

Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND
TOURISM SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

DATE: THURSDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2018

TIME: 5:30 pm

**PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall,
115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

Members of the Commission

Councillor Khote (Chair)
Councillor Rae Bhatia (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Bhavsar, Dr Chowdhury, Kitterick, Patel, Porter and Sandhu

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

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Anita Patel (Scrutiny Policy Officer)

Jason Tyler (Democratic Support Officer),

Tel: 0116 454 6359, e-mail: jason.tyler@leicester.gov.uk

Scrutiny Support, Leicester City Council, 3rd Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

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- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:

Jason Tyler, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 454 6359.

Alternatively, email jason.tyler@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

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AGENDA

FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION

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1. 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

**Appendix A
(Pages 1 - 10)**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 12 July 2018 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on any Questions, Representations and Statements of Case received in accordance with Council procedures.

5. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on any Petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

6. BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2011-2021

**Appendix B
(Pages 11 - 46)**

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submits a report, which provides an update on the Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2021 and to report on progress made on the Biodiversity Action Plan Programme for 2018/19.

7. BUS SERVICES ACT 2017

**Appendix C
(Pages 47 - 92)**

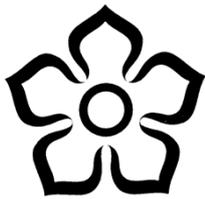
The “Review of The Bus Services Act 2017 – the impacts and opportunities” is attached for the Commission’s consideration and comment.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

**Appendix D
(Pages 93 - 98)**

The Commission’s Work Programme is attached for information and comment.

9. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND TOURISM SCRUTINY
COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 12 JULY 2018 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Khote (Chair)
Councillor Rae Bhatia (Vice Chair)

Councillor Bhavsar
Councillor Patel

Councillor Porter
Councillor Sandhu

In attendance:

Councillor Myers – Assistant City Mayor with responsibility for
the Entrepreneurial Councils Agenda
Sir Peter Soulsby – City Mayor

* * * * *

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dr Chowdhury.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Porter declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 10, “Putney Road Scheme – Consultation Update”, in that he had objected to the scheme as part of the consultation.

In accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct, this interest was not considered so significant that it was likely to prejudice Councillor Porter’s judgement of the public interest. He therefore was not required to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item.

3. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 12 April 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

AGREED:

That the Terms of Reference for this Commission be noted.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION

AGREED:

That the membership of this Commission for 2018/19 be noted.

6. DATES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS

Members noted that the next meeting of the Commission would be rescheduled to a date in September 2018.

AGREED:

That the dates of meetings of this Commission for 2018/19 be noted.

7. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations, or statements of case had been received.

8. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

9. ORDER OF CONSIDERATION OF REMAINING AGENDA ITEMS

The Chair advised the meeting that she would take the remaining items in a different order to that given on the agenda, due to the availability of Councillors.

10. BUSINESS WORKSPACE PORTFOLIO

The Head of Economic Regeneration submitted a report providing an update on the Economic Regeneration Workspace portfolio.

It was noted that turnover from the portfolio had now reached £1.4million and a revenue surplus was generated that could be reinvested in Council services. The success of this initiative had led other organisations and local authorities to view this as a good practice model for such portfolios and it was recognised that it also was effective when used as a catalyst in the regeneration of an area. An annual customer satisfaction survey was undertaken and the feedback used to help drive service improvements.

The Commission welcomed the report, but expressed some concern that warehouse facilities appeared to be developing in the county area, rather than in the city. In reply, the City Mayor explained that, as the city already was tightly developed, it was easier for businesses to find areas for warehousing outside of the city boundary. Although some well-established workspace schemes had been inherited from previous initiatives, this programme needed to be kept under review to ensure that the businesses developing through it continued to evolve. Work on this undertaken with the Chamber of Commerce had been very successful and the Chamber's input was welcomed.

The Head of Economic Regeneration noted that support also was provided to private sector businesses and could take the form of loans and support, as the initiative was not just about funding managed business workspace directly.

Some concern was expressed that the report did not contain information on upfront capital development costs for each workspace, so did not show actual costs. In reply, the Head of Economic Regeneration advised that the schemes in the report were largely funded through external grants that did not have to be repaid. The report was an update on the operational revenue performance of the seven centres. There had been some investment through the Council's capital programme over a number of years, which had been used to attract match-funding from external grant providers.

All of the centres were very different. For example, Makers Yard mostly contained sole traders, while businesses at Dock, (approximately 50 businesses employing approximately 200 people), were larger businesses working on innovative technology. Across the portfolio there were more than 200 businesses based in the seven centres, so it was a very dynamic environment, with businesses regularly moving in and out.

In response to queries, Members noted that works to complete the Friars Mill 2 development were due to start in the very near future, but an expected completion date was not known. Friars Mill currently had 100% occupancy. Leicester Food Park had nine businesses on site, employing 45 – 50 people.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

11. PUTNEY ROAD SCHEME - CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Major Transport Projects Manager gave a presentation on the consultation exercise concerning the Putney Road transport scheme, a copy of which is

attached at the end of these minutes for information.

Members noted that those in favour of the scheme were mostly road users and those against were local residents. However, the City Mayor noted that a low response had been received to the consultation, which suggested that it was not a high level concern.

The Major Transport Projects Manager explained that baseline monitoring was needed before the scheme started. This information needed to be available to enable appropriate mitigation as required.

A member of the Commission suggested that this scheme was linked to a scheme to create a road along linked to Evesham Road and questioned why data about traffic flows along residential roads and possible time savings through not having to use Knighton Lane West was not included in the report. The Member also queried whether users of the cycle lanes in Knighton Road West would be delayed by the traffic lights along that route and expressed concern that traffic along Aylestone Road, which already had a very high level of air pollution, would increase. The Member further expressed concern that a request for the consultation to be discussed at the Aylestone Community Meeting had not been agreed.

In reply, the City Mayor stressed that the Putney Road scheme was not linked to any proposals to build an Aylestone bypass, so was being considered entirely on its own merits as a way of relieving traffic congestion and pressure on roads between Welford Road and Saffron Lane/Aylestone Road.

It was noted that the scheme was budgeted to cost £5million, of which £3.8million would be grant funded by the Department for Transport.

AGREED:

- 1) That the results of the consultation on the Putney Road Scheme be noted; and
- 2) That the Commission endorses proceeding to the next phase of delivery of the Putney Road Scheme.

Councillor Porter left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

12. SOCIAL VALUE CHARTER - UPDATE

The Head of Procurement submitted a report setting out the next steps needed to finalise, adopt and implement the Social Value Charter.

The Assistant City Mayor with responsibility for the Entrepreneurial Councils Agenda introduced the report, noting that a timetable to progress the project was set out in that report. Platforms were being designed through which it could be implemented, (such as CrowdFund Leicester), along with an internal training programme and a “users guide” for external suppliers. It was

anticipated that intermediaries such as Leicestershire Cares or the Employment Hub would support contracts to ensure that the social/community benefits being sought were achieved.

The Head of Procurement confirmed that liaison with external organisations was scheduled to start in early August. Once feedback had been received, the guide would be professionally designed, making sure that it was easy to use and practical.

One way in which social value would be obtained from contracts would be to identify which community projects needed support and contractors would assist those projects. It was hoped that potential suppliers also would suggest some ways in which they could provide social value. For example, the Highcross Centre already was making space available in empty units in the centre that projects seeking crowdfunding could use to promote themselves. Consideration also was being given to how this could be linked to ward community funding.

The Commission welcomed the report, stressing the importance of adding social value to contracts, as assistance provided in this way could make a significant difference to projects. However, some concern was expressed about whether suppliers would increase prices in their tenders to cover any costs arising from meeting the requirements of the Social Charter, but it was noted that this should not happen, as the social value sought would be proportionate to the value and nature of the contract.

Some concern also was expressed that the report stated there were no Equalities Implications at this stage and Members asked that these implications be added as soon as possible.

The Head of Procurement advised the Commission that the summary of Lead Member/Director engagement provided with the report was the first stage in the process. It was recognised that benefits could impact on more than one service area, requiring a holistic approach across the Council.

AGREED:

- 1) That the next steps required to finalise, adopt and implement the Social Value Charter be noted; and
- 2) That the Head of Procurement be asked to:
 - a) Circulate the draft Social Value Charter and Social Value Guide as soon as they are available to all members of this Commission and all Members who participated in the Procurement and Social Value Task Group;
 - b) Include examples of good practice in the Social Value Guide, showing how social value has already been successfully secured through commissioning; and
 - c) Ensure that the Equalities Implications of the Social Value

Charter are added to documentation as appropriate.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair reported verbally that the Bus Service Act Task Group had completed its evidence gathering, including evidence received at its last meeting from the Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for Environment, Public Health and Health Integration.

