

# Bus Lanes Update

EDTCE Scrutiny  
18<sup>th</sup> October 2023

# Bus Priority Features

## Bus Lane



A length of running lane reserved for the usage of authorised vehicles

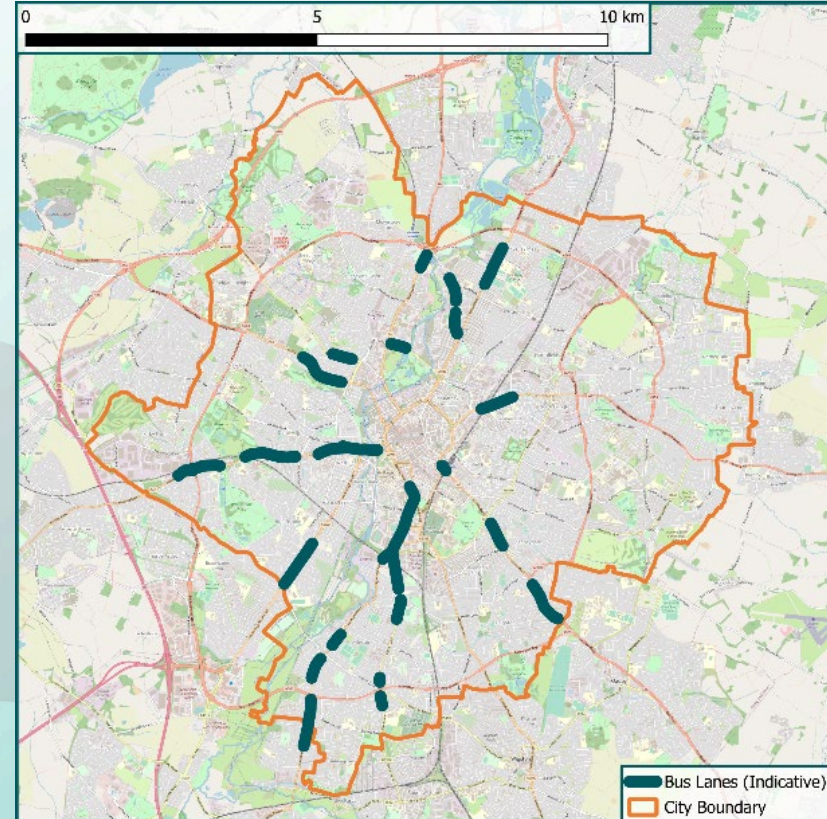
## Bus Gate



A section of road reserved for the usage of authorised vehicles

# Bus Lane Network

- Majority on 13 key transport corridors
- All 44 main network bus services benefit from priority measures on part of route
- Majority bus lanes permit:
  - All buses, minibuses, and coaches;
  - Emergency Services;
  - Bicycles;
  - Hackney Carriages

