO.

Access requirements should be carefully considered to ensure residents, businesses and disabled road users are not unduly impacted. Alternative parking bays should be created for blue badge holders if these are removed due to the creation of a bus gate. Engagement with communities should be undertaken as part of the planning process, as well as the statutory consultation required as part of the TRO process.

Signing and routing should be clear and legible to avoid any potential enforcement issues. **If a bus gate is placed on a road that was previously a signed route or was used by significant through traffic, updated directional signing should be provided to guide prohibited traffic to an alternative route.** Temporary direction signing may be required in the initial six months of a change. This supports compliance and effective enforcement by making it clear to drivers well in advance that the route is no longer available to them.

Enforcement is a key consideration to ensure the effectiveness of a bus gate. The effective use of signing, coloured surface treatments and/or surfacing materials can provide clearer demarcation of the facility, helping to improve compliance rates. Locations with a high violation rate may require camera enforcement to ensure ongoing compliance.

Installation of bus gates on Valley Gardens in Brighton allowed for reduction in the extensive network of dedicated bus lanes adjacent to general traffic lanes which were recognised to cause a high level of severance. The bus gates retained access for businesses and residents, while significantly reducing the volume of through traffic that could cause congestion for buses. As well as improving bus reliability, this has also positively impacted the overall public realm by enabling improved placemaking.

8.5 Other permitted vehicles

Bus gates may be used by other vehicles where permitted by the order and nearside bus gates should by default be accessible by cyclists. Where bus activated signals are used without a cycle bypass, it will be necessary to provide a means for cyclists to activate the signals. This may be achieved by a suitable means of detection or a push button unit for cyclists to operate. Refer to LTN 1/20 for further guidance on provision to accommodate cycle users as part of a bus gate.

(Figure 23: bus gate with cycling permitted and camera enforcement)

(Figure 24: bus gate with authorised vehicles permitted and camera enforcement)

8.6 Signing and road markings

A bus gate is signed in a similar manner to a bus only street as outlined in Section 8.1. Advice is given in Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual.

9. Kerbside controls

9.1 Importance of kerbside controls

How the kerbside operates can have a significant impact on both day-to-day operations and future bus service improvement proposals. Vehicles at the kerbside can create delay and interference to bus operations along a route. Dealing with these matters in a proactive way is important to maintain reliability and journey consistency.

Kerbside activities can include parking and loading as well as pick up and drop off activity.

Typical issues can include:

- friction from vehicles entering and exiting parking and loading spaces
- stationary vehicles creating obstructions and therefore a need to give way to opposing flows
- illegally parked vehicles blocking bus lanes stopping access and impeding bus movement
- vehicles in a bus stop forcing buses to stop in the carriageway making passengers walk into the carriageway and delaying boarding and alighting

In delivering improvements to bus services, controls on kerbside activity are a fundamental part of the toolkit. This means the introduction of parking, loading, or stopping controls should be considered in any package of improvements and will usually be required.

Altering or removing parking or loading provision can be highly sensitive. Consultation and Engagement is key to addressing such issues and is discussed in more in Chapter 3.

It is important for authorities and designers to remember that **the primary use of the public highway is for the movement of people, goods and vehicles**. Any kerbside activity is by permission not by right. This is further reinforced through the Network Management Duty placed on traffic authorities by the Traffic Management Act 2004. This duty requires them to manage their road networks to ensure the “expeditious movement of traffic”, which includes buses.

Any package of bus user priority should include measures to control and manage kerbside activity so that such activities do not cause delay or obstruction to buses. It is also important that such measures complement other infrastructure such as bus lanes and bus gates where kerbside controls are also required. In less urban situations, and where space is limited for installing bus lanes, waiting and loading controls by themselves can be an appropriate bus user priority measure.

Local authorities have a range of powers available to them to enforce waiting, loading and moving traffic restrictions. The implementation of any kerbside controls should include an enforcement strategy. Further discussion on enforcement is found in Chapter 13.

The options for kerbside controls include:

- no waiting
- no loading
- loading bays
- controlled parking
- disabled badge holder (Blue Badge) parking
- red routes/clearways (no stopping)

These are discussed below. Signs and markings used must comply with TSRGD, and advice on their use is given in the Traffic Signs Manual.

9.2 No waiting

Waiting should always be prohibited within a bus lane during its operational period. Signs and markings will indicate the duration of the prohibition which may be the same as that for the bus lane or longer.

On sections of a route where the road narrows and stationary vehicles delay buses, waiting restrictions should be considered. These can be targeted at specific times. Designers should be mindful of exemptions that allow parking from Blue Badge holders and potential loading activity. Picking up and setting down passengers is a standard exemption to waiting restrictions, which is particularly important for disabled passengers.

9.3 No loading

Loading should also normally be prohibited during the operational hours of a bus lane, although there may occasionally be reasons why it needs to be allowed, such as off-peak loading in a 24hour bus lane. Loading bans can control sections of route where servicing would otherwise obstruct bus movements.

9.4 Loading bays

The impact of loading on bus lanes should be minimised, and to achieve this, hours should be restricted, or loading bays inset or relocated away from the main carriageway, such as within side roads. Identifying specific locations that do not impede bus movements is a more proactive means of controlling these activities. A loading bay sign is shown in Figure 25.

On priority corridors the proactive designation of places to load in locations that do not disrupt bus movements is recommended.

(Figure 25: loading bay signing)

Virtual loading bays are an alternative way of making more efficient use through advance booking of short parking or loading timeslots as the driver approaches. This enables loading or deliveries at a place and time known in advance and has been effectively implemented by Westminster City Council as part of their kerb system.

9.5 Parking controls

Where parking is permitted along bus routes, consideration should be given to whether time based or other controls are required. This would be up to the individual highway authority to consider. One factor to consider is that where time restrictions are short (for example, 30-minute waiting) this is likely to create a high turnover of spaces. This turnover with vehicles frequently entering/leaving spaces can create delays for buses.

9.6 Blue Badge parking

Blue Badge holders may park on yellow line restrictions for up to three hours, provided they don’t cause an obstruction. It is important that any bus improvement measures consider where blue badge parking should be located, and it is actively managed with dedicated provision.

9.7 Red routes and urban clearways

Clearways or red routes can be used to introduce no stopping restrictions.

Red routes prohibit stopping activity to maintain the free flow of vehicles. Red routes are intended to be used strategically to deal with traffic problems assessed on a whole route or corridor basis, not to deal with issues on relatively short lengths of road.

Red routes are indicated by single or double red line road markings and can be accompanied by an upright sign prescribed by Schedule 6 of TSRGD. Single red line markings indicate that restrictions only apply during a set time period which allows parking and loading to be provided at certain times.

It is not possible to introduce a peak hour prohibition of stopping with waiting restrictions at different times; red and yellow lines cannot both be laid along the same length of road. Therefore, red route controls either operate for 24 hours or, if overnight parking can be permitted, throughout the day, typically 7 am to 7 pm. To enable buses to stop on a red route, bus stop clearways to TSRGD diagram 1025.1 are required.

A red route order should permit a licenced taxi to stop to pick up or set down passengers and the driver of a vehicle displaying a blue badge to stop to pick up or set down a disabled person. Drivers of other vehicles should not be permitted to stop for any purpose other than in an emergency.

Similar to a red route in function, the urban clearway (indicated by the sign to TSRGD diagram 646) limits stopping during peak periods, but is effectively a prohibition of waiting and loading as drivers may stop to pick up and set down passengers. It applies to both sides of the carriageway and includes footways and verges.

The Traffic Signs Manual provides guidance on signing and road markings for red routes and urban clearways.

9.8 Inset bays

Designers need to be both practical and creative in managing kerbside activity.

It is rarely practical to remove all kerbside access. Inset bays can maintain kerbside access while reducing delay for buses. This can help address concerns about removal of loading or parking provision which in turn can help deliver bus user priority measures. These can operate for longer time periods, which may provide advantages over standard kerbside bays. However, they should not reduce the remaining footway width below the recommended minimums set out in Inclusive Mobility.

Some examples are shown below in Figure 26 and Figure 27.

(Figure 26: inset flexible space loading bay)

(Figure 27: inset bays in bus lane)

10. Priority at junctions (non-signalised)

10.1 Other junction treatments

Time spent waiting at junctions can be a source of delay to buses therefore giving priority, or controlling movements, is an important tool in improving bus route performance. This section focuses on give-way and other junction types; traffic signal junctions are discussed in Chapter 11.

Measures to support buses include:

- vehicle turn bans
- turn ban exemptions for buses
- side road closures

10.2 Vehicle turn bans

Vehicles turning at junctions into side roads can cause delay to vehicles including buses, particularly right turning movements. High levels of pedestrian movements across side roads may also contribute to vehicle delays. Prohibiting turns either permanently, or at key times of the day, can remove obstruction and delay to buses and should be considered. Rationalisation of junctions and access points along a corridor is an important means of improving mainline flow by minimising delay. It can also be used to support other measures designed to enable active travel choices. The potential impact on other traffic should always be considered as part of any such proposals.

10.3 Turn ban exemptions for buses

Exempting buses from turn bans is a simple form of priority and is often used with other measures such as contra flow bus lanes or bus only streets.

10.4 Roundabouts

Roundabouts should be designed to ensure safe passage for bus movements, with sufficient lane widths and entry/exit path radii to safely accommodate vehicle swept paths. Mini roundabouts can be inappropriate for use along routes frequently used by buses due to difficulty in completing turning movements. Sharp turning movements when negotiating mini roundabouts can lead to poor ride comfort and pose a safety risk, particularly for standing passengers who are at increased risk of falling.

Bus priority can be more easily incorporated for roundabouts with multiple entry and exit lanes, including the use of bus lanes and bus gate pre-signals. Bus gate pre-signals can assist buses within the nearside lane to progress to the offside where a route requires a bus to turn right at a roundabout. Traffic signal priority (TSP) can also be utilised at traffic signal-controlled roundabouts, whereby the detection of a bus approaching the roundabout can lead to that approach arm being provided with priority.

Innovative approaches to the design of roundabouts, including "throughabout" roundabouts which allow traffic to pass directly through the middle of the central island, as shown in Figure 28, have also been used effectively to provide bus priority, such as the Sprint BRT corridor in Birmingham.