Since the Bus Services Act had been introduced in 2017 there had been a good supply of government guidance, media articles, best practice information and information from transport campaign groups to inform the work of the Task Group. Information gathering sessions also had been held with the local Bus Users Panel and bus operators.

A draft report of findings and recommendations would be compiled by the Task Group and could be presented to the next meeting of this Commission.

AGREED:

- 1) That the work programme be received and noted; and
- 2) That the draft report of the Bus Service Act Task Group be considered at the next meeting of this Commission.

14. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.01 pm

Putney Road scheme

Consultation update

EDTT Scrutiny



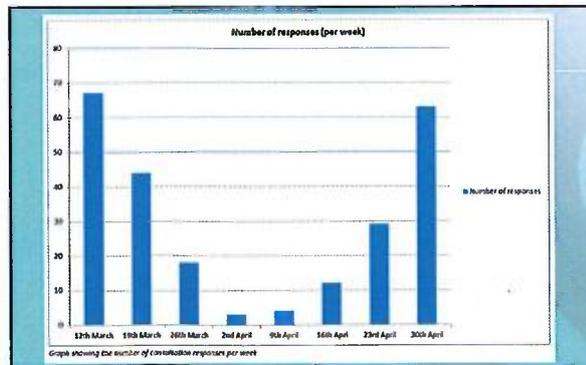

Publicity and events

- 2nd March – 29th April (8 weeks)
- c.3,500 leaflets distributed, 111 letters sent to businesses around Commercial Sq.
- 4 drop-in exhibitions in Saffron/Commercial Sq./Clarendon Park – mixture of daytime and evenings
- Permanent display at Aylestone Leisure Centre (staffed two hours per week)
- Castle Ward meetings 21st Nov & 13th Feb
- Saffron Ward meeting 8th March



Response

- 291 responses in total, mainly through the online consultation
- Exhibitions had low attendance, including Clarendon Park (10 people)
- 25.4% positive, 60.1% negative, 14.4% neutral/balanced
- Clear themes in the responses
- Castle Ward meeting strongly opposed, Saffron Ward strongly in favour

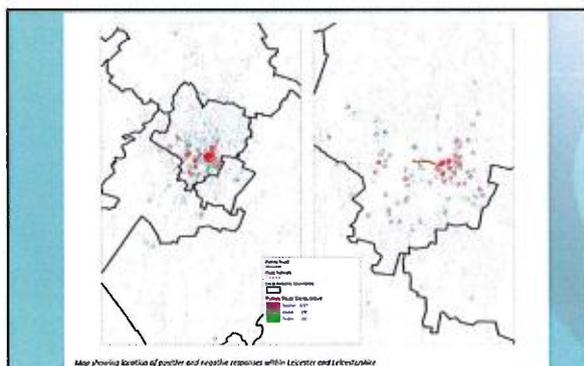
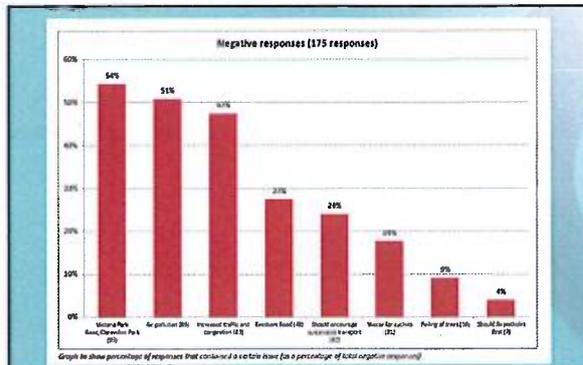
For

- Reduce congestion
- Easier journeys
- Improve travel time
- Respondents focused on how it might affect their existing journeys



Against

- Increased traffic on Victoria Park Road – worried about impact on Clarendon Park
- Increased traffic levels and pollution in the area
- Possible link to Evesham Road
- LCC should encourage sustainable transport
- 'Putney Road Say No' campaign
- Respondents focused on how it might affect the local area

Victoria Park Rd/Clarendon Park concerns

- Victoria Park Road currently designated a B Road and used as an orbital route
- Expected to take through traffic
- Off carriageway cycle lanes, and several signalised crossing points
- Predicted moderate increase will remove traffic from more residential streets and provide shorter journeys
- Impact on Clarendon Park to be monitored and, if necessary, action taken



Air Pollution concerns

- Increase in emissions at the junctions
- Overall benefit to city emission levels from shorter routes and less congestion



Traffic concerns

- Increase in traffic on Putney Road, but creates benefits on other parts of the network
- Journeys redistributed from other routes
- Less traffic on residential routes
- Junctions designed to manage high volumes of traffic



Evesham Rd concerns

- Putney Rd scheme provides benefits independent of other highway schemes
- Evesham Rd is part of the Local Plan process
- Benefits/impacts yet to be quantitatively investigated
- Likely to be debated at Full Council in the Autumn



Sustainable Transport concerns

- Council has to take a balanced approach to transport improvements
- Scheme does benefit cars, but reduced congestion will benefit other users
- Council delivering a programme of NPIF-funded bus pinch point schemes
- Scheme does interrupt a well used cycle route – junction being designed to reduce the impact on cyclists



Scheme Benefits

- Increases in traffic are manageable
- Redistributes existing journeys, reducing pressure on key parts of the network
- Provides benefits independent of other schemes



Scheme Benefits – shorter journeys

- Redistribution of existing trips being made
- More sensible, shorter east-west routes
- Less congestion on surrounding roads
- Less pollution
- Less traffic using residential streets



Scheme Benefits – improved access

- Access to
 - developments
 - education institutions
 - M1
- More resilient network
- Increased attractiveness for development



Next Steps – monitoring strategy

- Outline study for “before and after” data
- Highlight areas where the Council would want to note, monitor, and action results



Next Steps – monitoring strategy

- Traffic flows along roads and streets, including residential areas
- Pedestrian and cycle figures
- Pollution modelling



Next Steps – Design

- Complete design
- Develop cycle routing
- Work with UoL regarding the Freemans Park development
- Engage contractor



Report to Economic Development Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

Date of Commission meeting: 6th September 2018

Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2021

Report of the Director of Planning, Development
Transportation



Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Annie Provan, Team Leader
- Author contact details 0116 454 2963 anne.provan@leicester.gov.uk

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to update the Scrutiny Commission on the Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2021 and to report on progress made on the Biodiversity Action Plan Programme for 2018/19.

The Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2021 (attached as appendix 1) sets out how the council will manage, promote and extend the city's natural habitats, helping people to enjoy and understand the biodiversity of the city. The Action Plan programme (as attached as appendix 2) sets out progress across a range of strategic priorities over the last year and sets the priorities for future action.

The programme aims to:

- Encourage Participation and Raise Awareness of Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
- Identify and advise on opportunities to incorporate biodiversity and improve ecological networks
- Maintain a database to record species data and status of designated sites
- Create, conserve or enhance Priority Habitats to increase biodiversity value
- Conserve Priority Species in Leicester by ensuring compliance with wildlife legislation and guidance and working with landowners and developers

A slide presentation of recent projects delivered through the Biodiversity Action Plan will be provided at the Scrutiny meeting.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

To note and comment on the report.

3. Supporting Information

Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2021
Biodiversity Action Plan Programme 2018/19 (May 2018)

4. Background information and other papers:

5. Summary of appendices:

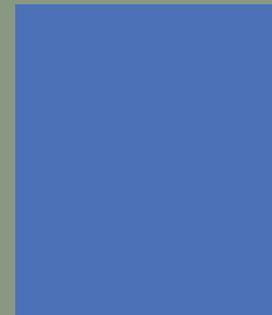
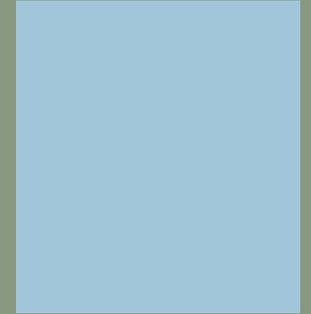
Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2021
Biodiversity Action Plan Programme 2018/19 (May 2018)

6. Is this a private report?

No

(If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly.