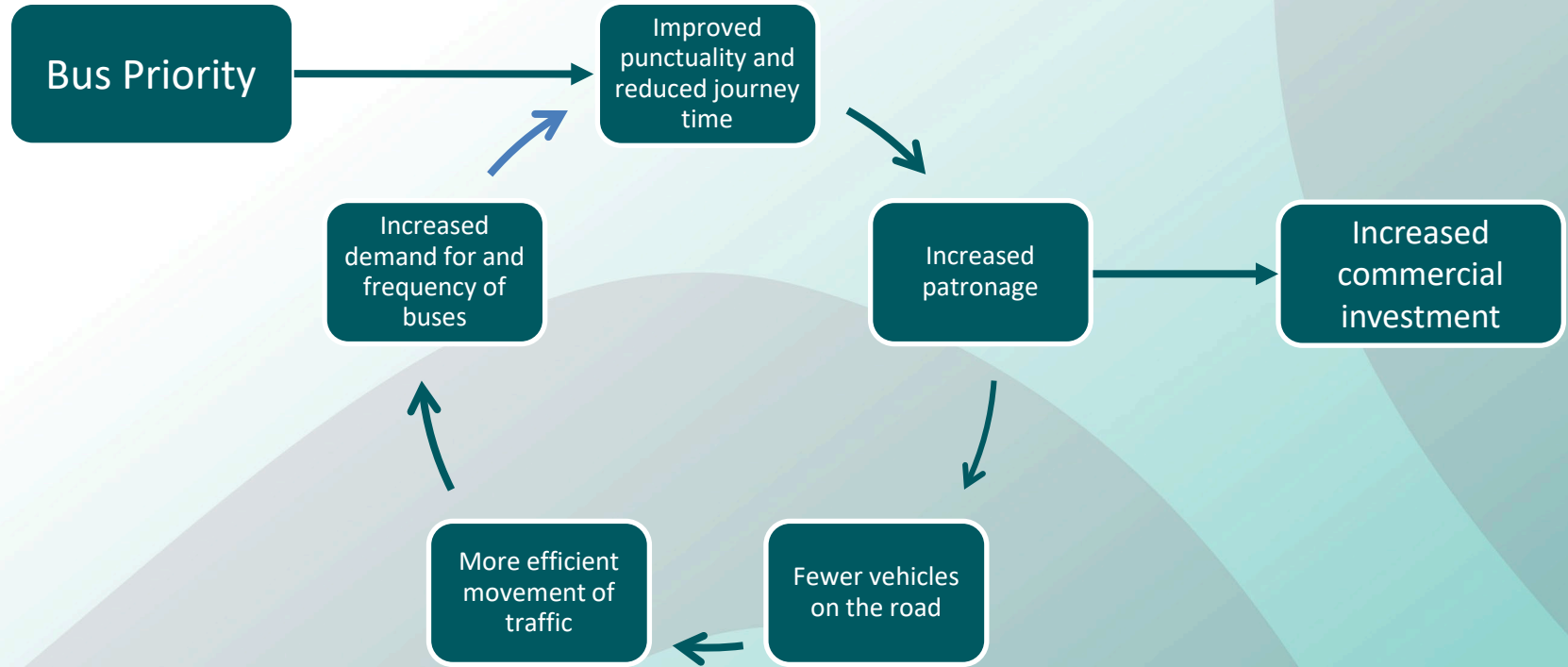


# Purpose of Bus Priority Measures

- 🚌 Improve punctuality and reduce journey time
- 🚌 Increase patronage
- 🚌 Allow for more efficient usage of road space
- 🚌 Help manage traffic flow across the network



# The Virtuous Cycle



# Are they working?

6%

Reduction in overall journey times along Groby Road

Increase in usage on Firstbus routes

25%

3 mins

Peak time saving on Abbey Park Road

User satisfaction for punctuality – up from 65% in 19/20

71%

2.5 mins

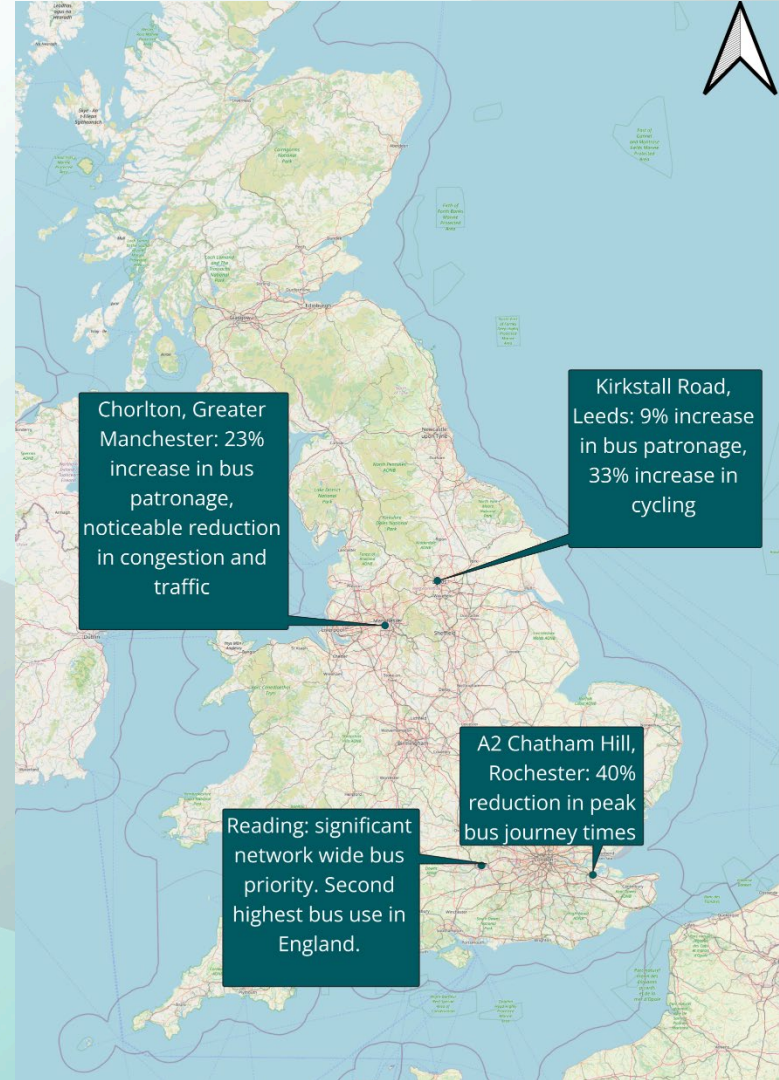
AM peak time saving on Aylestone Road (inbound)