(Figure 28: throughabout with bus gate at Heybarnes Circus, Birmingham)

The placement of bus stops near a roundabout requires careful consideration, with stops on the approach arms best incorporated within a bus lane to ensure easier entry and egress. Bus stops on the exit arms should be located away from nearside lane mergers for safety reasons. Stops should be sited within an accessible distance to a formal crossing facility to assist the interchange between connecting services.

The provision of clear signing, including advanced directional signs and lane destination markings, is recommended to reduce lane changing behaviour which can cause delay and negatively impact on bus journey times.

Where buses are turning onto road from minor side roads, particularly in less urban areas, the conversion to a roundabout can be effective in reducing bus delays and should be considered.

11. Traffic signal priority and other technologies

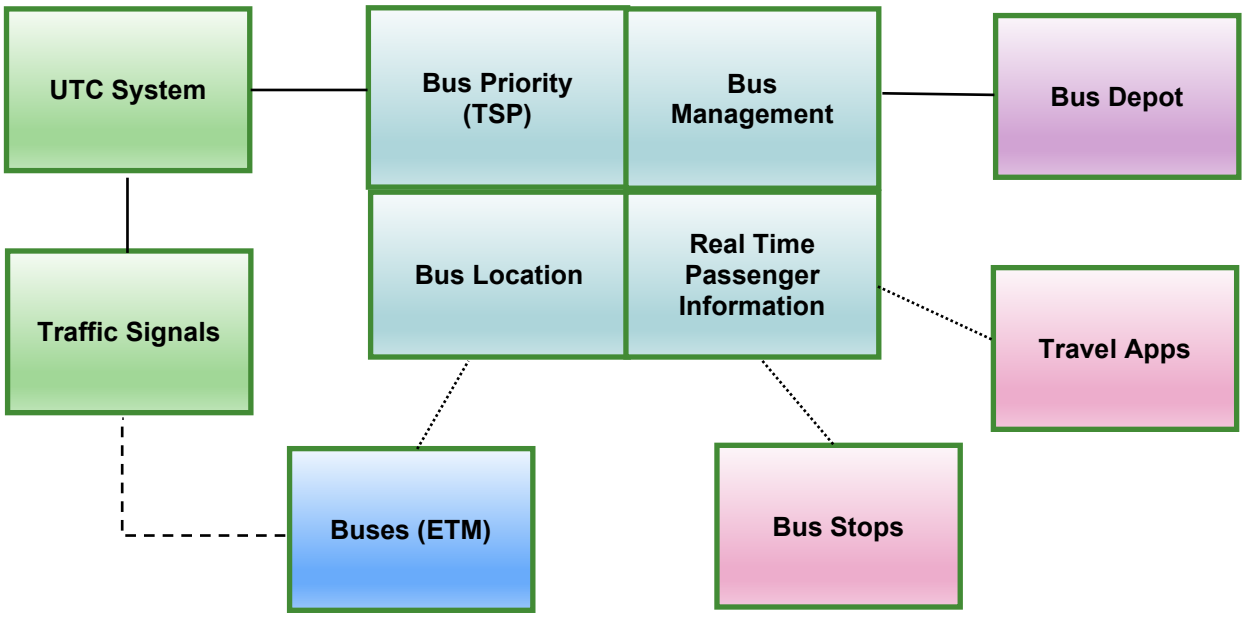
11.1 Introduction

Traffic signal technology has been used to improve bus journey times for many years. With space for physical bus priority measures at a premium in some places, and an increasing demand for more reliable service information, the development and application of newer, more evolved, technologies, and associated systems, has become essential to provide a range of service reliability and user information services. The evolution of technology has seen a major growth in recent years of the availability of advanced technological solutions for both local and network-based systems, tending towards a more centralised and coordinated approach.

Technological advancements provide the ability to locate and identify individual buses across a network through automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems, using onboard electronic ticketing machines (ETM) to establish their position through the global positioning system (GPS), as outlined in Figure 29. The ability to identify individual bus locations, and obtain other passenger information through the ETM, allows useful data to be provided to various control and centralised information systems.

This data can be used to control, influence and monitor journey times, with the aim of improving and maintaining reliable journey times. This can be achieved by combining the centralised information with traffic signal-based systems providing traffic signal priority (TSP). The use of adaptive control systems such as urban traffic control (UTC), with split cycle offset optimisation technique (SCOOT), for network coordination can provide better control of journey times by understanding if priority should be given, how much priority is required, and where, within a network, priority gives the most benefit. For a more local, but less informative, approach TSP via local selective vehicle detection (SVD), under microprocessor optimisation vehicle actuation (MOVA) control will provide some benefits over basic traffic signal control.

Information from the centralised system can be also used to provide reliable service information, such as bus times, current usage and accessibility information, through real time passenger information (RTPI) systems. This information can then be relayed to bus stops, variable message signs, mobile apps and websites.



(Figure 29: centralised AVL system)

11.2 Assessment of new or additional technology

General guidance on the design and use of traffic signals is given in the Traffic Signs Manual (TSM), Chapter 6. When considering the application of new or additional bus priority technology, there are several factors it is essential to consider:

The current operation of any existing systems and how the proposed new systems and technology will integrate with them;

- Where and how it will be deployed
- Its suitability
- Benefits of deployment
- Installation, maintenance and future asset management.

A review of current systems and associated assets should be carried out as part of the overall assessment to determine the need for new or additional systems. For example, ensuring UTC systems are revalidated and any faulty detection equipment is fixed may provide an improvement to journey times, meaning a reduced or even no need for specific bus priority systems. As with any technological systems, it is essential that they are suitably maintained and kept at an optimal operational state at all times to achieve the most benefit.

A review of current assets will also allow information to be gathered to understand where and how any proposed technology will be deployed and determine the suitability of the proposed technology at each location. Items that should be considered when assessing existing assets and locations for proposed assets include -

- Communications, if required, and whether provided by fixed broadband line or mobile networks. The type of asset may influence the choice of communications method, for example CCTV may require additional bandwidth which may be difficult at remote sites.
- Ducting and cabling for additional above or below ground infrastructure.
- Infrastructure for mounting equipment.
- Equipment cabinets including space within existing cabinets.
- Power connections.
- Other unrelated infrastructure nearby that may cause operational interference, either physically or passively.

The potential benefits of new technology should be considered both during the early stages of a proposal and then again once other technology and asset reviews have been completed as this could change the outcome of the benefits review, especially regarding cost.

Whether the chosen location can provide the required benefit should be considered. For example, placing traffic signal sites close to busy bus stops often do not work well, and sites where regular bus services operate on conflicting routes can be problematic.

The benefits of proposed technology should not be at the expense of other factors, for example traffic congestion. For example, a traffic signal junction regularly called upon to prioritise bus movements may generate significant queues for other traffic, which could create potential impacts on air quality and the local environment.

11.3 Technology for traffic signal priority (TSP)

Traffic signals are an important part of the toolkit, helping to ensure adherence to the timetable and journey time reliability. It is important to have a clear strategy and approach for the deployment of TSP technology, that maximises benefit for bus operations whilst minimising impact on wider traffic flow, in line with wider traffic management objectives. This should be documented so that operators, those responsible for network management and policy makers are aware of the approach and priorities. Traffic signal priority works best when delivered over a network and as part of a package of other measures. Making short term changes to the operation of a junction to move buses through rarely works in isolation as it reduces junction efficiency and disbenefits all traffic. Conversely, when well delivered, traffic signal priority for buses can also provide benefits for general traffic in the same stream.

TSP for buses has been available for many years in various forms. Modern systems are based around on-bus ETM and AVL systems and service running information. These require either a link between the local bus and the signals, or a link between a central server link to the traffic signals or UTC system.

Digital based platforms with cloud-based data are becoming more widely available, which can make information more accessible to other intelligent transport (ITS) based systems. More versatile and flexible ways for TSP systems to make requests to traffic signal controllers and adaptive systems such as SCOOT and MOVA are becoming available.

11.4 Traffic signal priority, detection technology

Buses can be given priority at traffic signals more effectively if the signal can be made to respond to the arrival of the bus. This is known as selective vehicle detection. Traditionally, this was achieved by fitting buses with an electronic device which can be detected either by satellite using GPS techniques or by static equipment in the highway which is linked to the traffic signal controller. The most common form of this is a bus fitted with a transponder which is detected as it passes over an inductive loop slotted into the road surface.

With the evolution of digital and wireless cloud-based systems, SVD inputs have become virtual, through the use of GPS via the ETM, and form part of a centralised AVL system. Older types of SVD, such as the inductive loop may still have a place. Various types of SVD and AVL are listed below.

SVD and AVL systems provide inputs to traffic signal controllers and/or a UTC system to enable priority to be given to buses. The methods of providing that priority and the level of priority differ depending on the method of control in operation at a site, for example whether localised vehicle actuated (VA), microprocessor optimised VA (MOVA), or network UTC/SCOOT control.

11.5 Inductive loops / magnetometers - SVD

An inductive loop uses a loop of cable buried in the highway surface. The inductance of the loop changes under certain conditions, in particular, the presence or passage of ferrous material. The change in inductance is then monitored to detect a vehicle.

Magnetometers operate in similar way as inductive loops but use magnets rather than loops of cable. They use wireless technology to communicate back to the traffic signal controller via access points.

Simple inductive loops and magnetometers may be suitable in areas where buses are the only vehicles present. More advanced versions are capable of detecting vehicle axles and axle spacing to identify different vehicle types and provide selective vehicle detection input to traffic signal priority systems, which may be suitable in mixed traffic.

11.6 Vehicle based radio transmission units - SVD

Similar to, transponder technology, a vehicle can be fitted with a radio frequency identification (RFID) tag which uses specific radio frequencies to communicate with a receiver linked to the traffic signal controller.

11.7 Radar detection - SVD

Much like the inductive loop, the radar detector is a commonly used form of detection technology for standard traffic signal detection but with recent advancements radar detection can be used for SVD applications as well.

Advanced radar detection systems are able to be selective by analysing the larger radar signals returned from buses providing a local TSP input into the traffic signal controller. This technology can be used at a bus gate or in conjunction with a dedicated bus lane to provide priority at the signals. However, it may not be able to distinguish between large vehicles like HGVs, and buses.