Leicester's Biodiversity Action Plan 2011 – 2021





contents

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

THE VISION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 What is Biodiversity? 3
- 1.2 The National And International Context 4
- 1.3 The Benefits Of Biodiversity To Leicester 5
- 1.4 Biodiversity In Leicester 6
- 1.5 Threats To Habitats And Their Conservation 6
- 1.6 The Purpose Of The Bap 7
- 1.7 Setting Priorities For Action 8

2 LEICESTER'S BAP OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Objectives 8
- 2.2.1 Participation Objectives 11
- 2.2.2 Site Objectives 11
- 2.2.3 Habitat Objectives 11

3 STRATEGIC ACTION PLANS – HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS 12, 14

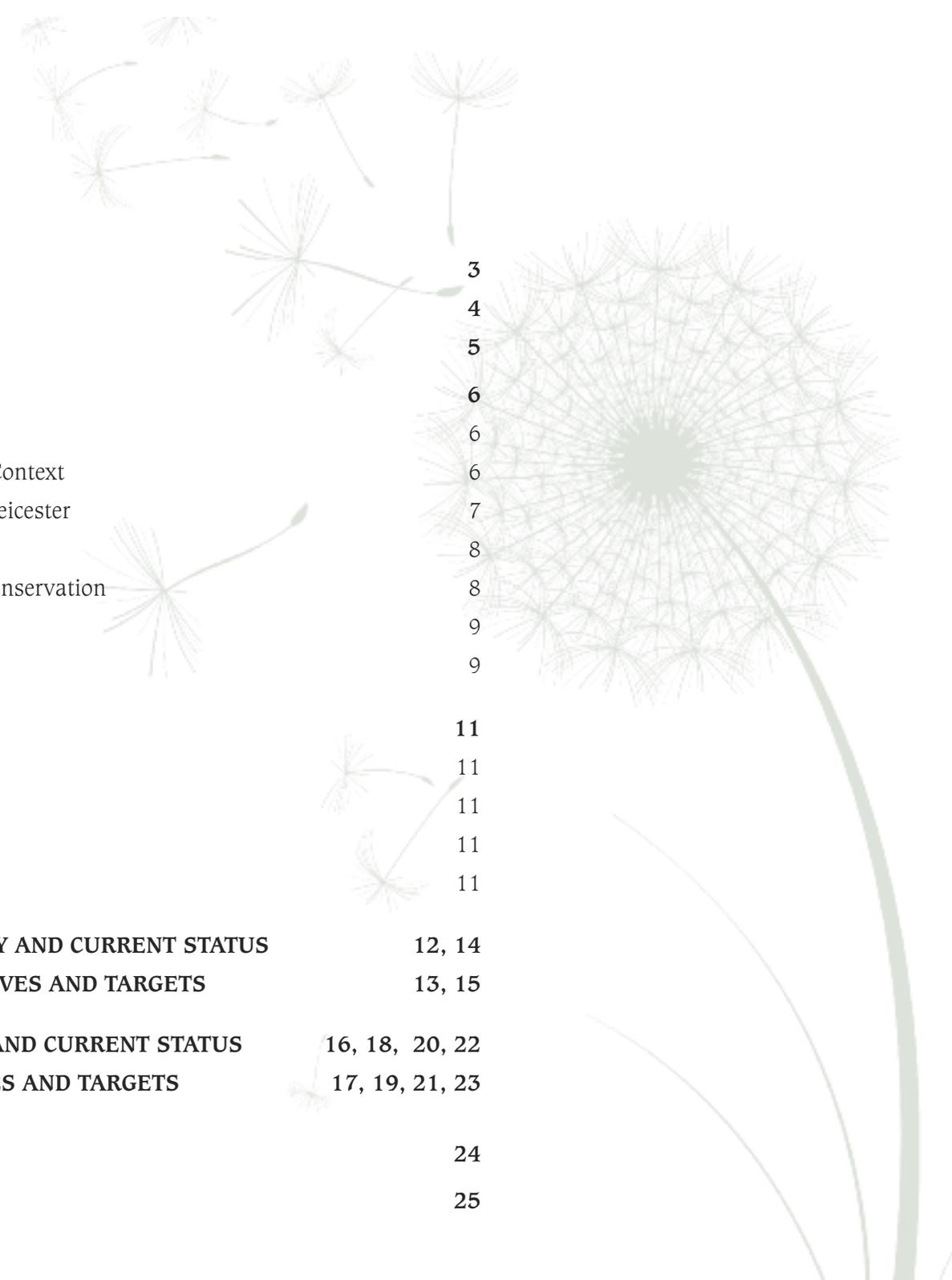
4 STRATEGIC ACTION PLANS – OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS 13, 15

5 HABITAT ACTION PLANS – HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS 16, 18, 20, 22

6 HABITAT ACTION PLANS – OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS 17, 19, 21, 23

7 REFERENCES 24

8 ACRONYMS 25



foreword

This Biodiversity Action Plan sets out how we will manage, promote and extend the city's natural habitats. Much has already been achieved across the city by managing our parks and green spaces with biodiversity and nature conservation in mind. Through our partnership with Groundwork Leicester & Leicestershire we have been able to involve volunteers and engage local communities in the management of local nature reserves and wildlife sites. Maintaining these sites to protect and enhance biodiversity, whilst at the same time encouraging people to enjoy them remains an important priority.

Bioblitz events are a key part of this work and more events will be organised as part of this action plan, building on the events held in recent years at Abbey Park and Watermead Country Park.

Our Biodiversity Action Plan is not just about enhancing and protecting existing wildlife sites, it is also about identifying where new natural habitats can be created in Leicester. This action plan therefore aims to help inform decisions about land use and development, making sure that issues of biodiversity and greenspace protection are properly considered in the future.

This action plan recognises that effective management of biodiversity and provision of greenspace can have a significant impact on overall quality of life. We want more people to enjoy and understand the biodiversity of the city.

The priorities and objectives set out in this action plan require strong partnerships and we will continue to work alongside the many organisations and our communities in enhancing and protecting the city's natural habitats and greenspaces.

Protecting and enhancing the city's biodiversity and greenspaces, and creating new habitats for wildlife, will contribute significantly to our vision of Leicester as a greener and more sustainable city.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Soulsby'.

Sir Peter Soulsby
City Mayor



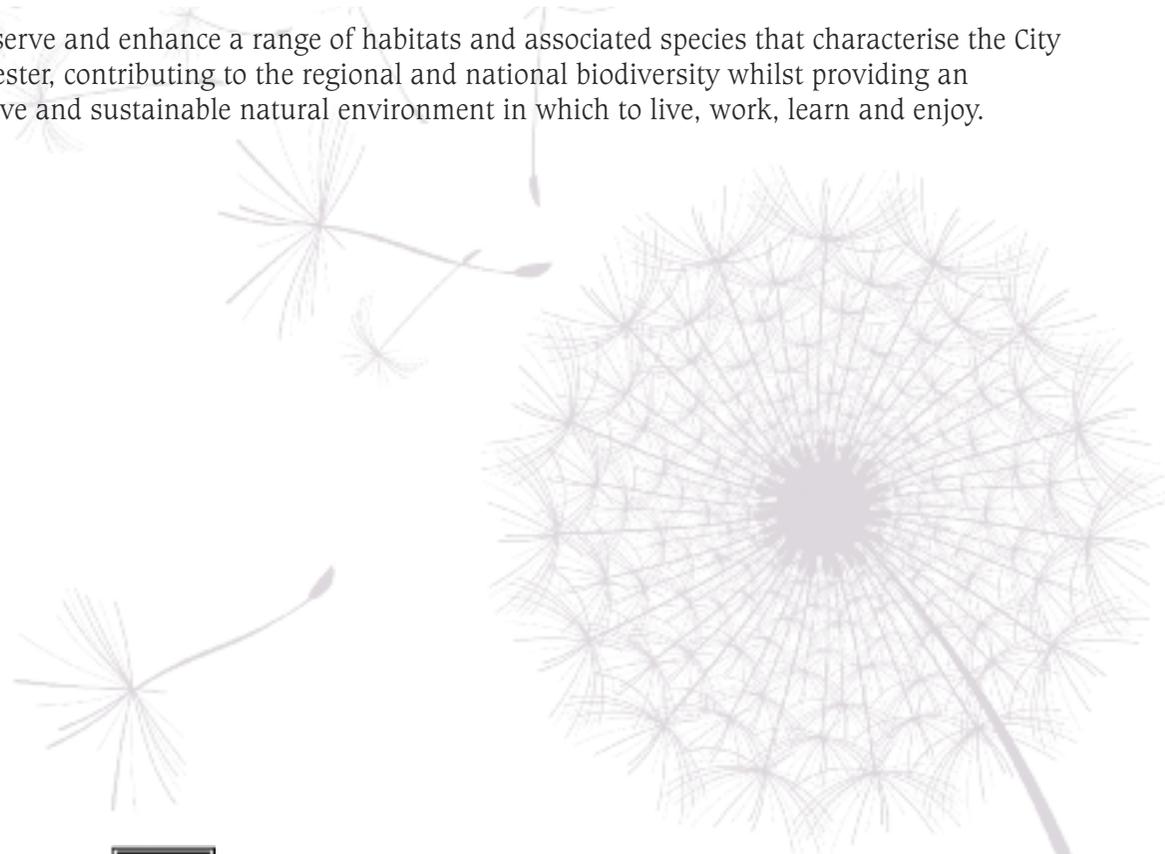
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory Palmer'.