Punctuality on Melton Road – up from 84%

89%

# Across the Country

- National Bus Strategy and BSIP guidance:
  - *There must be significant increases in bus priority*
  - *To increase bus modal share, buses must become an attractive alternative to the car for far more people. The key to doing this is making them faster and more reliable.*



# Local Bus Market

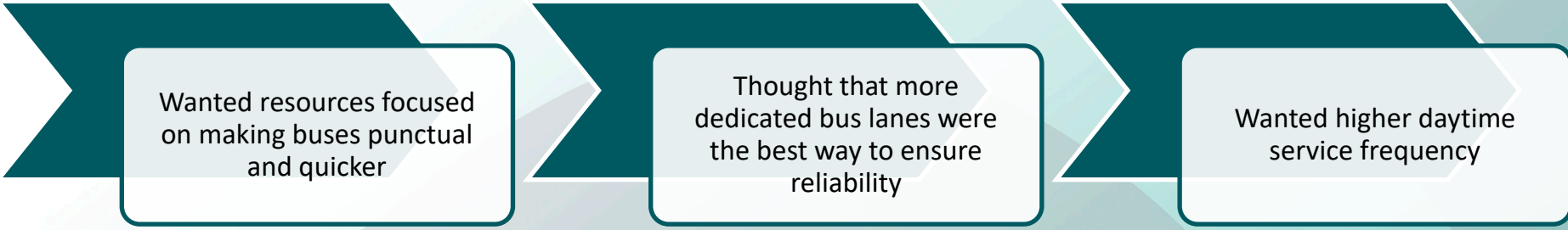
- 21.9m bus trips begun within the city boundary in 22/23 – Leicester eleventh highest for bus journeys outside of London
- 24 main bus routes with buses every 15 minutes or better
- 33% of Leicester households do not have access to a car – England average is 24%.
- Over a third of bus trips by elderly and disabled residents
- Strong support all operators - bus priority key to continued service operation, patronage growth and investment
- Majority of network commercially operated – allows the city council to direct subsidy towards strategic routes such as the Park and Ride, outer ring loop and inner ring loop (Hop!)