11.8 ANPR & AI cameras - SVD

This type of detection technology is still emerging, but there are trials currently being carried out (2023) to help develop this technology for future use.

Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) / artificial intelligence (AI) powered traffic camera uses advanced vehicle classification algorithms to differentiate between vehicle types and provides a local TSP input into the signal controller. This requires onsite setup and calibration.

It should be noted that these ANPR / AI cameras are purely for detection purposes and are not capable of carrying out enforcement activity.

11.9 Electronic ticket machine (ETM) - AVL

The ETM uses GPS technology to allow buses to be detected at selected points along the network by the use of virtual detection zones (loops). Virtual loops are programmed into the on-board computer which, via wireless communications, is able to send data to both local control facilities and / or network-based control systems, such as Urban Traffic Control (UTC). The ETM forms part of the centralised AVL system and is currently the only detection system that can provide the journey ID, service and route data, that is needed to offer selective TSP based on service hierarchy or degree of lateness.

11.10 Local control traffic signal priority

Local SVD applies a basic level TSP input into the traffic signal controller. Typically, this is via vehicle profiling through inductive loops or above ground technology. Once a filtered priority detection event has been identified, an output from the detector is passed to the traffic signal controller.

Under local vehicle actuated (VA) control, the request for bus priority will be serviced in the form of a hurry call which will request an immediate move to and/or extend a specified stage as long as there are no conflicting safety requirements within the controller. Due to the impact of hurry calls on normal operation, they can have a negative impact on overall junction capacity if called frequently; this impact can be moderated by inhibiting repeated demands (a prevent period) for a specified time.

Under local MOVA control, the bus priority request is passed as a specific detector output into the outstation transmission unit (where MOVA software is running) to be actioned. Unlike VA, MOVA introduces flexibility in the level of priority given to particular links or vehicles and incorporates optimisation and recovery techniques that make this a popular platform for bus TSP control. This flexibility includes:

- the use of emergency demand immediate moves that are only subject to the constraints of safety critical minimum periods, or priority demands that are constrained by other traffic related controls, for example emergency demands or other priority demands that will take precedence

- the ability to take specific actions on emergency/priority links to control the application of stage truncation, stage skipping and stage extensions

The main benefits of local TSP include:

- they can be applied to any traffic signal-controlled location

- reliability, if installed and maintained properly

- they are applied locally, without the need for a UTC system

Disbenefits of local TSP include:

- TSP demand will be generated for all public service vehicles, including those not in service

- hardware and installation works required at each traffic signal controller location

- cannot provide the journey ID, service and route data, that is needed to offer selective TSP based on service hierarchy or degree of lateness

Where local SVD is being installed, there will be a need to install the physical infrastructure and update the traffic signal configuration information and/or MOVA datasets to interpret the new inputs and outputs. In addition to undertaking a signal controller commissioning, TSP validation must be undertaken to ensure it is operating as intended and for the on-site conditions.

11.11 Network adaptive control traffic signal priority

In addition to be able to read and influence local bus priority inputs and outputs where local SVD is present, network adaptive control systems such as urban traffic control (UTC) enable network wide bus priority strategy and can utilise bus AVL systems such as electronic ticket machine (ETM) and wireless communications for bus TSP.

SCOOT-UTC bus priority is a common platform for applying TSP in urban areas, due to its adaptive control and optimisation techniques. Similar to MOVA, SCOOT has varying methods and user-selectable degrees of influence in applying TSP and goes through a recovery process that re-optimises the SCOOT region following a TSP demand.

If the site is under UTC control there may be no requirement to modify the controller, however, to implement UTC bus priority software design will be required to; produce bus service operators data-bundle including associated virtual loop locations; set up the required secure VPN links between AVL centre and UTC system; set up the UTC installation for the for the receipt of TSP; undertake controller commissioning and TSP validation.

The main benefits for AVL via ETM include:

- no additional physical infrastructure required
- low cost to set up TSP when AVL/ETMs in operation
- no physical maintenance required, reducing costs associated with lane closures and traffic management
- virtual loop locations can be adjusted if queueing distances increase or decrease

Disbenefits for AVL via ETM include

- only works with sustained UTC connection – if connection is lost, a very low risk, the system will not operate
- not all bus operators currently have on board technology
- relies on local authorities using ETM / AVL bus open data (BOD).

Case study: SCOOT signal technology, Greater Manchester

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) has used technology that tracks buses to provide those that are running late with priority at traffic signals. Improving the punctuality of these buses has been achieved by linking two distinct systems:

The TfGM urban traffic control (UTC) system, which controls traffic signals across Greater Manchester.

The automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems of bus operators, which use GPS satellites to track buses and their adherence to schedule.

The majority of traffic signals connected to the TfGM UTC system are controlled by SCOOT (Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique), an adaptive form of control that co-ordinates signal timings to reduce delay and improve traffic flow. A facility within SCOOT allows late running buses to be prioritised as they approach the signals.

The link between them allows messages to be sent from the AVL systems to the UTC system when buses reach trigger points upstream of the traffic signals. These messages include information on buses' adherence to schedule and if they are late then SCOOT can grant priority in one of two ways:

An extension, which holds the signals on green until the bus has passed the stop line.

A recall, which brings the signals back round to green earlier than if there had not been a late running bus.

Differential priority, based on lateness, allows it to be granted to those buses that most benefit from it. Additionally, in combination with knowledge of how busy the junction is, SCOOT can minimise the impact on other road users by only granting priority to buses if they are late and if the junction is not over-capacity.

When installed at sites already under SCOOT control, this form of priority is not expensive, as there is no requirement for new physical infrastructure. Large numbers of passengers on buses also mean that the benefits can be large, making SCOOT bus priority a cost-effective solution. This was demonstrated by TfGM analysis showing that buses granted priority received significant time savings and that the impact on general traffic was minimal. Following an initial trial, these positive results led to TfGM rolling out SCOOT late running bus priority at traffic signals across Greater Manchester.

12. Application of other technology

12.1 Real time passenger information (RTPI)

RTPI is an integral part of the centralised AVL system. It uses the bus's ETM, providing live information about bus arrival times, passenger numbers (space availability on the bus) and accessibility of the bus. Information provided by RTPI systems can be disseminated in a variety of ways such at bus stops (see Figure 30), variable message signs and online travel apps and websites. RTPI systems help to provide confidence for passengers to make an informed and smart choice to travel by public transport. RTPI data also helps stakeholders such as bus operators and highway authorities monitor the network.

(Figure 30: bus stop electronic information sign)

12.2 Closed circuit television (CCTV)

CCTV systems can be used to monitor bus journeys, identify incident situations and enable enforcement of bus lanes and other priority measures. CCTV systems can be in either fixed locations (see Figure 31) or mobile units. Remote viewing enables real time

interventions and awareness of operational issues. It can be used at individual sites and in urban networks.

(Figure 31: bus lane enforcement camera)

12.3 Automatic bollards (bus bollards)

Automatic rising bollards can be used to control access to certain areas, such as bus only corridors. Typically used as a standalone solution, bollards are not only used as a bus priority measure but also a physical form of enforcement into bus only areas. They can also be integrated into other bus priority measures as part of a TSP solution, as shown in Figure 32, combining enforcement with traffic signal priority.

(Figure 32: TSP with integrated bus bollards and AI camera)

12.4 Urban traffic monitoring and control (UTMC) integration

Urban traffic management and control systems allow various control and monitoring systems to work together, including those used to obtain and share bus journey data. UTMC systems can maximise road network potential by creating a more robust and intelligent system. For example, it allows UTC systems to directly communicate with AVL systems as well as providing links to other key systems such as RTPI, incident & enforcement monitoring systems and systems that control and monitor Variable Message Signs.

12.5 Real time traffic prediction systems

The advancement of traffic technology and real time software solutions for traffic networks over the past few years has created the ability to monitor and predict traffic conditions, integrated control systems such as UTMC with traffic simulation software integration. Such systems combine dynamic traffic models with live traffic data to provide current and forecasted congestion across the network. They can also allow operatives to test alternative scenarios for the next hour, next day or weeks into the future. These systems allow highway authorities to predict how the network will operate allowing adjustments to be made throughout the network which in turn helps with bus journey time reliability.

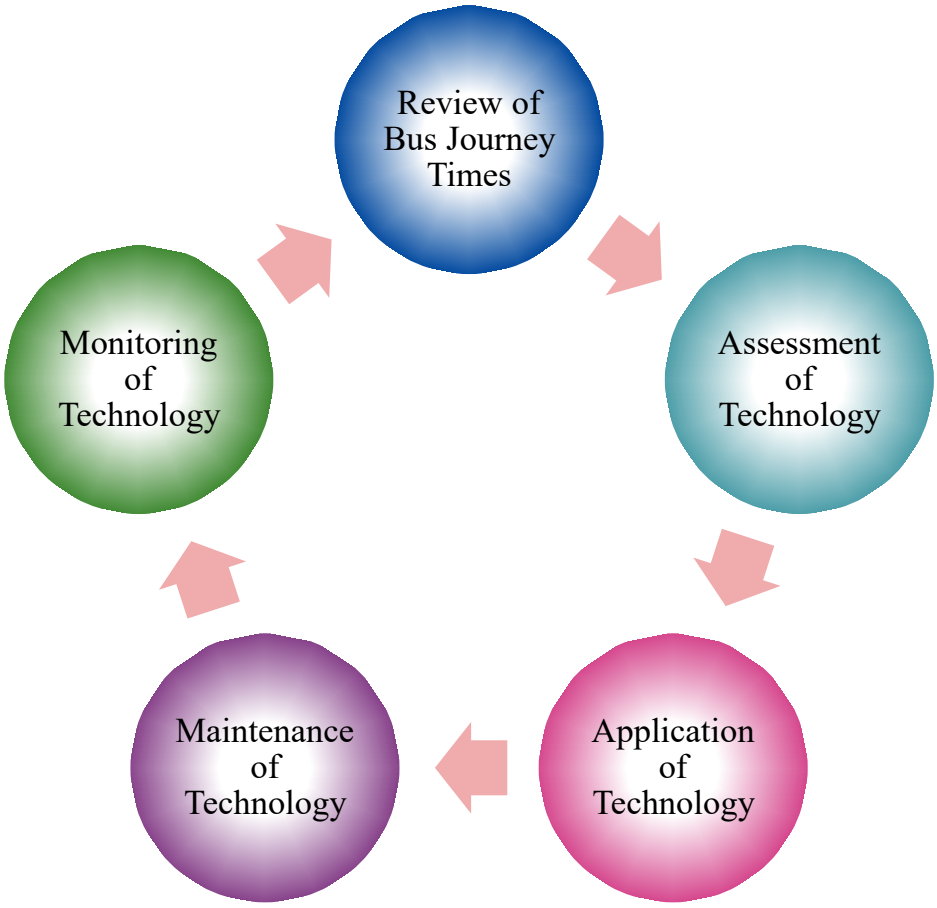
12.6 Maintenance & monitoring of technology

The monitoring and maintenance of technology is essential to ensure that it continues to operate as intended and to the same level of efficiency. Properly maintained technology, and associated systems, help keep traffic moving safely, also helping to reduce air pollution and noise levels by helping to reduce the amount of time vehicles remain idling in traffic. In addition, appropriate maintenance reduces the risk of costly repairs.