Cllr Rory Palmer
Deputy City Mayor



the vision

To conserve and enhance a range of habitats and associated species that characterise the City of Leicester, contributing to the regional and national biodiversity whilst providing an attractive and sustainable natural environment in which to live, work, learn and enjoy.



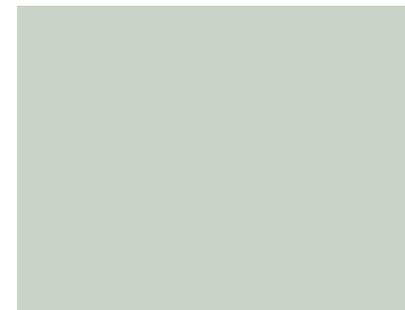
executive summary

This 10-year Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) follows on from the 'Wild About Leicester' – Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2006-2009 (Leicester City Council 2006). It incorporates the One Vision for Leicester in upholding that we all have a responsibility to safeguard and improve the environment in which we live for our enjoyment and for future generations to enjoy. Recognising the importance of wildlife and nature conservation and its contribution to the biodiversity of Leicester is central to this vision.

In 2008-09 the City of Leicester signed an international agreement through "Local Action for Biodiversity" (LAB) to protect and enhance sites of nature conservation value in the City; to identify new sites and to encourage the residents of Leicester to help create and manage those areas of importance to wildlife right on their doorstep.

This Biodiversity Action Plan is key to this success and sets out a strategy, identifying real targets and objectives within a timeframe in which they can be achieved. Bodies such as Natural England, the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and local natural history groups have been consulted together with local community groups to ensure that we have included the most important aspects of wildlife conservation in the Plan. The involvement of such specialist bodies and the local community is fundamental to it succeeding.

Leicester City Council will also continue to work in the partnership with Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire who have assisted in writing this Plan, together with the many other partners who have helped Leicester protect and conserve its wildlife. Managing our parks, open spaces and woodlands as well as planting more trees and creating new woodlands, wetlands and grasslands around the City will allow people greater access to wildlife. Incorporating nature conservation into all aspects of development and encouraging our schools and colleges to create outdoor classrooms in which wildlife can live and be seen will help provide areas for wildlife to live and disperse throughout the City. Monitoring and recording of wildlife will help identify whether targets are being achieved and where further attention needs to be focussed to safeguard the habitats and wildlife associated with them. Progress against the targets will be regularly reviewed and new targets set as old ones are achieved during the lifetime of this Plan (2011-2021).



introduction

This document sets out to secure a strategy for biodiversity in Leicester for the next 10 years (2011-2021). It is however recognised that it is particularly difficult to foresee how biodiversity can be incorporated and evolve in an urban environment over such a long time. Economic and financial circumstances (both boom and recession) heavily influence the level of development and availability of funding for environmental projects. Physical changes such as atmospheric pollution, climatic instability (summer storms, high temperatures and severe winters) and changes in legislation and policy at a central and local government level (particularly Planning and Wildlife) can influence how areas are managed strategically and the impact on biodiversity within an urban environment.

To overcome this, the strategy seeks to promote several generic objectives, namely Participation Objectives, Strategic Objectives and Habitat Objectives that form the basis of the 10 year Plan. Specific Strategic and Habitat Action Plans that incorporate the participation, strategic site and habitat objectives are then described in detail to identify the current position; the aims of each Action Plan; what is required to achieve them and who is responsible. This section is divided into action to be taken in the current year (2011-2012) and in the next 4 years (2012-2016). Each years achievements and progress towards the next 5 years will be reported separately. This will enable the plan to be updated and respond to changes by reviewing each year and following 4 years, for example, the next report will include progress made in 2011- 2012, actions for 2012 – 13 and 2013 – 17.

The annual report will provide information on the Action Points and targets met which will inform on National Indicator and EMAS targets reported on quarterly and annually as well

as supporting the UK, Regional and County Biodiversity Action Plans and targets. The report will also assist in identifying potential projects and schemes for biodiversity enhancement in the City, their prioritisation and potential funding.

1.1 WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

Biodiversity is a word created by biologists to describe the richness and variety of life around us (bio = 'life' and 'diversity' = range or variety). It is a catch-all expression and also includes the genetic variation (size, colour etc) within those species and the variation in the habitats in which these species live. Crucially the term biodiversity does not just refer to rare or endangered species but includes the wildlife familiar to us all in the places where we live and work and certainly what we might see in the City.

The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992) identified the need to address the accelerating loss of biodiversity around the world when the leading nations of the world accepted responsibility to “halt the loss” of biodiversity. This resulted in the UK producing a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) in 1994 with an overall goal "to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity through all appropriate mechanisms".

1.2 THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The UK BAP defines urban habitats as 'green spaces and the associated ecological niches found within built up areas'. It applies to such areas as gardens, parks, ponds, and allotments which provide most of us with our first and most regular contact with nature.

Recently the acceptance that many more people live within

our cities (worldwide more than 50% of people now live in urban areas, but this proportion, at 90%, is even higher in the UK) shows that the UK BAP and local BAPs should apply as much to cities as they do to the countryside and coast. Leicester City Council and Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire (GWLL) recognised a need to reflect this and produced the first Leicester City BAP “Wild About Leicester” (Green and Timms 2006). The local County BAP for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (Jeeves et al 2002) also includes a generic Habitat Action Plan (HAP) for urban habitats. However, “urban” is a catch-all phrase that actually includes a complex mosaic of habitats that collectively provide wildlife value within these developed areas. Specialist habitats include remnants of old habitats such as ancient woodland and unimproved meadows; buildings and other built structures; derelict land, including disused industrial land, demolition sites and waste ground; wetlands, including rivers, brooks, ponds, lakes, flooded gravel pits and canals; allotments; parks and gardens; railway lands; cemeteries and churchyards and mature trees.

This second BAP is building on the success of the first by identifying new targets and challenges to help conserve biodiversity in the City.

Since the adoption of the first BAP by the City, Leicester has made a significant commitment to promoting biodiversity by being one of 21 pioneering cities around the world that are currently participating in the urban biodiversity project: Local Action for Biodiversity (Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire 2008). Each City has signed up to an agreement to promote, increase and enhance biodiversity within their Cities. This commitment was signed

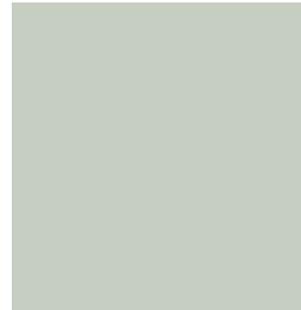
in 2008 and launched in 2009 to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin who laid the foundations of the theory of evolution and transformed the way we think about the natural world. Leicester City is now committed to publishing biodiversity reports on the state of biodiversity in Leicester which will stand as a public record.

1.3 THE BENEFITS OF BIODIVERSITY TO LEICESTER

The benefits of biodiversity to people living in cities have attracted a lot of attention in the last few years from national and international research. It is hard to put a monetary value on many of the benefits that are associated with wildlife in our City, but perhaps the most valuable is that it can improve the quality of life for its residents. Many of us gain great pleasure by simply being in a more natural place whether it be whilst playing or working and such natural landscapes can have an important effect on our psyche.

Recently, the government has put a value on green space and the type of benefits it can provide. These benefits have been termed “ecosystem services” and include the monetary benefits associated with providing a well-managed green space in terms of water quality, soil protection, flood protection, reducing effects of climate change as well as indirect benefits related to health and well-being. Some of these are explained in more detail.

Grasses, shrubs and trees in an urban environment can all have a beneficial effect of reducing pollution through the absorption of noxious gases from the atmosphere and particles of dust and grit which eventually settle





and contribute to the build up of soils. Reducing temperatures and alleviating the effects of climate change may still need more research, but certainly the trees within our City provide us with shade and shelter, with a tree-lined road being more visually pleasing than a barren, sterile street devoid of vegetation.

