
Executive Decision

Renewed Leicester Enhanced Bus Partnership including Plan and Scheme

Decision to be taken by: City Mayor

Decision to be taken on: 10 August 2026

Lead director/officer: Andrew L Smith

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Andrew Gibbons
- Author contact details: andrew.gibbons@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a renewed plan and scheme for the Leicester Buses Enhanced Bus Partnership for the period to 2029/30.

2. Recommended actions/decision

That the City Mayor approves:

- a. The renewal of the Leicester Buses Enhanced Partnership
- b. The adoption of the Leicester Buses Enhanced Partnership Plan
- c. The adoption of the Leicester Buses Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme

3. Supporting Information

In April 2022 Leicester City Council entered into a formal Enhanced Bus Partnership with local bus operators for the period 2022-2025, in which all partners agreed to deliver a range of commitments. These commitments had to be aligned with the aims and objective of an agreed bus strategy – an Enhanced Partnership plan.

These commitments included a range of collaborative actions and investments which are summarised on the partnership website www.leicesterbuses.co.uk, along with the current partnership plan.

The City Council has recently been allocated a four-year bus grant allocation by Central Government for the period 2026/7 to 2029/30. A condition of this grant funding is that the City Council enters into a renewed partnership scheme with bus operators covering the period to March 2030, together with a new plan and scheme.

This scheme sets out a new range of commitments that all partners are proposing to sign up to.

4. Detailed Report

An Enhanced Partnership is governed by legislation and guidance frameworks issued by the Department for Transport and features two parts – a plan and a scheme, attached as Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

Appendix 1 summarises the technical plan and scheme, including our progress to date across the five core areas of electric, frequent, more reliable, easier to use, and great value. This has included:

- 190 electric buses in operation, with 250 by March 2027
- 750 real time information totems with text-to-speech facilities
- A new bus station, St Margarets – the UK's first carbon neutral bus station
- 500 new bus shelters
- All operator flexi ticketing, with tap-on/tap-off day and weekly capping
- 95% of bus stops with level boarding
- Bus priority systems and bus lanes on 20 main bus routes.

Both the plan and scheme have been written with support from local bus operators.

The 'plan', attached in Appendix 2, based on research and consultation, sets out the main issues and agreed priorities to transform bus travel and help in the fair and sustainable growth of Leicester. It puts forward the further need for an intervention package of investment and a comprehensive range of actions by all the partners over 4-year period. This will enable the network to be fully electric, frequent, more reliable, easier to use and good value.

This plan is an updated version of the previous plan and takes into account additional requirement from the Transport Act 2025, together with changes that have taken place in the local bus market since 2022.

The 'scheme' sets out formal commitments of all bus operators with registered bus services in Leicester, together with the Council, to deliver a range of projects and changes over the period from August 2026 to March 2030. Unlike the plan, the scheme is binding on all parties.

The proposed financial commitments set out in the scheme are fully funded by government grant and are included within the council's capital programme. The committed dates for action are based on the conditions of these grants.

Other commitments relate to the agreement of all partners to undergo further intervention processes aimed at improving network co-ordination of services and making them easier to understand and use.

These include the introduction of co-ordinated timetables on shared bus 'corridors', agreed service change dates, 'best fare' automated contactless ticketing, joint information systems, co-ordinated network branding and a single all-operator web portal for ticketing, fares, information and plans.

The scheme has an in-built mechanism to be amended and expanded – subject to overall partner approval – in line with future additional investment streams that might become available.

In addition, the scheme will be subject to ongoing monitoring to evaluate the effectiveness of the Enhanced Partnership.

5. Scrutiny & Stakeholder Engagement

Members of the EDTCE scrutiny commission have been kept updated with the progress and performance of the Enhanced Partnership. This has included specific sessions on elements of the partnership's work – such as transport affordability, or future spend programmes and targets.

The City Council has engaged independent consultants to measure yearly passenger satisfaction with every aspect of the EP Plan. For each aspect this can be compared with the average across all council areas in England, and against similar sized urban authorities. These show positive progress over time and against the national average. See Transport Focus report in Appendix 1.