For all technological applications, it is imperative that the current technology assets including communications are maintained. A full review of the technology functionality should be undertaken quarterly as a minimum, in addition to the normal routine maintenance and monitoring periodic inspections, to maintain bus journey time reliability.

A requirement to monitor bus journey times, as well the operational condition of the technology deployed on street, is also essential.

The monitoring and maintenance of traffic-based technology is part of the life cycle for maintaining reliable bus journey times, outlined in Figure 33.



(Figure 33: monitoring and maintenance lifecycle)

12.7 Integration with other bus priority measures (non-technology based)

The design and application of technological measures alongside non-technological ones requires a good understanding of benefits each provides and how the combination of these measures gives further improvements and benefits. For example, bus lanes and TSP can work together well, with the priority provided at traffic signals enhancing the benefits provided by the bus lane.

If technological and non-technological measures are not well integrated, benefits will be reduced. For example, if a bus stop is located too close to a traffic signal junction with TSP, the system may not distinguish between a bus about to stop and one continuing to the junction. It may insert a demand that is not fulfilled, leading to unnecessary delays to other traffic or to the bus itself.

12.8 Stakeholders

A range of stakeholders should be involved when developing technological solutions. These may include:

- highway authorities
- bus operators
- contractors
- designers
- local residents and businesses
- private developers

Each will have insights which will help decision-making to ensure appropriate solutions are developed. Their individual objectives and requirements will contribute to a holistic understanding of the big picture.

13. Other complementary measures

13.1 Enforcement

Measures such as waiting and loading restrictions, bus lanes and bus gates are important elements in providing priority to bus movements and removing delay factors, but these measures will only provide benefits if other road users respect and comply with them.

Key to compliance is effective enforcement, meaning an enforcement strategy should be seen as an important component of a holistic bus user priority improvement package. Capital investment in enforcement technology should be seen as beneficial to bus services as it supports compliance, and ongoing benefits of different types of measures. Potential compliance levels should be considered in any assessment of measures.

Enforcement should be proportionate, and primarily target dangerous and irresponsible drivers. It should not be a way to raise revenue. A perception of unfair enforcement may undermine compliance with bus priority measures, and acceptance of the need for them among local communities.

Almost all local authorities have the powers to enforce waiting and loading restrictions.

All local authorities have the power to enforce bus lane restrictions through the Road Traffic Act 1991 or the Transport Act 2000.

In London, the boroughs and Transport for London have enforcement powers for a range of moving traffic contraventions under the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003.

Outside London, since May 2022 local authorities have been able to apply for powers under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 to enforce the same moving traffic contraventions as in London. Where authorities have taken these up, they are responsible for enforcing these. Where they have not, enforcement remains a police matter.

In both cases, the offence is that of disobeying a traffic regulation order indicated on street by the appropriate traffic sign. The signs covered include:

- No Entry

- No left or right turn
- Entering a yellow box junction when the exit is not clear
- Prohibition of motor vehicles

Well-designed traffic signing is key to ensuring drivers are clear about where they may go, and that any enforcement is fair. Local authorities must ensure traffic signing is compliant in design, is properly placed so that drivers can see it in time to avoid fines, and accurately conveys the restriction in the Traffic Regulation Order. The good practice advice in Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual should be followed.

Advice for authorities wishing to apply for powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions is given in statutory guidance published by the Department and available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-lane-and-moving-traffic-enforcement-outside-london/traffic-management-act-2004-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities-outside-london-on-civil-enforcement-of-bus-lane-and-moving-traffic-contravention

13.2 Bus modal priority

Network management (hierarchies/roadworks)

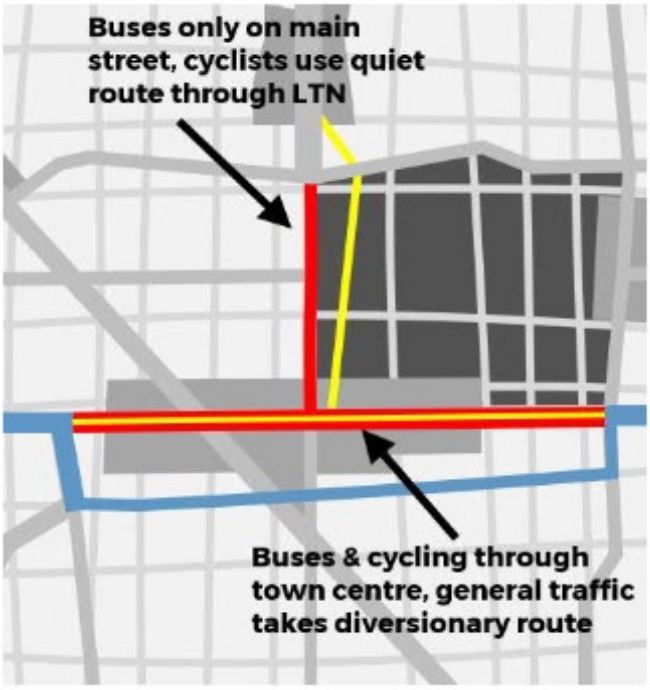
The Traffic Management Act 2004 puts a network management duty on all highway authorities to manage their road networks to provide expeditious movement of traffic, with a view to reducing congestion. 'Traffic' covers all modes of transport including buses, pedestrians and cyclists. In the context of bus service improvements this has two aspects:

- network planning and prioritisation
- network resilience and operational service maintenance

Highway authorities should be clear on the modal priorities along a given section of road, or junction. However, in terms of allocation of road space, or the way for example traffic signals are controlled, this will depend upon network priorities. Often within spatially constrained urban areas providing priority infrastructure e.g., bus or cycle lanes, is not physically possible without land acquisition which may not be feasible. It should also not be assumed providing for every mode with dedicated infrastructure achieves the best outcome due to impacts on operational performance, safety and placemaking due to the width of corridors involved.

Designers, in line with the MfS should seek to define movement networks indicating the relative importance for each link across the network. From a bus perspective this is important in identifying those links which bus user priority should be proactively considered, and where bus and passengers' considerations may be of more importance than other modes including not only motor vehicles but also cycles. User priorities versus modal network priorities are outlined in Figure 34.

Consider first	Pedestrians
	Cyclists
	Public transport users
	Specialist service vehicles (e.g. emergency services, waste, etc.)
Consider last	Other motor traffic



(Figure 34: user priority versus modal network priority)

13.3 Experimental and temporary traffic regulation orders

Under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 local authorities have powers to introduce experimental or temporary traffic regulation orders (TROs).

Temporary TROs are used to manage short-term closures. They enable works such as felling, bridge repairs and other maintenance work to be carried out. They can be in place for a maximum of 18 months.

Experimental TROs are made for a maximum of 18 months and can provide an effective way to test and refine measures before making them permanent. Measures such as bus lanes, bus gates or bus only streets are the type of measure best suited to an experimental TRO approach. ETROs incorporate a statutory 6-month objection period after making, during which the traffic authority must consult with statutory consultees, including bus operators.

Case study: experimental and temporary traffic regulation orders, Cumbria

Westmorland and Furness Council (WFC) (Formerly Cumbria County Council) and Cumberland Council have introduced experimental and temporary traffic regulation orders (TROs) on several roads within the Lake District national park in recent years in response to growing issues around uncontrolled and potentially unsafe parking practices. TROs can be used to manage large fluctuations in seasonal or event-based demand and can also facilitate short-term closures, enabling repair and maintenance works to be carried out.

Growing visitor numbers travelling to the national park by car puts increased pressure on the road network leading to dangerous and obstructive vehicle parking at the roadside, particularly at the weekends and during school holidays. This has caused issues for bus services and emergency vehicles which have been unable access the full extent of the road to pass clearly – leading to long delays and response times.

Experimental TROs have been used successfully in areas including Pooley Bridge, Grange, Borrowdale and Ambleside to prohibit dangerous waiting and parking of vehicles as well as to test the introduction of new restrictions, such as school streets. Both orders are quicker and easier to implement than permanent TROs as there are fewer requirements to consult the public before enforcement. These TROs also act as a useful trial for temporary measures which can help support the case for full delivery and implementation.

Source:

https://www.localgov.co.uk/Council-takes-emergency-measures-to-improve-Lake-District-traffic-/54617

13.4 Network resilience and roadworks

The impact on bus users, stops and routes should be considered within any temporary traffic management planning for road works or street works. Maintaining access for buses is important not only due to their place in the use hierarchy but also because of the potential impacts on more vulnerable parts of the community by closing or removing bus access or stops.

Access to bus stops and routes should be maintained during roadworks. If a stop needs to be closed or relocated measures should be taken to ensure passenger access, including suitable crossing or footways to any alternative stop. Stop closures should be publicised, for example through local media so that local passengers are aware. Stops closed with diversion signing on its own may not be obvious to some groups, particularly visually impaired people, and additional ways of alerting people should be considered. These may include physically covering the bus timetable and closing the shelter where present.

For some works temporary priority measures should be considered if delays are caused.