Many people value the wildlife they come into contact with in the City. It may not be the rarest or most charismatic, and it may only occur in small pockets of land, but because it is so accessible to so many people, such areas may be used more frequently than many of our more traditionally recognised areas of wildlife value such as our nature reserves and wildlife sites.

Many of the new schools in our City appreciate the educational value of wildlife and having an “outdoor classroom” on their doorstep. Bringing young people closer to wildlife can help to safeguard the natural environment of our City and the benefits of biodiversity for future generations to enjoy.

Incorporating biodiversity through strategic planning of where our green spaces will be most valuable to the residents of Leicester is an important role. Linking biodiversity to specific “green infrastructure” associated with sustainable drainage systems, rights of way and existing areas of open space will provide multiple benefits where demand for space is high.

1.4 BIODIVERSITY IN LEICESTER

Leicester's wildlife, natural features, landuse and human history have helped to shape the general character of the area. This has been defined in the Trent Valley and Rises Natural Area by Natural England which describes and evaluates the wildlife and geological features. In addition to the obvious urban environment, Leicester also has a number of other important habitats which include neutral grasslands, wet meadows, parkland, woodlands, rivers and streams. These habitats support a vast range of characteristic and rare species, such as the white-clawed crayfish of international importance historically recorded in a several rivers in Leicester. Those

habitats of particular importance to Leicester have been identified in a series of strategic Habitat Action Plans to safeguard the species and the environment in which they thrive (see Section 5).

1.5 THREATS TO HABITATS AND THEIR CONSERVATION

Whilst the area of developed land has increased in Leicester, the quality of some of the urban wildlife habitats has declined. The main factors causing this degradation are:

- Development pressure on derelict land and waste ground causing habitat loss and fragmentation;
- Increased use of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides in gardens, parks, allotments, and railway lands;
- Pollution – atmospheric and from largely industrial sources;
- Recreational pressure;
- Demolition of old buildings to make way for new development;
- Frequent or inappropriate mowing of amenity grasslands; and
- Anti-social behaviour and acts of vandalism

The value of urban wildlife and its contribution to the quality of life to the local residents has been recognised to a degree by addressing some of the threats through a variety of initiatives by local authorities, government and charitable organisations, for example:

- Establishment of Leicester as Britain's first Environment City;
- Leicester signing the Local Action for Biodiversity to ensure the local council is engaged in urban biodiversity, enhancement, utilisation and management;
- Publication of the Leicester Ecology Strategy and subsequent nature conservation strategies;
- Protection of Wildlife Sites through local development plans and policies;
- Declaration of Aylestone Meadows, Knighton Spinney, Goss Meadows, The Orchards, Humberstone Park, Kirby Frith and Watermead Local Nature Reserves;

- More enlightened management of local authority land;
- The establishment of projects such as Leicester's Riverside Park; and
- The provision of advice to schools and the general public.

1.6 THE PURPOSE OF THE BAP

At the heart of the biodiversity process is recognition of the need to take positive, practical action to reverse declines in species and habitats and restore them as key elements in a healthy, diverse and sustainable environment, across the urban, sub-urban and rural areas of Leicester. The Leicester BAP identifies the action that is needed and the role of lead agencies. The habitats identified are of national, regional or local importance, but all are of special significance within the Leicester area. The actions may not only benefit the condition of a habitat or the status of a particular species, but will have a wider benefit to both people and wildlife, helping to assist in improving the quality of life for residents whilst working towards the One Vision for Leicester. The Plan fully incorporates the benefits of contact with nature and green space in terms of people's well being, including health, emotional and developmental benefits.

The purpose of this document is to build on the first Leicester BAP which successfully demonstrated to the people of Leicester why and where biodiversity was important in the City. This document will continue to further that knowledge, but also provide information to assist with guidance on strategic policy such as the planning framework, green infrastructure and sustainable development, all of which are key to safeguarding nature conservation and

biodiversity in the City.

The Plan also addresses the needs of wildlife and their habitats potentially affected by climate change. This has been done by reinforcing the aspirational project-type targets aimed at public participation; identification of sites of wildlife value, and inclusion of more specific habitat based targets to ensure that they are maintained and enhanced for biodiversity.

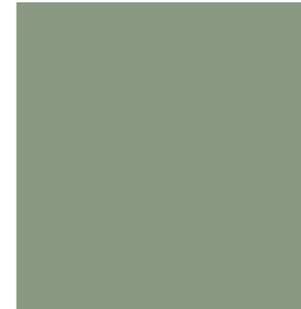
The Plan, however, is a working document and will be reviewed periodically to address changes in habitats and species around the City; changes in political agenda, policies and legislation; and funding streams available for habitat creation and enhancement.

1.7 SETTING PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

In addition to safeguarding biodiversity in the City, a major role of the local BAP is to maximise the effective use of resources by identifying those habitats and species where action is needed and where resources will have the greatest effect. It should be emphasised that this does not mean that habitats and species not identified in the Plan will be ignored.

Auditing is a key part of the process of identifying local priorities for biodiversity action. Audits of local biodiversity have been completed by the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust in 1996 (Bowen and Morris 1996) to determine the status of the Counties' wildlife, and to identify the priority species and habitats for action.

A long tradition of natural history recording is publicly available having been collected or acquired by local organisations such as the Leicester and Leicestershire County Council's Museum Services, Leicestershire Environmental





Records Centre, Leicester City Council and Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire (GWLL) (and its forerunners Environ and the City Wildlife Project, the Leicester Ecology Trust and the Leicester Environment City Trust). However, there are some inherent problems with the collation of this data as the information held by local organisations is not always accessible and much of the data stored are not available in an electronic format or digitised maps. The data collected are also stored at a number of locations across the City making it difficult to collate and update records efficiently. Nevertheless, Leicester has a large amount of data on wildlife sites, habitats and species within the City and this has been used to identify specific habitats and species considered important locally; set targets and prioritise actions. The following sources of data have been used:

Historic data from the Leicester Habitat Survey (1983-1986) by the City Wildlife Project which identified the main habitat types in Leicester: woodland and tree groups, hedgerows and scrub, unmanaged grassland, tall herbs and pasture grassland, intensively managed grassland, rivers, streams, canals and small lakes, reedswamp and other wetland, arable land and allotment land. These habitats were mapped, together with a detailed plant list of every site which provided a useful baseline data for habitats in Leicester.

- Phase I Habitat Survey of Leicester (2006-08) which identified and digitised specific habitats across the City and identified potential sites of local wildlife value for further assessment;
- A series of reports (1992-1995) produced by GWLL on specific habitats around the City: private gardens, allotments, cemeteries, wetlands, ancient trees, woodlands, grasslands which provide baseline data for distribution, condition and quality;
- Wildlife sites in Leicester now known as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), but previously referred to as Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINC) collated by Leicester City Council since 2000. Each site's designation contains information on the habitats and species present;
- Wildlife information from development site surveys

commissioned by Leicester City Council's planning department;

- Survey data of protected species (bats, badgers, great crested newts, water voles and white-clawed crayfish) often submitted with planning applications or as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment;
- Public surveys of great crested newts, hedgehogs, foxes and kestrels;
- Various site-based surveys on specific invertebrate groups (beetles, snails, crayfish);
- Dr Jenny Owen's survey of her Humberstone garden ('The Ecology of a Garden') contains comprehensive invertebrate data collected between 1972 and 2001, as well as data on flora and other animals;
- Surveys of some parks, cemeteries and public open spaces including: Braunstone Park, Knighton Park, Evington Park, Welford Road Cemetery, Astill Lodge Park, St Mary's Allotments, Western Park, Anstey Lane Green Wedge, Castle Hill Country Park;
- Surveys of lichens from 350 sites in the City in 1992, grasslands in 2000 and the Soar and Grand Union Canal in 1997;
- Local naturalists groups such as the Leicestershire and Rutland Ornithological Society (LROS), the Leicestershire and Rutland Moth Group, the Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group and Leicestershire Badger Group also hold extensive and very valuable data sets which include the City.
- Opportunities to plan for new areas of natural green space to connect existing sites and create new corridors will be co-ordinated through the planning process. Green Infrastructure planning will identify existing and potential sites for nature conservation to enable specific habitats to be protected, created or enhanced whilst providing additional benefits such as climate change amelioration and sustainable drainage within the City. This process will enable those sites of high local wildlife value to be identified, enhanced and protected whilst the creation of habitats in appropriate places will link green spaces across the City.

leicester's BAP objectives

A number of objectives and targets have been identified to conserve the valued habitats and species which characterise Leicester whilst also contributing to an attractive and sustainable natural environment. The new Leicester BAP sets out to update the BAP from being mainly aspirational project type targets with qualitative data, to having specific and measurable targets that establish and implement a delivery programme, with agreed accountabilities, for priority habitats and species. In line with the national review of biodiversity that states targets of all local BAPs are made SMART by March 2008, the specific targets for participation, strategic and habitat have been SMARTened.

SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound and being explicitly quantitative within a specified time-frame as well as being realistic and attainable is the best way to ensure that a target is SMART. This has been achieved by using the best available data and expert advice to set target figures and units and will be regularly reviewed to account for changes in factors and policy affecting the urban environment.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the vision of the Leicester BAP three specific strategic objectives have been identified, namely Participation Objectives, Strategic Site Objectives and Habitat Objectives. These objectives and targets will require

agreement from all partnership organisations and departments within Leicester City Council that have an influence on biodiversity. This will involve a concentration of effort from all agencies, particularly with regard to funding.

2.2.1 PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES

- Increasing participation in biodiversity;
- Increasing understanding of biodiversity issues; and
- Increasing availability and quality of biodiversity recording and information.

2.2.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- Ensuring the wildlife corridors, green wedges and biodiversity networks are maintained or improved, particularly with regard to mitigation against climate change and flooding through incorporation of strategic green infrastructure principles.

2.2.3 HABITAT OBJECTIVES

- Specific targets and actions for the main habitat types and species found in Leicester.

The next section provides details of the history and current situation with regard to each of the three objectives. This is followed by a set of action points for the current year and following four-year period in order to meet these objectives.



strategic action plans – history and current status

History of biodiversity strategies in Leicester

92Participation

Leicester has a good record of encouraging public participation in biodiversity management and nature conservation which has evolved from the Councils partnership with Groundwork (previously called Environ) over the last 25 years. Groundwork encourages community participation in local conservation projects and co-ordinates volunteers to complete conservation tasks across the City.

Groundwork has assisted with the setting-up of several “Friends Of” groups (FOGs) across the City who assist with management of local sites close to residential areas.

Parks and Green Spaces run regular guided walks and events to encourage people to visit the Parks

The Green Lifeboat Project managed by Parks encourages public participation to clean-up the River Soar and GUC through a regular programme of litter picking.

Where we are now

There are 15 FOGs across the City associated with nature reserves and parks. The groups are actively encouraged and assisted by Parks staff and/or GWLL. Parks and Green Spaces have targets to increase the number of Park User Groups and FOGs in the City.

During 2009 and 2010 GWLL and LCC NCO ran a series of Biodiversity Events to encourage participation. This included a Garden Survey to encourage residents to record wildlife in their gardens; and an Environment Day for FOGs which included a series of speakers, workshops and training.

Parks in partnership with OPAL have organised volunteers to participate in research to record biodiversity and monitor habitat quality. This is a national programme and records contribute at a national and regional as well as local level. The Green Lifeboat Project increased the number of boats following a successful bid for funding enabling more volunteers to participate in conservation projects.

Public awareness

Leicester was declared an Environment City in 1990 in recognition of its green vision for sustainability and conservation of wildlife. It was the first council in the UK to employ a Nature Conservation Officer (NCO) to co-ordinate planning and biodiversity strategies across the City and raise awareness.

Several nature conservation strategies have been produced which include the Biodiversity SPD (2003) and The City Biodiversity Action Plan (2006-09). Publicity material and reports have been regularly produced by the LCC Environment Team, Parks and Green Spaces, GWLL and LRWT.

Leics CC, the City Council, GWLL and LRWT have developed web pages to inform the public of green spaces and wildlife across the City.

In Feb 2009 the Local Action for Biodiversity was launched following the signing of an International Agreement by the Council to protect and conserve biodiversity in the City (Leicester is one of only 21 Cities worldwide to have signed-up to this agreement).

In 2009-10 GWLL and LCC NCO ran a series of guided walks for the general public to raise awareness of natural green space in the City.

In May 2010 the first Leicester and Leicestershire Bioblitz was held at Watermead CP and encouraged the public to record wildlife in the nature reserve with the help of specialists and organised events. The event was highly successful and resulted in partners being awarded the overall Green Life Environmental Award in December 2010. Another successful Bioblitz was completed at Abbey Park in June 2011 which encouraged participation with the public and local schools.

Parks and Green Spaces regularly organise events across the Parks such as Watermead Family Fun Day, guided walks and bird surveys.

4. strategic action plans – objectives and targets

27

Strategies in Leicester The programme 2011–12	Lead & Partners	Looking forward 2011–2015	Lead & Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set out our commitment to local Bioblitz events, such as the recent event at Abbey Park, with the aim of involving local residents and voluntary groups in improving understanding of the biodiversity in Leicester's city parks and greenspaces. 	<p>LCC NCO, Parks, GWLL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a FOG for each LNR to be involved in developing a management plan and active management to assist in achieving aims and objectives for specific species or habitat 	<p>GWLL, LCC Parks</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate 10 guided walks or events with wildlife/nature conservation element across the City parks/LNR 	<p>LCC NCO, Parks, GWLL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase percentage of wildlife sites in favourable condition from 45% to 65% by encouraging landowners (public or private) to enhance the biodiversity value 	<p>LCC NCO, Parks, GWLL</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 5 x FOGs through direct management of conservation projects and on-going advice 	<p>GWLL, LCC Parks, NCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise at least one Bioblitz event annually to involve local residents and voluntary groups in improving and understanding of the biodiversity 	<p>GWLL, LCC NCO, LRWT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage participation of Universities and FE/HE Colleges in conservation projects, research and strategies 	<p>LCC NCO, GWLL, Leics CC, LRWT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish "Biodiversity Champions" and train them to record wildlife across the City Set-up and co-ordinate one species survey each year (flora or fauna) across City 	<p>LCC NCO GWLL</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote biodiversity in City using a variety of media – websites, posters, leaflets, newspapers, TV 	<p>LCC NCO, Parks, Environment, GWLL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Biodiversity Projects as exemplar case studies for promotion at international, national and local level 	<p>LCC NCO, Parks, GWLL</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit 5 x schools and/or youth groups to promote biodiversity 	<p>GWLL, LRWT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain targets for work with schools and community groups 	<p>GWLL, LCC Parks, LRWT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise 2 x school or community projects 	<p>GWLL, LCC Parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a programme of Bioblitz events across the City to involve the public and increase the understanding of biodiversity in Leicester 	<p>LCC NCO, Parks, GWLL, Environment</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advice and information on national and local biodiversity policy within the local authority, the general public and developers 	<p>LCC NCO, GWLL, LRWT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update websites and links to other organisations promoting biodiversity in the City 	<p>LCC NCO Environment, GWLL, Leics CC, RWT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Green Flag Awards of Parks and Green Life Awards for conservation groups 	<p>LCC Parks, Environment Team, NCO, GWLL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote Green Flag Awards of Parks and Green Flag Awards for conservation groups 	<p>LCC Parks, Environment Team, GWLL ¹³</p>

3. strategic action plans cont'd

History of biodiversity strategies in Leicester

Where we are now

Data Recording

The City council has data records held in several locations – City museums, New Walk Centre and at the County Record Office. Recent records are digitised, but many historic records are not in electronic format making the existing data scattered and insecure.

GWLL has records from City Wildlife Projects and Habitat data, but much of this is still in paper format.

There are gaps in the knowledge of Leicester's biodiversity which requires improvement to provide an evidence base to support future policy and funding.

The number of people recording data in the City is restricted to a few individual specialists and groups.

A Phase I Habitat Survey of the City was completed 2006-08 to inform on the locations and types of habitats present.

The City and County Council have continued to work in partnership to exchange data and update records. Records of protected species in the City have been digitised to inform on planning and appropriate biodiversity enhancements.

Specific wildlife projects in the City are being co-ordinated to increase and encourage data collection e.g. Garden survey; Harvest Mouse survey. Annual monitoring of one site by University of Leicester commenced 2009 prior to change in grassland management regime and will inform on appropriate techniques and increases in species diversity which will contribute to other targets in the City.

Green Infrastructure

Sites designated for their nature conservation value (LNRs, LWS and BES) have been digitised and are available on the City and County council websites. The Habitat Phase I maps are not fully digitised, but data are held on main habitat types, locations and significant species and include land in public and private ownership.

The Site Allocation City Local Plan 2006 and Biodiversity Map show the designated sites, areas of green wedge and green space in the City. The Green Space Study and Open Space Strategy were completed in 2006 and 2007 and provide information on the locations and types of green space, current usage and deficiencies.