In addition, the council has collected yearly key monitoring metrics including fare paying and concessionary (elderly and disabled) passenger trips, together with punctuality and reliability performance data and modal share. It has also measured other key areas such as accessible buses and bus stops, together with geographic accessibility across the conurbation by time of day and day of week. The pollution benefits of all electric bus investment has also been calibrated throughout each stage of the electric bus project.

Other specific consultation has taken place through various user groups including key employers such as Leicester NHS Trust.

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

6.1 Financial implications

This report and its appendices set out the proposed continuation of the Leicester Enhanced Bus Partnership Plan and Scheme. The financial commitments relating to the council contained within these have already received budget approval. The ability to achieve the scale of ambition set out within the Plan will be subject to the funding which government makes available alongside local contributions.

Signed: Mohammed Irfan - Head of Finance

Dated: 24 July 2026

6.2 Legal implications

The partnership arrangements set out in this report include a commitment for the Council to undertake certain projects to given timescales. The Authority will need to ensure it complies with any specified conditions imposed by the various external funding streams for these projects together with an assessment against subsidy control of the incoming funds. This will need to be undertaken as part of the approval basis for each individual project.

The partnership commitments are subject to full consultation being carried on each project. The product of the consultation should continue to be taken into account and the responses fed into the final decision-making process in a transparent manner in accordance with any information provided as to how this will happen.

The partnership agreement includes a commitment for operators to share non-personalised information to given timescales. This will need to be underpinned, where relevant, by further partnership agreement(s) incorporating any information sharing requirements - assistance should be sought from information governance team and legal services.

In addition to the comments above that were provided previously on the previous report and remain apt, please note the following:

- (a) Legal will be able to assist in the specific partnership documentation that will be required to implement these arrangements.
- (b) The originating funding for the collaboration is from central government, but it would be advisable to consult with Procurement about the status of the subsequent contracts and whether these need to be subject to any form of competitive procedure.
- (c) Subsidy Control Act assessments and Information Governance input should be obtained as previously recommended.

Signed: Emma Young, Senior Lawyer,

Dated: 26 May 2026

6.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in carrying out its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

The proposed renewed Enhanced Bus Partnership has the potential to bring positive equalities outcomes by making bus services easier to understand, more reliable, more frequent and better value. These improvements are likely to benefit people who are more dependent on public transport, including older people, disabled people, young people,

people on lower incomes, and residents who do not have access to a car. Improved accessibility, clearer information, integrated ticketing and better co-ordination between services may also support people with sensory impairments, people with limited digital access, and people whose travel needs are more complex.

An EIA may be required on some projects that are implemented under the auspices of the Partnership. The EIAs should pay particular attention to what would be different for service users if the projects are implemented, including any positive outcomes. The Equality Impact Assessment and consultation findings should continue to be used as a tool to aid consideration around whether we are meeting the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, and to identify any potential mitigating actions, where a disproportionate negative impact is identified

Signed: Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer x374148

Dated: 27/5/26

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Transport is one of the largest sources of carbon emissions in Leicester, making up 27% of the city's carbon footprint in 2025, with transport-related emissions falling much slower than those from other sources.

Tackling these emissions is a vital part of the council's work that will require both switching more car journeys to sustainable transport options, including buses, and reducing the emissions from the city's buses themselves. As noted within this report, the Enhanced Bus Partnership is intended to play a key role in achieving both of these aims, with the Partnership Plan setting out a wide range of actions to improve and expand services and electrify the bus fleet. As such, the agreement of the Enhanced Bus Partnership is expected to support a significant reduction in transport-related carbon emissions.

Signed: Phil Ball, Sustainability Officer, Ext: 372246

Dated: 26 May 2026

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

None

7. Background information and other papers:

None

8. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – [Leicester One Network EP Summary](#)

Appendix 2 - [Leicester Enhanced Bus Partnership Plan 2026-2030](#)

Appendix 3 – [Leicester Enhanced Bus Partnership Scheme 2026-2030](#)

9. 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.

10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

Yes, the cumulative value of the decision is over £1m capital and £500k revenue.