13.5 Cashless ticketing

Cashless or pre-purchase ticketing systems can reduce boarding time at bus stops. Given the proportion of total journey time that is spent at stops any measures that reduce this will help improve the performance of a bus service. These systems can be app or smartcard based or use payment cards - factors to consider in choosing such systems should include ensuring apps are accessible, and that alternatives are available for people who do not have access to smartphones or online systems.

13.6 Ride quality / maintenance

The on-board experience for passengers is a key part of delivering a complete door to door journey, including ride quality. Roads with poor quality road surfacing, potholes and rutting can significantly contribute to poor ride quality and can in some instances leads to injury slips and falls. Where possible when improvements for buses are being considered these should be integrated with maintenance works, or resurfacing.

13.7 Operational maintenance of technology

As discussed in Chapter 11, maintaining traffic signals regularly can significantly contribute to bus user priority. Ensuring the hardware, especially detectors, are working is important for ongoing reliability and performance. It is also important for authorities to regularly check that the times and control plans are appropriate. Networks evolve over time, and regularly reviewing traffic signal installations will support better passenger experiences.

14. Future application of bus user priority guidance

14.1 Overview

This guidance provides a recommended basis for supporting and prioritising buses and their passengers within an integrated road network as it currently operates. It has set out key design principles and redefines bus priority to focus on the bus user and a whole-journey experience within the context of supporting traditional local bus services and fleets.

Embracing future innovation in vehicle technology and making transport modes look and feel part of the same system will help to enable seamless passenger journeys. Public transport itself might not be able to offer door-to-door journeys, but when combined with active and micromobility modes it can rival the car, making it a realistic and attractive choice for people. A new understanding of travel as seamless, multi-modal and continuous will replace traditional notions of moving from A to B. Passengers of tomorrow's public transport system are likely to be mode-agnostic – choosing whichever mode gets them to their destination via the fastest, most efficient or most direct route, depending on their preference.

Successful transport systems will therefore operate as a network of 'civic' transport modes, combining public and private providers. The design principles and focus on bus user priority as described in this guidance will remain just as relevant as schemes involving demand responsive transport and automated vehicles become more prevalent.

When developing or supporting schemes that involve these forms of public transport, LTAs should consider how they can appropriately apply this bus user priority guidance to improve scheme development. This could include but is not limited to exploring the following aspects.

14.2 Inclusive transport

In 2018 the government committed to support the creation of an inclusive transport system by 2030, enabling disabled people to travel easily, confidently and without additional cost. Building accessibility into scheme design from the beginning can help ensure that bus services not only meet the basic needs of disabled people, but actively attract their custom

and that of their families and friends, providing choices that non-disabled people take for granted. With an aging population, transport design which works for disabled people is often more usable by everyone, future-proofing installations and ensuring their longevity as passenger requirements evolve.

14.3 Faster, reliable, joined-up services

Improving reliability is crucial to the operation and attractiveness of public transport services. Bus user priority should be established on corridors identified as core public transport routes, enabling faster, more reliable journeys. High-quality roadside infrastructure at bus stops and mobility hubs, as well as a public realm that supports and encourages active transport is also required to build consumer trust in public transport as a viable and attractive alternative to car use.

Transfers between services can be improved by well designed infrastructure where bus routes coincide. This improves the interchange experience for passengers, and reduces the difficulty, perceived and actual, of changing service.

14.4 Demand responsive transport

The move to less fixed route bus services through demand responsive transport (DRT) will mean that aspects of a fixed route will no longer apply.

Services in general will continue to make use of existing bus stops. Therefore, the importance of access for passengers from origin to the stop remains important as part of the experience, as does the bus stop itself.

In terms of on-road priority measures DRT may place greater emphasis on indirect measures. Technology and traffic signals are likely to become more important as the ability for communication between vehicles, traffic signals and a UTMC system enables priority to be given wherever a vehicle comes from.

14.5 CAV/AV

The advent of connected and autonomous mobility (CAM) / connected and automated vehicles (CAVs) and the possibilities around DRT that they enable could impact the level of and provisions for bus user priority that is required along existing bus corridors.

The user priority requirements and impacts of CAM / CAVs acting as mass transit may be different from existing bus services and will depend on the operational design domain, including the level of segregation as well as the future mix of vehicles. This may require changes to:

- bus stop infrastructure, including the spacing and length and potential provision of charging infrastructure
- safety and security measures including wider considerations such as access to a reliable and secure 5G (or equivalent) network
- the location, sizing and purpose of a remote operation centre

- depot / CAV parking facilities
- charging infrastructure for electric vehicles

14.6 Segregated busways

Segregated or guided busways are a form of bus-only road corridor that are usually purpose built, as shown in Figure 35. They may be guided or non–guided and are typically set within concrete channels. Additional wheels mounted on the side of the bus assist with guiding it along the channel, enabling a reduction in width compared with a conventional bus lane. The physical road infrastructure associated with a busway can provide reassurance to residents of an area of a long-term commitment to bus connectivity. The Guided Busway Construction Handbook produced by Britpave should be referred to for further guidance on the technical requirements for segregated busways.

In the UK they have had limited use however they are an option that can be considered especially within the context of a city/region/area wide transport strategy.

Fasttrack in Dartford provides an unguided busway network to connect large communities which have previously been severed by challenging topography and bypassing major roads and railways. Similarly, integration of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway with residential environments at Arbury Camp and the New Town at Northstowe is a notable benefit that has been recognised of the scheme.

(Figure 35: segregated busways)

Appendices

A.1 example theory of change template

Rationale for intervention (need)

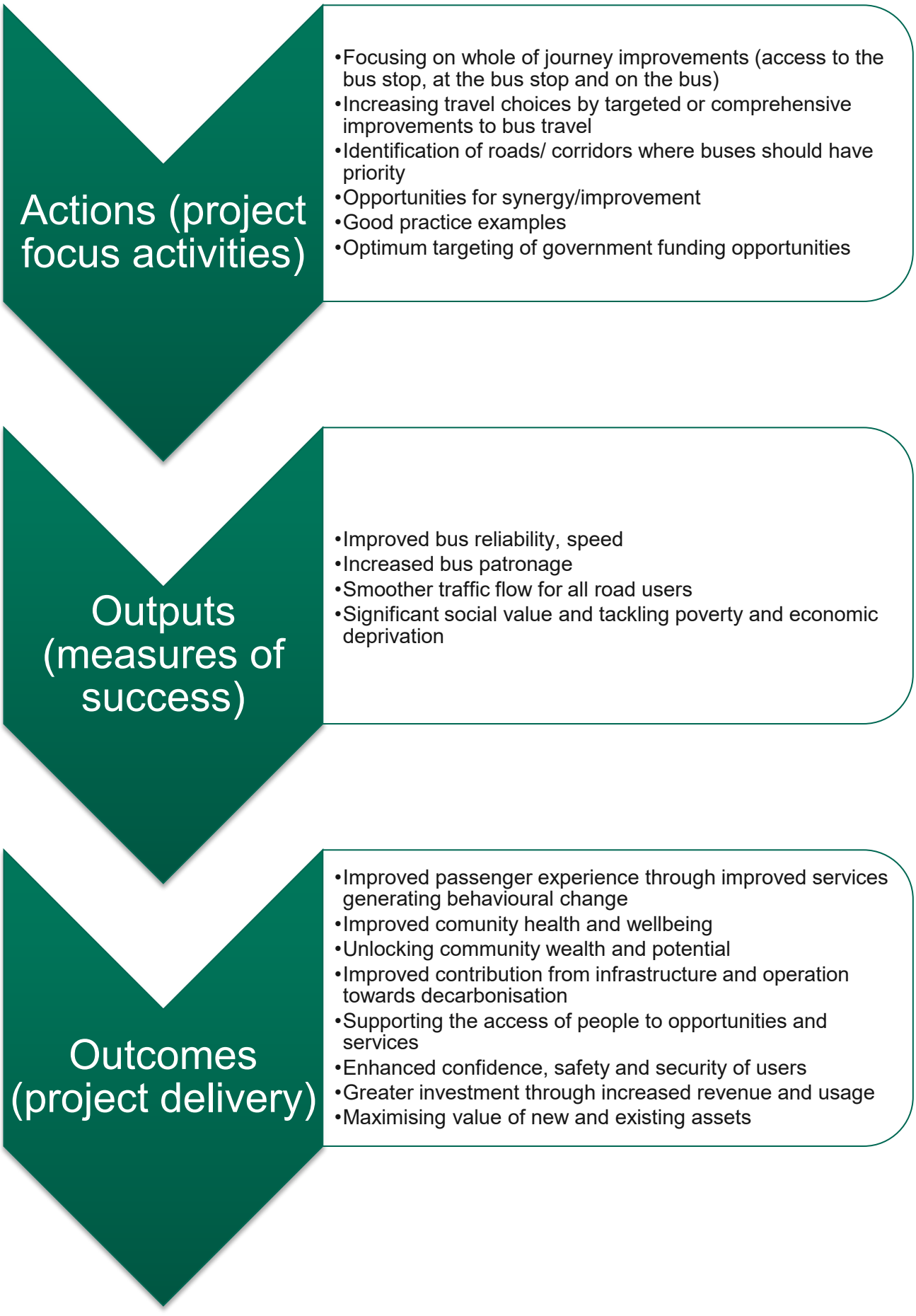
- The road network is becoming increasingly congested, leading to unreliable bus services
- Reduced year on year bus patronage
- Identification of economically disadvantaged areas locally
- social isolation of specific locations (e.g. rural communities)
- Desire to improve public transport choice through better buses (speed, reliability, patronage, safety)
- Public sector, working with the private sector, acting as the enabler of change, driving improvements, intervening directly where possible

Objectives (core priorities)