In 2010 the Core Strategy was adopted by the Council and incorporates a strategy for improving green networks in the City which aim to provide multiple benefits to include biodiversity and wildlife.

The River Soar and GUC Strategy (launched Nov 2009) identified the importance of this strategic corridor for multiple benefits of wildlife, flood alleviation, climate change amelioration and water source as well as the potential for regeneration and investment. The corridor and its surrounding tributaries will be central to the developing Green Infrastructure Strategy within the City.

4. strategic action plans cont'd

29

Strategies in Leicester The programme 2011–12	Lead & Partners	Looking forward 2011–2015	Lead & Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update data exchange agreement between organisations holding Leicester's biodiversity records, access historical data held at LRERC 	<p>LCC NCO, Leics CC GWLL, LRWT;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create virtual library of data to be held centrally and shared between organisations 	<p>Leics CC, LCC, GWLL, LRWT, EA, NE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set-up and co-ordinate one species surveys 	<p>LCC NCO, LRWT, GWLL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10% of paper records held by organisations to be digitised each year and forwarded to LRERC 	<p>Leics CC, LCC NCO, GWLL, LRWT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LCC and GWLL to digitise protected species data in City and forward to LRERC quarterly 	<p>LCC NCO, GWLL, Leics CC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a group of "Biodiversity Champions" and train them to record wildlife in the City 	<p>GWLL, LCC NCO, LCC Parks, LRWT</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish "Biodiversity Champions" and train them to record wildlife across the City Liaise with Universities to encourage adoption of local sites for continued research 	<p>LCC NCO GWLL</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Green Infrastructure (GI) priorities for the City to identify and prioritise areas for creation/enhancement of green space; provision of ecosystem to include areas such as Aylestone Meadows and the larger network of green space 	<p>LCC NCO, Parks, Highways, Drainage, Environment, Sport, Planning Policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enhance wildlife corridors, green wedges and biodiversity networks through Identification of 4 x LWS through the green network and GI Strategy 	<p>LCC NCO, LRWT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leicester Core Strategy adoption and site allocation map to identify areas of green space for protection and conservation 	<p>LCC Policy, LCC NCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Management Plans (5 –yr rolling review) on Green Spaces (LNRs, Parks) and implement 	<p>LCC Parks, GWLL, LCC NCO;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce guidance on Green Space Strategy to include natural and amenity green space 	<p>LCC Parks, Policy, LCC NCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and complete 3 x schemes for GI/biodiversity enhancement, seeking appropriate funding 	<p>LCC NCO, GWLL LCC Highways, Parks</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider potential approaches relating to the issue of the loss of back gardens to development and impact on wildlife 	<p>LCC Urban Design, NCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review GI Strategy and data (annual data processing and map digitisation and link to Climate Change, Adaptation, SuDs policies and Flood Risk Management Study 	<p>LCC IT, NCO</p>

habitat action plans – history and current status

History of biodiversity strategies in Leicester

Woodland Mixed Broadleaved Woodland and Wet Woodland

Total area of woodland is ~ 80 ha (public and private ownership). No areas of ancient woodland, but 3 areas of mature semi-natural woodland > 1 ha (Highway Spinney, Meynells Gorse and Knighton Spinney) and similar spinneys < 1 ha planted in last 15-20 years in parks. Important areas of wet woodland on the designated LNRs of Aylestone and Watermead where the woodland runs adjacent to the strategic River Soar.

Abandonment of traditional systems, removal of dead wood and large old trees, and planting of nonnative species has depleted the biodiversity value of woodland in the past. More recently the Trees & Woodlands Strategy has introduced a management programme to increase diversity of native species to enhance the age and structure of woodlands.

Inappropriate recreational activity, dumping of litter, habitat loss from development and clearance of understorey for public safety (e.g. Two Acre Spinney) has caused degradation. Dutch elm disease; Horse chestnut bleeding canker are impacting, but pathogens affecting Alder and Oak are currently low impact.

Wetland (Rivers, Streams, Ponds)

R Soar and Grand Union Canal (GUC) provide a strategic corridor for wildlife linking the City to surrounding countryside. Major tributaries include Saffron/Wash Brook, Melton, Braunstone and Rothley Brook.

Biodiversity is threatened by diffuse pollution from agricultural and urban runoff and more directly from industrial centres; a legacy of culverting and channel straightening resulting in removal of habitat features in 1970s; land drainage and increased sediment load; water abstraction and discharge, and increased litter along the banks. Climate impacts from droughts and flooding; unsympathetic development adjacent to the watercourses and the spread of non-native species of flora and fauna are reducing biodiversity.

Where we are now

Several woodlands are designated sites (LNR/LWS) e.g. Knighton, Highway Spinney and Meynells Gorse in recognition of their local wildlife value and are managed by GWLL. FOGs assist with management tasks and litter picking.

3 yr 10 000 Tree Project has exceeded the target of planting native and naturalised trees in the City. Sustainable use of timber encouraged – felled trees re-used following purchase of saw mill (planks, chippings, picnic tables); rotten tree trunks used for seating; safety barriers.

Woodland officer (community) employed by LCC – remit small woodlands near to housing estates to manage woodlands and encourage partnerships and local community involvement.

Tree Strategy – replacement planting 1:1 for trees felled or 2:1 on Highway schemes.

Resource funding severely restrict the level of management to increase their biodiversity value across the City

R Soar and GUC are largely designated as a LWS through the City with areas adjacent designated as Biodiversity Enhancement Sites (BES) which form part of the green network. Larger areas to the north and south are designated LNR (Aylestone Meadows and Watermead CP).

LCC programme to control Floating Pennywort (non-native invasive plant) along Soar and GUC since 2006 in partnership with EA and BW.

Recent strategies include “Re-Wilding the Soar” (2008 – Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust), “River Soar and Grand Union Canal” (2009) Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping (Natural England 2009) and Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Green Infrastructure Report (EMGIN 2010) to identify areas for creation and enhancement of biodiversity along strategic corridors such as the R Soar. Otter (UK and local BAP species) found in City (Aylestone LNR, Willowbrook LNR and Melton Brook)

6. habitat action plans – objectives and targets

31

Habitat Programme 2011	Lead & Partners	Looking forward 2011–2015	Lead & Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess quality of 3 mature spinneys using standard methodology; botanical survey of flora and create 5-year rolling Mgt Plan for each 	<p>LCC Trees & Woodlands, NCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further develop Tree Strategy for Leicester to incorporate Biodiversity 	<p>LCC Trees & Woodlands</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write/update rolling 5 yr Mgt Plan for each LNR/LWS woodland (x3) and implement management 	<p>LCC Trees & Woodlands, NCO, GWLL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thin plantations and spinneys to create a diverse age and open structure 2 x woodlands per year and manage on a 5 - 10 year rotation period 	<p>LCC Trees & Woodlands</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch plans to plant more trees across the city, building on the success of the 10,000 trees initiative, including plans for at least three new community orchards. Alongside developing new community orchards promote allotments and garden growing to support local people in 'growing their own' 	<p>LCC Project and Allotments Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant under-storey of trees and replace top canopy trees where required to maintain diverse age and structure in 2 x woodlands per year Identify areas for new planting adjacent to existing woods to act as buffer. Map areas on GIS base (to complement Green Infrastructure Strategy) 	<p>LCC Trees & Woodlands LCC Trees & Woodlands, NCO</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete otter survey of Soar and main tributaries. Map and produce otter strategy for the City 	<p>LCC Parks, NCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete/commission wetland BAP species surveys (water vole, white-clawed crayfish, great crested newt) 	<p>LCC NCO, LRWT</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write/update 5 yr rolling Mgt Plans for Aylestone Meadows, Castle Gardens, and Watermead CP 	<p>LCC Parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue programme of invasive plant control – floating pennywort and Japanese Knotweed through appropriate funding support 	<p>EA, BW, LCC Parks, NCO, LRWT, Trees & Woodlands</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue programme of invasive plant control – Japanese knotweed, Himalyan balsam, floating pennywort 	<p>EA, BW, LCC Parks, Trees & Woodlands, NCO, LRWT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding for pond/wetland creation projects with partners and create 2 x ponds per year 	<p>LCC NCO, GWLL, EA, BW, NE</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance wetland and access within Regeneration Areas e.g. Abbey Meadows and Rally Park 	<p>LCC Regen, NCO, Urban Design, Parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify suitable areas for pond and wetland creation to create 3 x new habitat areas 	<p>LCC NCO, GWLL, EA, BW, NE</p>

5. habitat action plans cont'd

History of biodiversity strategies in Leicester

Grassland and Meadows

Leicester has large areas of closely mown amenity grassland and areas of natural grassland either managed traditionally as meadows or left un-managed. It has lost much of the species-rich meadow grasslands due to poor management (mown too frequently/infrequently; arisings not removed; scrub encroachment). Other areas have been lost due to development (on or adjacent to), vandalism, compaction and increased disturbance.