# Encouraging Modal Shift

- User surveys undertaken when developing the Enhanced Partnership Plan found that most respondents:



Wanted resources focused on making buses punctual and quicker

Thought that more dedicated bus lanes were the best way to ensure reliability

Wanted higher daytime service frequency

- DfT research – service reliability and cost are key barriers to increasing bus usage

# Investment and Commitments

- Leicester Buses Enhanced Partnership includes 100 legal commitments to be delivered over a 3-year period along five service areas – **electric**, **frequent**, **reliable**, **easy**, and **great value**
- Bus lanes directly support the **frequent** and **reliable** targets
- Government support grants require continued investment and support of the council and bus industry, as laid out in the National Bus Strategy
- Strong performance of the bus sector in the city has leveraged £31.5m investment from operators in electric buses, on track for over 150 by summer 2024
- Government ZEBRA grants of £22m secured for investment in electric buses is linked to delivery of complementary investment such as bus lanes

# What do the operators say?

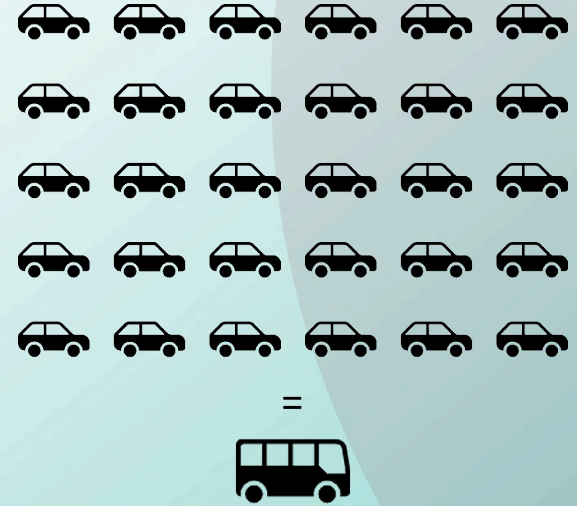
- Arriva
  - “Patronage recovery continues to be stronger on corridors with bus lanes than without, with year on year growth on these routes circa 10%”
  - “We are fully supportive of the maintenance and introduction of additional bus lanes in Leicester”
- Centrebus
  - “The schemes recently introduced have had a positive impact on the reliability of Centrebus services and the wider local bus network.”
  - “Any erosion or removal of the bus priority measures already introduced will certainly have a negative impact on our service delivery and be a backwards step in promoting public transport in the City.”

# Scrutiny Conclusions – April 2016

- Car ownership/use, congestion and pollution increasing. Key sustainable solution is for modal switch to buses
- Bus lanes make buses more punctual, decrease journey times, and make buses more attractive to use
- Evidenced by Aylestone Road bus lane resulting in an 18% increase in bus use
- Other measures e.g. fares, car parking charges, frequency, quality also impact on modal shift
- Bus lanes also assist coaches, minibuses, cyclists and hackney cabs
- Bus lanes should not be sacrificed to cycle lanes to the detriment of bus services, given the difference in the number of bus passengers compared to cyclists
- Clarity of message makes 24/7 bus lane operation the preferred approach

# Congestion

- Congestion is mainly caused by junctions reaching capacity
- Bus lanes end before junctions, maintaining vehicle queuing capacity and allowing general traffic to flow
- Major impact from increase in car ownership and journeys – forecasted to increase over the next 20 years



