Transport Affordability

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EDTCE scrutiny

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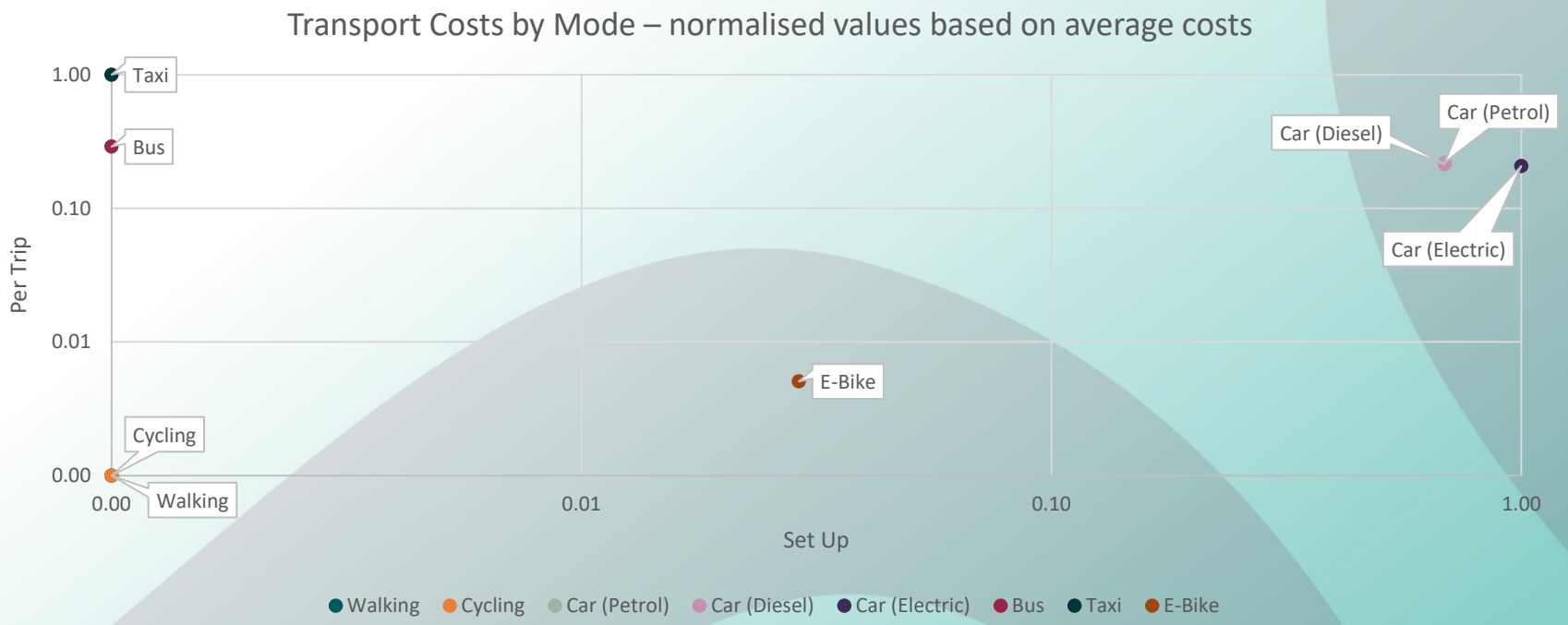
Context

- The EDTCE scrutiny commission considered a representation from young people on the cost of bus travel, citing examples of fare subsidy schemes operating in other locations (such as Manchester)
- Officers were asked to consider the cost of travel, the operation of other fare subsidy schemes, and the possibility of introducing a similar scheme in Leicester
- Majority of bus funding goes towards supporting concessionary travel, service extensions to evenings and weekends, socially necessary service provision, Park and Ride, Hop, Orbital, and ticketing initiatives.
- We currently believe there may be £1m - £3m available per year over the next three years after current commitments, pending more detailed analysis.

Cost of transport modes



Support for Walking/Wheeling/Cycling

- The absolute lowest cost modes of travel – minimal set up costs, low or zero trip costs.
- Continued support for new infrastructure across the city to ensure there are safe route options.
- Schemes and initiatives such as Leicester E-Cycles to provide options to access cycles, training, and equipment

Bus costs

- National £3 fare cap in operation until March 2027.
- Two way (2x single fares) - £6
- Flexi fare - £6.20, unlimited travel within the flexi area that day.
  - Triggers automatically via TOTO
  - Arranged via Leicester Buses EP, lower price negotiated by LCC
  - Excludes P&R

Routine Bus Costs

- Assumptions:
  - Week = 7 days
  - 4-Weekly = 4 weeks
  - Year = 12 4-Weekly
- Flexi capping provides significant discounts to users – arranged via Leicester Buses EP.
- Automatic weekly capping in effect when using TOTO – month and annual tickets require purchasing in advance