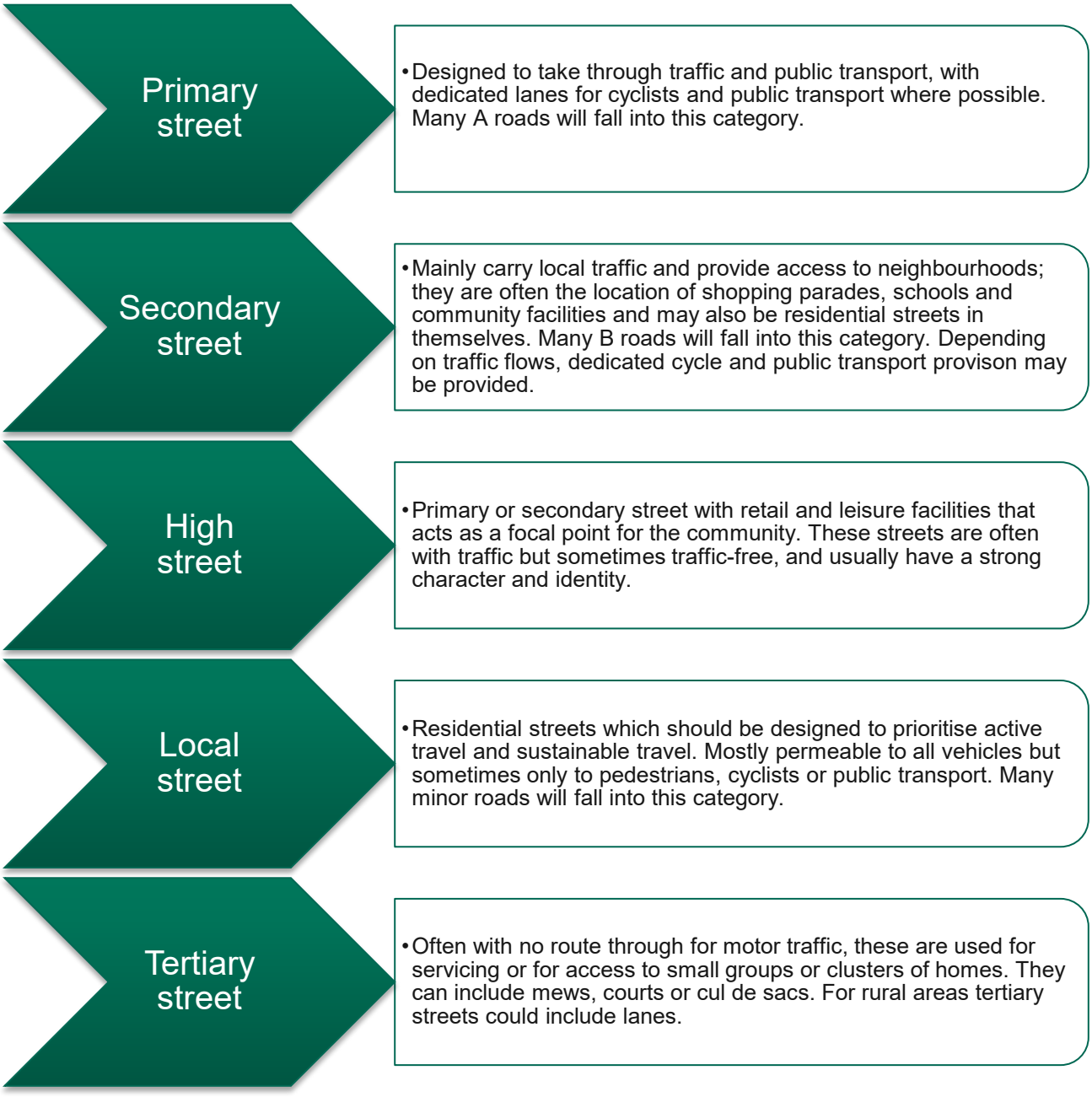
- Meeting the social and economic needs of local communities and bus passengers
- Ensuring that priority measures help rather than hinder the flow of traffic - installing bus lanes only when needed
- Avoid adverse impacts on local businesses and other road users wherever possible
- Positive contribution to public health
- Improving accessibility for all, regardless of age and ability, for work, leisure and services
- Reducing congestion
- Achieving value for money and economic growth

Inputs (The drivers of change)

- Bus Services Act 2017
- National bus strategy
- The Plan for Drivers
- Local transport plans
- Bus service improvement plans (BSIPs)
- Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs)
- Central govenment, regional and local funding opportunities
- Bus user priority guidance including 6 core design principles
- Network management duty


Actions (project focus activities)
•Focusing on whole of journey improvements (access to the bus stop, at the bus stop and on the bus)
•Increasing travel choices by targeted or comprehensive improvements to bus travel
•Identification of roads/ corridors where buses should have priority
•Opportunities for synergy/improvement
•Good practice examples
•Optimum targeting of government funding opportunities
Outputs (measures of success)
•Improved bus reliability, speed
•Increased bus patronage
•Smoother traffic flow for all road users
•Significant social value and tackling poverty and economic deprivation
Outcomes (project delivery)
•Improved passenger experience through improved services generating behavioural change
•Improved comunity health and wellbeing
•Unlocking community wealth and potential
•Improved contribution from infrastructure and operation towards decarbonisation
•Supporting the access of people to opportunities and services
•Enhanced confidence, safety and security of users
•Greater investment through increased revenue and usage
•Maximising value of new and existing assets

A.2 suggested road typology definitions



Glossary of terms

Term	Description
Bus bay	An area adjacent to the main carriageway designed to let buses pick up and drop off passengers without hindering the flow of traffic.
Bus boarder	A section of footway which has been built out into the carriageway to create a platform and dedicated area for buses to stop and passengers to wait.
Bus gate	An access restriction controlling access to bus-only streets by preventing use by general traffic. They may be implemented through rising bollards, traffic signals or upright traffic signs.
Bus only street	A section of road where access is restricted to buses only. Other vehicles may also be permitted.
Bus stop	A place where buses stop to allow passengers to board and alight safely and conveniently.
Contraflow bus lane	A one-way road with a bus lane running in the opposite direction to general traffic.
Demand responsive transport	A form of shared transport for groups or individuals which alters its route based on demand rather using a fixed route or timetabled journeys.
Inset bay	A parking bay that is protected by footway build outs at either end so that they appear to be fully or partially recessed into the footway (or other area beside the carriageway).

Loading bay	A section of road reserved for vehicles to load and unload goods, which may be restricted in duration and to certain days and times.
Local cycling and walking infrastructure plans	A strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level.
Local transport authority	defined as upper tier local authorities, usually combined authorities and county councils, but can be also 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 (MCA).
Mobility as a service	A digital interface to source and manage the provision of a transport related service(s) which meets the mobility requirements of a customer.
Mobility hub	The co-location of different mobility and mobility-related services and infrastructure. Mobility options may include car sharing services, e-cycle or e-scooter hire.
Red route clearway	A Stretch of road on which motorists are not permitted to stop during certain hours of the day. The restriction applies to the footway and verge as well as the carriageway.
Real time passenger information	An electronic information system that provides passengers with live information about the arrival of services at stations and stops.
Selective vehicle detection	A method of bus priority that allows buses to be progressed through traffic signals by prioritising their passage to improve speed and reliability for passengers.
Traffic regulation order	Legal documents that restrict or prohibit the use of the highway, made by local authorities using powers derived from The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
Traffic signal priority	A set of operational improvements that use technology to reduce dwell time at traffic signals for buses by holding green lights longer or shortening red lights.
Urban clearway	A stretch of road in an urban area on which motorists are not permitted to stop during certain hours of the day, except to pick up or set down passengers.

Virtual bus lane	A set of traffic signals along a section of road used by general traffic which uses signal-controlled priority to allows buses to progress through to improve speed and reliability for passengers.
With-flow bus lane	A traffic lane, typically on the nearside, reserved for the use of buses (and other vehicles as identified) that runs in the same direction as the traffic beside it.

Kinchbus
Loughborough's finest

Bijel Mistry
Leicester City Council
City Hall
115 Charles Street
Leicester
LE1 1FZ

24 September 2024

Dear Bijel

Bus Lane Scrutiny response and A6 bus lane project

As the operator of one of the most frequent and comprehensive interurban services into Leicester through our 24/7 skylink Derby service which runs along the A6 we are writing in support of the introduction and retention of high-quality bus priority in the Leicester area. As we run 24 hours a day we can see the difference congestion makes to travel times for bus passengers. Our scheduled times on the Loughborough – Leicester section of skylink Derby are up to 72% higher at peak times for congestion compared to when traffic is at its lightest.

Previous measures introduced, such as the new exit from St Margarets bus station, have helped to provide quicker and more consistent journey times, which enables faster journeys and improved punctuality. This in turn encourages bus use, increasing the number of people using environmentally means of travel and supporting the local economy, whether travelling for employment or leisure.

Earlier this year we made an investment of nearly £1million in improving our service, enhancing skylink Derby to run every 15 minutes Monday – Saturday daytimes between Leicester, Loughborough, East Midlands Airport and Derby, although when congestion is at its highest we do have some slightly longer gaps to allow buses more time to complete their journey. Being able to speed up journeys at these times would enable further uplifts to be made to the frequency within the existing number of buses and drivers.

We continue to encourage bus priority infrastructure to be considered alongside all highways projects. Studies have shown that such measures give back up to £7 to the wider economy for every £1 spent on quality bus priority infrastructure. We know through improved journey times and genuine benefits over the private car bus priority measures can help convert people to a more sustainable mode of transport, such as the bus.

Yours sincerely

Ross Hitchcock
Head of Commercial
Kinchbus

Unit 3, Sullivan Way, Loughborough, LE11 5QS
kinchbus.co.uk
01509 260104

23rd Sep '24.

Dear Cllr Waddington, Cllr Whittle and the EDTCE Scrutiny Commission,

We're writing to you on behalf of Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire and the other organisations listed below in support of 24-hour bus lanes.

Leicester has high levels of poverty and an associated high level of households without cars. These are people who depend on buses and active transport to get to work, school and other places. Many of our low-income communities are also exposed to higher levels of air pollution than wealthier communities. The Council needs to stop prioritising car use, which privileges those with more resources and cars, and instead support everyone to use buses and bikes which are available to far more people.

There are 3 key reasons why keeping (and developing more) 24-hour bus lanes is so important when it comes to tackling climate change and supporting both public and active transport in Leicester:

1. As well as enabling the smooth and reliable running of buses, dedicated 24-hour bus lanes provide a safe space for cyclists. Many people only feel able to cycle on busy roads where active bus lanes exist. For less confident cyclists, a cycle lane without physical segregation is not enough to feel safe - a bus lane is. We desperately need more people to feel able to choose to cycle rather than drive, and 24-hour bus lanes are an important part of that.

