



one network
electric frequent reliable
easy great value



Leicester Buses

Enhanced Partnership Plan 2026–30

Executive Summary

This Enhanced Partnership Plan updates the previous one of 2022 to reflect significant changes over the past 5 years. It has been given an early cut-off date of 2030 as the current local government review is likely to alter boundaries, responsibilities and the delivery process beyond this date.

The overall aim remains to make buses:

electric frequent reliable easy great value.

The objective is to have a transformed bus network that is a viable alternative to the car. One that allows the conurbation to grow in a sustainable, equitable and accessible way.

The main target of this EP Plan is to increase bus patronage by 10% by 2030 and user satisfaction from 88% to 90%.

This will be achieved by further developing and integrating a network of 50 integrated high quality bus routes. All delivered through partnership, not franchising.

This network will have electric buses, frequent reliable timetables, enforced bus priority, contactless ticketing, fare capping, real time information, quality waiting facilities and targeted fare discounts.

There will be significant additional emphasis on stronger integrated delivery standards – across timetables, routes, fares, ticketing, bus specification, branding, infrastructure, enforcement, information and promotion.

We are now well on the way and have already achieved **75%** of this transformation. Nearly three quarters of the network is now electric, the free Hop! service, easier better value ticketing, more bus lanes and red routes, information displays, a new bus station and stop facilities covering all bus routes.

Up to March 2025 overall passenger use was recovering well and had surpassed pre-pandemic levels, despite concessionary travel still being significantly lower. Fare paying trips then dropped by over 13% with the removal of the national £2 single fare cap but are still 1% above 2019 levels. The recent reinstatement of the £2 single fare from January 2027 is very welcome. In addition, concessionary travel is now starting to increase at speed.

User satisfaction has risen consistently to 88%, with measures for each area of bus travel being higher than national average, except for value for money. This strongly indicates that the quality of the bus network is improving, but increasing cost of travel has slowed passenger growth.

Significant ongoing support, capital investment and further integration is still required to complete this network transformation. Resources are particularly required to radically improve the orbital bus service, to complete the electrification of the network, improve journey times and to target lower fares for key movements.

This Plan sets out a further ambitious yet deliverable programme of change through to 2030, requiring around £75m investment and £10m pa support. The City Council has now approved the spend of around £50m of allocated government grant funding over this period. This includes around £5m pa of revenue grant funds, over half of which is being used to keep existing commitments going. Operators have indicated their commitment to a further £25m of electric bus investment, together with significant integration commitments.

The Leicester Buses partnership has now agreed a formal enhanced partnership scheme for 2026–30. This has advanced binding network delivery commitments and integration standards. This could achieve the main benefits of franchising but without the major costs, risks, delays and turbulence.

It is estimated that this will complete **90%** of the transformation plan.

It will be promoted under the new banner:

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There is a strong need for additional grant revenue funds of over £5m pa to match this investment, achieve **100%** transformation and fully achieve our 10% passenger growth and 90% satisfaction target by 2030.

In addition, it is the City Council's view that effective local partnership governance also requires additional devolved responsibilities for the bus service registration process and bus service operator grant scheme. These are key current asks to Government.