Bus Fares	Day	Week	4-Weekly	Year
Single	£ 3.00	£ 21.00	£ 84.00	£ 1008.00
Two way	£ 6.00	£ 42.00	£ 168.00	£ 2016.00
Flexi	£ 6.20	£ 23.00	£ 78.00	£ 820.00

Benchmarking

- Benchmarking undertaken against 5 other local authorities.
- Multi-modal cards removed, comparison only to equivalents of the Leicester flexi adult day ticket.
- Cheaper options are those from areas with access to greater levels of funding – such as combined authorities

Example	Authority	Cost
1 day Bee Bus	Greater Manchester Combined Authority	£5
nbus (West Midlands)	West Midlands Combined Authority	£5.20
Solo Ticket (Merseyside)	Merseytravel/Liverpool City Region Combined Authority	£5.70
West Yorkshire DaySaver	West Yorkshire Combined Authority	£6
Leicester Flexi	Leicester City Council	£6.20
Derby Spectrum	Derby City Council / East Midlands Combined Authority	£7

Existing discount schemes – Flexi Fares

Ticket	Day	Week	4-Weekly	Year
Adult Flexi	£ 6.20	£ 23.00	£ 78.00	£ 820.00
Child (<16)	£ 4.30	£ 16.00	£ 49.00	£ 540.00
Student (16+)	£ 6.20	£ 23.00	£ 78.00	£ 612.00

Ticket	Day	Week	4-Weekly	Year
Adult Flexi	100%	100%	100%	100%
Child (<16)	70%	71%	70%	66%
Student	100%	100%	100%	75%

Other subsidy and discount schemes

- English National Concessionary Travel Scheme – council offer enhancements and rail discounts, including free travel for disabled users and half fare travel before 9:30 to other pass holders
- Travel Aid – half price fare for unemployed users, valid for 2 months; funded by Leicester City Council.
- Discounted student tickets for low-income families, administered by academies and colleges independently.

National Schemes

Our Pass – Greater Manchester

- Free local bus travel for 16-18 year olds living in the CA area – c. 69,000 people
- Operating cost of £15.9m per annum in first year (2019) - £230 per person
- Franchise model for bus operation – makes introducing subsidy schemes of this nature simpler.
- Early reports – 13% increase in number of young persons undertaking bus journeys, 80-90% felt it made a positive improvement

Barnsley - MiCard

- Free travel for under 18s on services across South Yorkshire that start and end in Barnsley between 07:00 – 21:00 – c. 30,000 eligible, 17,602 cards issued.
- Operating cost (two year pilot) of £6m, combined funding from Barnsley Council and SYMCA - £100 per person
- High uptake in deprived areas, strong positive comments from users and recipients

Other schemes

- Scotland – free bus travel for under 22s, £132m per year
- Zip Oyster – free/discounted travel for under 16s on TfL network. Cost not disclosed, part of overall £400m concessionary travel cost.
- No longitudinal study yet available on other economic impacts or changes to lifelong travel patterns.

Deployment in Leicester

- 2021 Census:
  - 91,952 residents aged 0 – 17
  - 9,570 residents aged 16-18

Indicative cost per head in Leicester	Cost - 16-18	Cost - Under 18s
Manchester Model (At £230)	£ 2,205,260.87	£ 21,188,939.13
Barnsley Model (At £100)	£ 957,000.00	£ 9,195,200.00
Leicester Flexi Ticket (at £540)	£ 5,167,800.00	£ 49,654,080.00

- Table below is based on scheme operating costs for Manchester and Barnsley applied to Leicester population
- Note:
  - Costs do not scale linearly – are subject to local market conditions and uptake.
  - Governance, network, and funding differences also play a part

Conclusions

- Very high cost to introduce and maintain a subsidy scheme for young people.
- Mostly operated by authorities with high levels of government funding (combined authorities) or much lower levels of eligibility (Barnsley)
- Leicester Buses Partnership provides a variety of lower cost travel options currently.

Opportunities

- Consideration of a targeted fare subsidy scheme is included within the BSIP up to 29/30
- Will need to ensure this makes best use of resources – supports the network, encourages new trips, benefits those that are not able to travel.
- Other work with the partnership to ensure good value ongoing – higher frequency, later running, etc. all provide a benefit.

Feedback from the YPC

- Hop buses tend to be crowded and don’t fully service educational facilities – e.g. WQE
- Commercial service crowding in AM peaks – some services running double deckers when not needed, but saloons during busy times.
- Safety on buses and when boarding/alighting found as a concern – potential for a campaign with operators and LCC