2. In order to reduce our carbon emissions, we have to get people out of their cars. This means using a carrot and stick approach. Bus lanes do both - they take space away from cars and they facilitate bus and bike travel. There is a considerable body of research that shows that allocating space away from cars actually reduces car use, and does not simply move traffic into other nearby roads. This because it encourages people to choose alternatives to driving. Part-time bus lanes do not send a clear message to change transport mode – full-time bus lanes do.

3. Which brings us to clarity. In order to get people to use buses, the buses need to be able to run smoothly and not get stuck in traffic. Bus lanes need to be full-time so that people are fully aware of them and are clear that this is not road space they are allowed to drive cars in. While signage is useful, a large part of driving is about memory. One's memories of driving in, and of seeing others driving in, a part-time bus lane make it harder to remember they are space allocated to buses and bikes rather than cars. This in turn makes people more likely to forget not to drive in them during the active times of day.

Finally, we want to remind you that low-income households without cars are often more susceptible to air pollution as well as being more dependent on buses. They are also the people most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (as well as contributing to it least). Climate change impacts everyone, but not equally, and Leicester City Council needs to prioritise acting to minimise carbon emissions and building climate resilience. 24-hour bus lanes are part of this.

Best wishes,

Zina Zelter (Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire)

This letter has been endorsed by the following organisations:

- Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire
- Leicester Friends of the Earth
- Caritas Leicester and Leicestershire
- Muslim Green Guardians
- South Highfields Neighbours
- Transition Leicester
- Extinction Rebellion Leicester
- The Red Leicester Choir

Bus Lanes Session 2
Evidence Review and Consideration

23 September 2024

Questions and Comments from Session 1

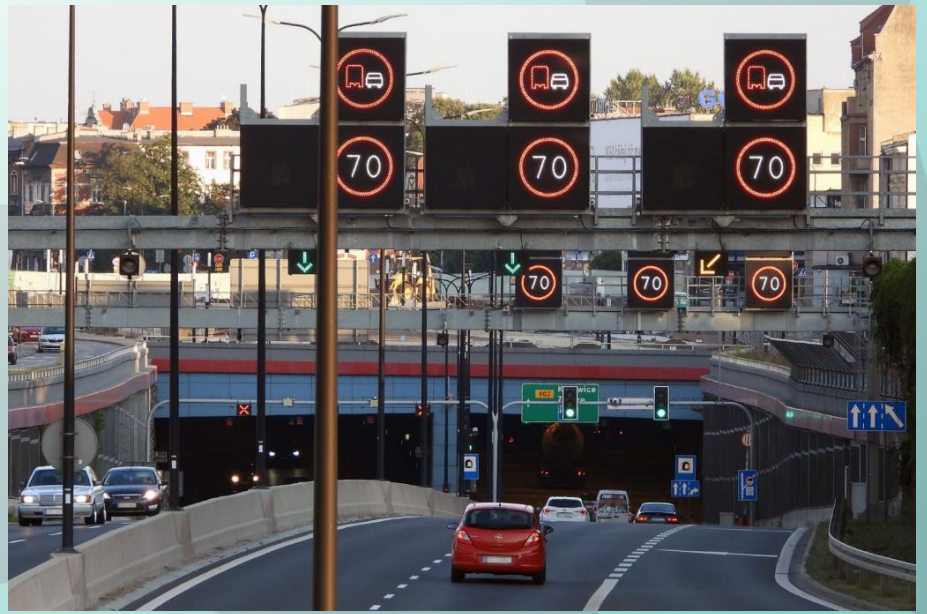
- Bus lane widths
- Variable digital signage
- Road markings and clarity
- Monitoring
- Hours of operation

Bus Lane Widths

- Regulation states that, where possible, bus lanes should be 4.25m wide, with a 4m minimum width.
- This is to allow buses to safely overtake cyclists using the bus lane.
- City bus lanes are designed to a 4.25m width where possible, local constraints may mean the width is reduced at points.

Variable Digital Signage

- UK regulations on what can be placed on digital signage is very strict – must comply with the same regulations.
- Signage would need to be gantry mounted, which is unsuitable in most locations, and carry high installation costs.
- Enforcement of variable digital systems much more difficult, requires bespoke equipment.



Road Markings and Clarity

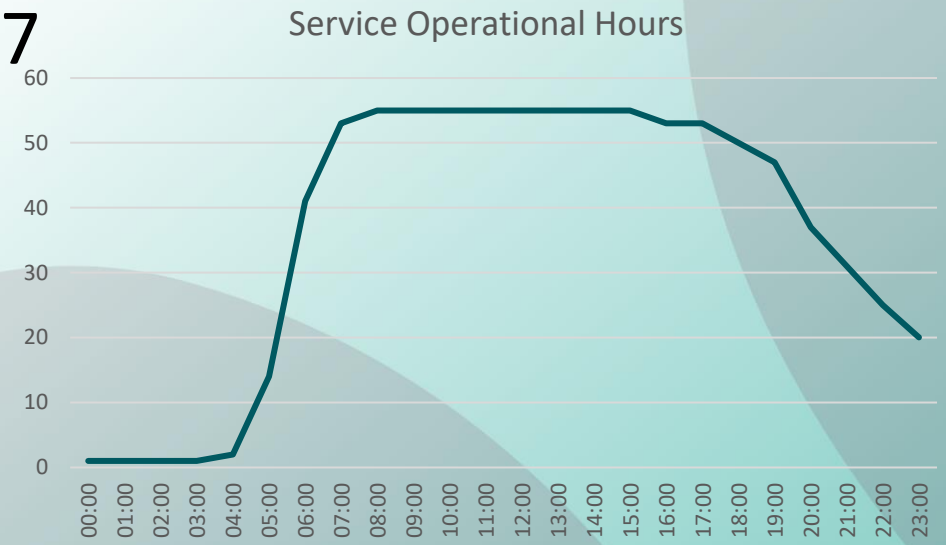
- Minimum requirement – bus lane sign and road markings. Signage strictly controlled by DfT.
- Many city bus lanes surfaced in red to aid driver awareness

Monitoring

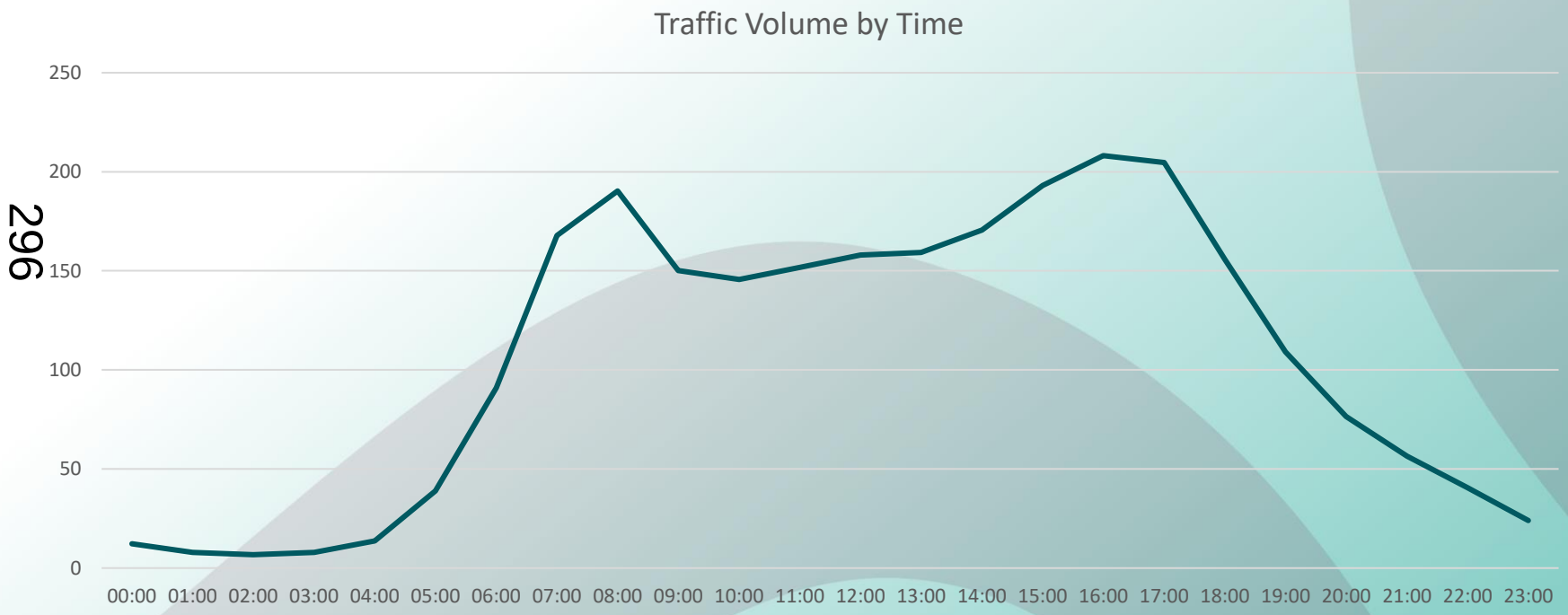
- Monitoring starts at scheme inception with a neutral data collection that feeds into the traffic model.
- Vehicle speed and volumes measured after completion – 6-12 months depending on level of disruption.
- Road Safety Audits, traffic apportionment, and vehicle delay studies undertaken in interim.
- City bus lanes schemes usually involve works to junctions and signals along the route to maximise transport efficiency