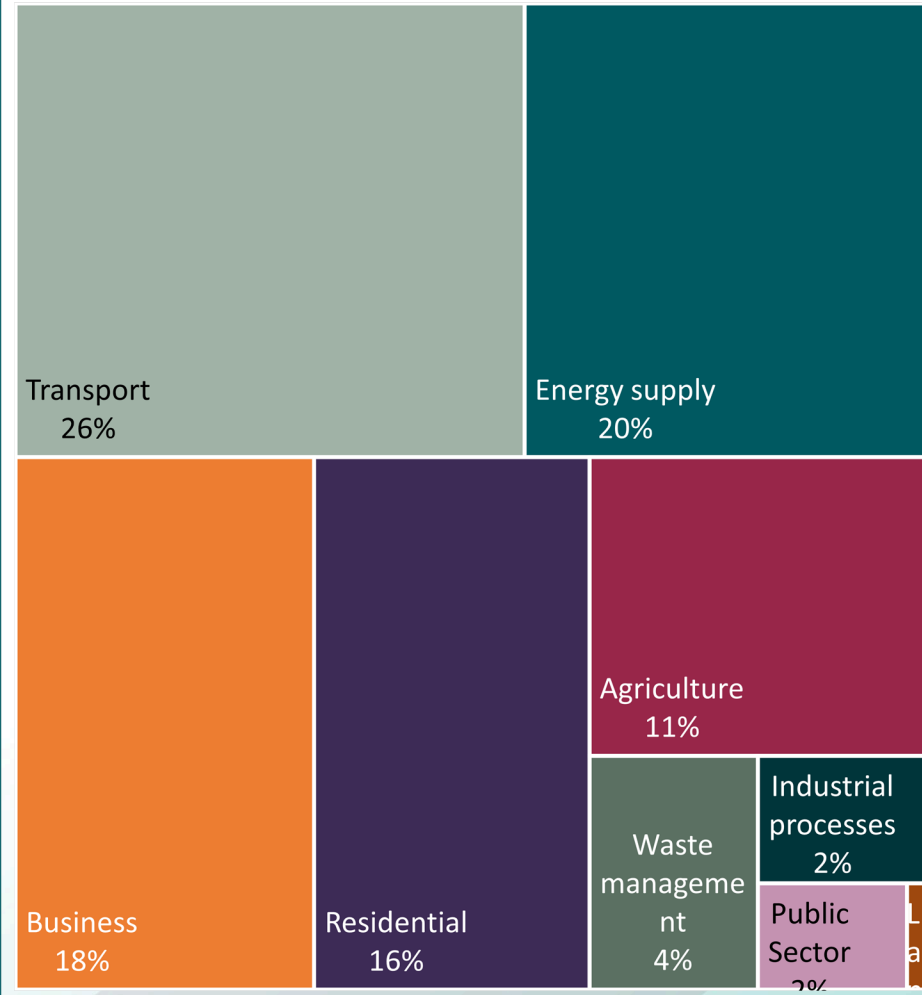
Modal shift remains the best way to combat congestion. One bus = 30 private cars

# Congestion visualised

 CPF  
cycling promotion fund



UK Domestic Emissions by Sector, 2021



# Pollution

- Transport 26% of all UK emissions – cars 52% of all transport emissions
- Modal shift is, again, the biggest tool to decarbonise transport
- Bus network will be over 50% electric by 2024
- No evidence bus lanes have increased pollution

# 24/7 Bus Lanes

- Less confusion for drivers with 24/7 lanes
- Currently some bus lanes not 24/7 (e.g. Saffron Lane) that require review
- Emergency vehicles, cycles, hackney carriages continue to benefit from bus lanes at all hours
- Most key bus routes operational 06:00 – 23:00, therefore encompassing all busiest periods in road usage
- Traffic patterns since covid have seen longer busier periods through the afternoon and into the early evening
- Extra capacity from additional lane for general traffic not required outside of peak/busiest periods
- Recent 'Plan for Drivers' Gov't publication may require future review of bus lane operation – hours and permitted vehicles



# Alternative Options

- Dynamic balancing already undertaken by automated signal controllers
- Extended green stage at signalised junctions for late running buses also being investigated – whole network approach required
- Bus lanes internationally recognised as effective solution to transport priority.
- Bus lanes delivered as part of wider Enhanced Partnership package and with other road safety and walking/cycling measures



# Bus Lane Enforcement

- All monies from fines must be spent on transport network
- Cameras used only as an enforcement tool to ensure compliance with the bus lane
- Bus lanes without enforcement show less compliance, which impacts local bus services
- All fines are reported on Leicester open data platform
- Warning approach before fining – new camera sites
- Robust appeals process



# Conclusions

- Conclusions in line with April 2016 Scrutiny Committee
- Evidence supports view that bus lanes have a strong positive impact on local bus services for punctuality, journey times and patronage
- Impact supports continued grant investment in Leicester including electric buses and supports commercially viable routes - recognised at a national level
- Negative perceptions of bus lanes can, in most cases, be attributed to the root cause they are designed to tackle – the increasing volume of private cars on the existing traffic network
- The continued provision of bus lanes continues to be a tool to support modal shift and the resultant benefits to decarbonisation, air quality, and congestion
- Await further Gov't guidance