Hours of Operation

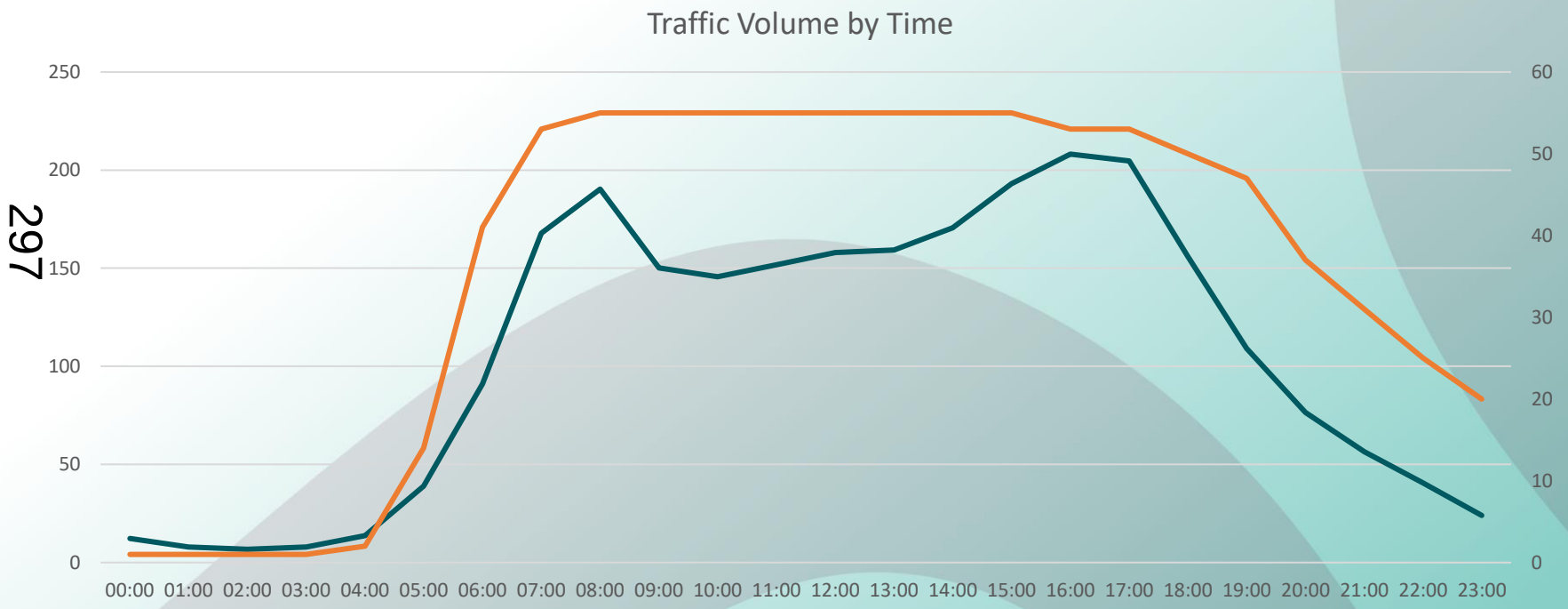
- Leicester has one 24/7 bus service – Skylink.
- Services operate majority of the day – early hours of the morning quietest period



Traffic flow – 2023, weekday averages



Traffic flow and Bus Service Volume



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taxi
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authorised
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Bus Gate
enforcement
NOW
STARTED

local
Bus lane
cameras


taxi
Bus lane
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Image ID: MFPP7T
www.alamy.com


taxi
and
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vehicles
10.30 am - 6 pm
Traffic
enforcement
cameras
PALLADIUM
STAR SPORTS
bm

Except buses, taxis and for loading
Traffic enforcement cameras


taxi
Bus lane
cameras
alamy
Image ID: MFPP7T
www.alamy.com

local
Bus lane
cameras


taxi
7 - 10 am
4 pm - Midnight
Bus lane
cameras
87
alamy
Image ID: PPEM2A
www.alamy.com

6 am - 9 pm
except for
buses, taxis &
permit holders
Traffic
enforcement
cameras

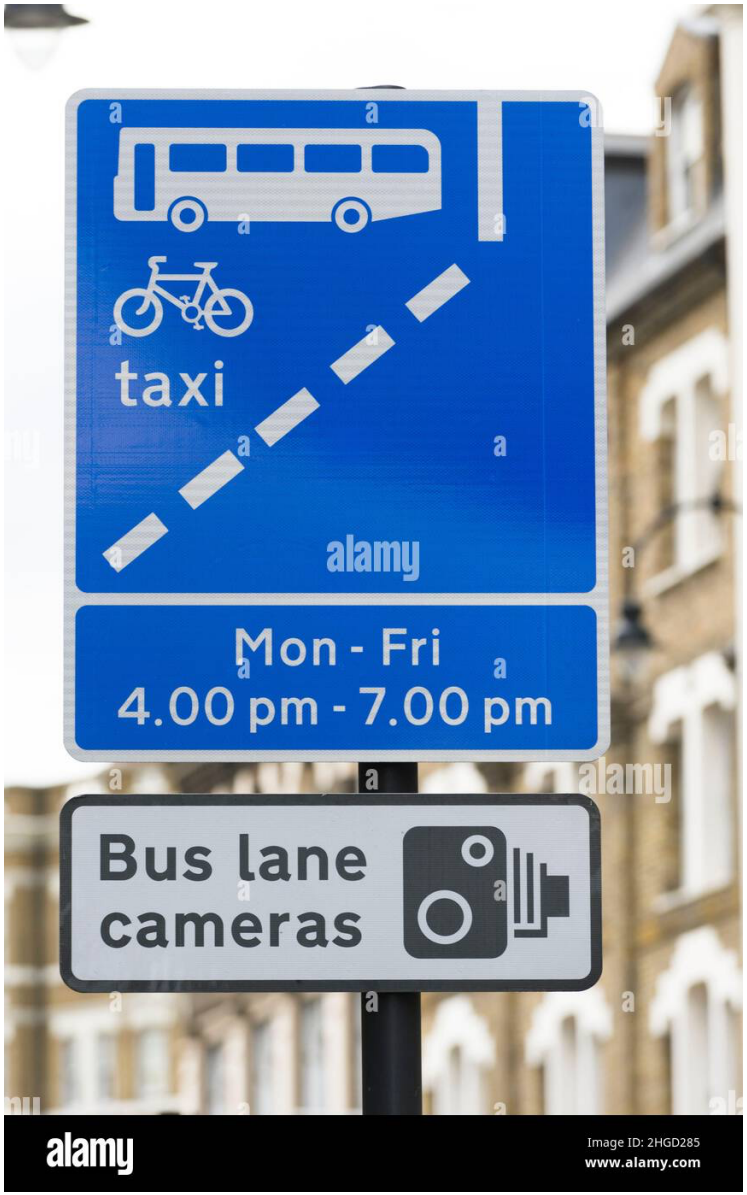
6am - 9pm
except for
buses, taxis &
permit holders
Traffic
enforcement
cameras
20
BIKE
SHOP
•repairs
•service
•Bikes
•accessories
magic bus
tacos to you
Stagecoach


taxi
Mon - Sat
7 - 10 am
4 - 7 pm
Bus lane
cameras
RED
ROUTE
alamy
Image ID: C6FDC9
www.alamy.com


permitted
taxi
24 hour
Bus lane
cameras


permitted
taxi
Mon - Fri
7.30 - 9.30 am
3.30 - 6.30 pm
Bus lane
cameras


permitted
taxi
Mon - Fri
7.30 - 9.30 am
3.30 - 6.30 pm


taxi
Mon - Fri
4.00 pm - 7.00 pm
Bus lane
cameras
alamy
Image ID: 2HGD285
www.alamy.com

Appendix 8

Motorcycles in Bus Lanes Consultation – Note from City Transport Director – 27th November 2024

The report references the recent consultation on permitting motorcycles to access bus lanes by default, and recommends that the authority wait for the publication of the government's response to this consultation.

The Department for Transport published their formal response on the 21 November, and have opted not to permit motorcycles by default, citing the lack of a robust evidence base as to the safety benefits from allowing access or the impact to other users.

The government also referenced the potential cost implications of mandating a change, with local authorities needing to amend legal orders and traffic signs.

The full consultation response may be found here:

Motorcycles in bus lanes consultation outcome - GOV.UK

Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission (EDTCE)
Work Programme 2024 – 2025

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
18 July 2024	1) An overview presentation of EDTCE services and key issues. 2) Terms of Reference. 3) 24-hour Bus Lanes – informal session scope. 4) Worker Exploitation – Informal session scope.	3) Report to consider potential informal scrutiny. 4) To include recommendation on how to proceed with the work.	
28 August 2024	1) Levelling up - Workspace Update – including sustainability of buildings. 2) Rally Park Update. 3) Market Place – Questions to City Mayor. 4) Electric Vehicle Charging – Informal Scrutiny Report. 5) Air Quality Report	2)Breakdown and further details of paths, plants, surfacing material and lighting with the Commission. 3) Report regarding option taken to come to the Commission to include more information to be given on option of partially covering square and potential ways to manage ASB in the area. 5a) Signalling and Smart Controllers to be looked into and taken forward when opportunities arise. 5b) Members to engage with consultation with schools on green energy products.	

Appendix F

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
6 November 2024	1) 20mph review – Executive Response 2) Market Place report 3) Plan for City Centre Improvement. 4) Bus Lanes Informal Scrutiny – Verbal Update	3) More detailed report to be brought to the Commission following initial report on 20 March.	
8 January 2025	1) Draft General Revenue Budget 2) Draft Capital Programme 2025/26 3) Ashton Green development update 4) 24-Hour Bus Lanes – Informal Scrutiny Report.		
12 March 2025	1) Bus Partnership Plan 2) Skills update to include ESOL – Outcomes of delivery and Skills Bootcamps. 3) Post-LLEP Arrangements and Economic Strategy Refresh. 4) Levelling up - Railway Station update. 5) Shared Prosperity Fund – Programme Report. 6) Local Plan Modifications Consultation.	1)To be brought to commission prior to going out to public consultation. 2) Raised at meeting on 31st January 2024. It was mentioned that delivery would be tracked over the next 18 months.	

Meeting Date	Item	Recommendations / Actions	Progress
23 April 2025	1) 20mph Update. 2) Electric Vehicle Strategy 3) Bio-Diversity Net Gain 4) Connecting Leicester programme – Local Transport Fund 5) Waterside Visit – feedback 6) Inward investment and place marketing		

Forward Plan items (suggested topics)

Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
Development Areas in Heart of Leicester Plan		
City Centre Maintenance	To include delivery bike regulation, retail and hospitality, and issues around development and the areas that need it.	
Local Plan	To be considered by scrutiny following the report from the inspectors. Likely to be in 2024/25 municipal year.	
Budget reductions and areas under review	Requested at meeting of 31st January 2024 when discussing Revenue Budget.	tbc
Implications of new government	Requested at meeting of 18 July 2024	