Priority areas of grassland are generally well-managed by trained staff or GWLL (e.g. Braunstone Park meadow, Kirby Frith, The Orchards) and contract farmer who oversees the herd of Longhorn cattle that graze Aylestone Meadows.

Mature Urban Trees

Applies to trees that occur as individuals or in small groups rather than in woodlands; usually located on roadsides, verges, parks, cemeteries and private gardens. Leicester has many such trees, e.g. the old Parkland Estate of Braunstone Park; all designated as LWS and some additionally with TPOs in recognition of their wildlife and aesthetic value.

Decline in tree numbers has occurred through inappropriate planting locations; development affecting root/canopy growth; drought-stress through extremes of temperature; vandalism and incorrect management (pollarding etc). Health & Safety issues dominate requirements for tree surgery resulting in loss of biodiversity value and potential bird and bat roosts.

Where we are now

Inappropriate management and lack of resources have degraded grassland sites, some of which are designated as LWS on which their condition is reported as a National Indicator (NI 197) or an EMAS target. Advice on appropriate management is provided for sites.

Development proposals at two grassland LWS/LNRs high-lighted biodiversity concerns regarding loss of habitats and species. Ashton Green site has small areas of species-rich grassland which will be conserved and enhanced as part of the development mitigation process. An application to develop part of the Aylestone Meadows LNR was refused and work has commenced to identify and safeguard areas of high biodiversity value through appropriate management and usage.

Two new grassland LWS were designated in 2009. Hamilton College NR is attached to a college where students studying nature conservation are able to complete conservation tasks on site. A Management Plan has been prepared for staff and students. The successful grazing project at Aylestone Meadows has increased the diversity of plant species. Monitoring programme at Piggy's Hollow LWS commenced with University of Leicester and a Management Plan has been prepared for the site.

The majority of trees in public open space (POS) have been plotted electronically. A mature tree survey has provided baseline data and identified those trees that meet the criteria as a LWS. This complements the Trees & Woodlands database to enable designation of trees where appropriate. Several individual trees were identified as LWS in 2009-10 (Ashton Green, Castle Hill CP and Western Park).

The great Oak in Western Park lost a couple of limbs from disease and has resulted in some initial safety work being completed. Public concern regarding further work on the tree has resulted in a thorough inspection; bat assessment and evaluation prior to any further work.

Mature parkland trees at Braunstone Park (LWS) are regularly monitored by Trees & Woodlands re concerns about the health and safety. Trees are being retained and sympathetic tree surgery has resulted in trees retaining some wildlife value.

6. habitat action plans cont'd

Strategies in Leicester The programme 2011–12

- Write/update rolling 5 yr Mgt Plan for each LNR grassland managed by GWLL
- Prioritise and write 5 yr Mgt Plan for 3 x LNR/LWS grasslands managed by Parks
- Review SLA and Groundcare maintenance programme between GWLL and LCC
- Declare 2 x proposed LNR (Highway Spinney and Glen Hills Nature Reserve)

3 Commence formal monitoring programme at grassland sites x 2 (Piggy's Hollow and Goss Meadows)

Lead & Partners

GWLL, LCC NCO

LCC NCO, Parks

LCC Parks, NCO, GWLL

LCC NCO, NE

LCC NCO, GWLL, Parks

Looking forward 2011–2015

- Write rolling 5 yr Mgt Plan for 3 x LNR/LWS grasslands managed by Parks - review each year
- Bring one site back into favourable management each year
- Declare 2 x new LNR each year (dependent on resource availability at each site)
- Organise training event for grassland managers (Parks, golf courses, cemeteries) on good grassland mgt
- Organise a FOG to be attached to each LNR or proposed LNR
- Review SLA and Groundcare maintenance annually and prioritise sites to be managed by GWLL to complement Park resources

Lead & Partners

LCC NCO, Parks

LCC Parks

LCC NCO, NE

LCC Parks, NCO

GWLL, LCC Parks

LCC Parks, NCO, GWLL;

- Update tree inventory to identify mature urban trees and designate sites as LWS

- Inform NCO prior to commencing works to mature trees or other trees considered of wildlife value in accordance with EMAS

- Organise in-house/external training on wildlife legislation and trees

LCC NCO

LCC NCO, Trees & Woodlands,

LCC NCO, Trees & Woodlands,

- Develop a Mature Tree/Veteran Tree Strategy to advise on appropriate management for the tree and associated species

- Establish a Tree Warden Scheme for local communities to identify and monitor mature trees in the City (seek funding)

- Organise in-house/external training for management and awareness of veteran trees to Parks staff, NCO and GWLL (open it to partnership)

LCC Trees & Woodlands, NCO

GWLL

LCC Parks

5. habitat action plans cont'd

History of biodiversity strategies in Leicester

Hedgerows

Most of the hedgerows were planted after the Enclosures Act in the 18th and 19th centuries to divide and enclose former common land, but a number of ancient hedgerow systems linking old spinneys are of higher conservation value associated with a diverse range of woodland plants and invertebrates e.g. Gorse Hill, Anstey Lane, Stokes Drive, Ratby Lane and Gartree Road.

Hedgerows have been lost or degraded due to neglect or inappropriate management, removal, intensive farming practices or damage to root structure through development and road building.

Green Space (Allotments, gardens, parks, golf courses, graveyards and cemeteries)

Collectively these green spaces provide opportunities for habitat enhancement to increase and sustain biodiversity. Allotments cover a large area of the City and provide a series of micro habitats across individual plots and average 30% higher species diversity than urban parks. The large parks around the City cover 5% of land and are valued for their amenity and recreation as well as biodiversity value. Most are formally landscaped, but many contain mature trees and wildlife areas of relatively un-managed grasses of value to wildlife. The graveyards and cemeteries provide a haven for wildlife and network of stepping stones for species to disperse. They often contain relict grasslands and mature trees. Leicester has 4 golf courses located in the green wedge around the City boundary totalling 198 ha in public and private ownership.

Where we are now

5 ancient hedgerows in the City are designated as LWS and are monitored on a 5 yearly basis. Agricultural hedgerows are protected under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997), but many of the urban hedgerows fall outside the regulations. Advice and guidance is provided through the British Standards to protect against impacts of development and is commented on in planning applications.

Damage caused to some hedgerows through inappropriate cutting of ivy from around trunks; illegal felling or poor coppicing of tree and shrub species by un-trained personnel.

Several former allotment sites have been designated as LWS (e.g. The Orchards, Stokeswood Park). Gardens provide an important refuge for wildlife in close proximity to people, enabling areas to connect and provide a corridor to adjacent public open green space.

The four cemeteries in Leicester adjoin areas of open space which adds to the wildlife value. Belgrave (2ha) and Welford Rd (12.3 ha) are designated LWS for their relict grassland. 11 historic churchyards in Leicester vary in their wildlife value and have opportunities for enhancement.

Some golf courses are designated LWS because of great crested newts and/or species-rich grassland and trees.

6. habitat action plans cont'd

Habitat Programme 2011	Lead & Partners	Looking forward 2011–2015	Lead & Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify extent of linear hedgerows across the City. Prioritise and assess 5 hedgerows to identify those of high wildlife value and designate as LWS 	<p>LCC Parks, NCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue assessment of 5 hedgerows each year to identify those of high wildlife value and designate as LWS, provide mgt advice Enhance connectivity and structure through appropriate tree planting of 3 hedgerows (review following assessment) Get 1 site into HLS agreement to include appropriate hedgerow mgt 	<p>LCC NCO, GWLL</p> <p>LCC Parks, NCO, Trees & Woodlands, GWLL</p> <p>LCC NCO, Parks, NE</p>
<p>35 Identify 1 x allotment site within the City and commence monitoring programme to assess wildlife value</p>	<p>GWLL, Leicester Allotment Gardens Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote wildlife gardening organise “Open Garden” event to show practical examples of wildlife gardening in the City 	<p>GWLL</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor grassland LWS sites and train Parks staff in procedure 	<p>LCC NCO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a further 2 x allotment sites to monitor wildlife value 	<p>GWLL, Leicester Allotment Gardens Council</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Green Space SPD and incorporate into planning guidance to seek appropriate funds for natural green space 	<p>LCC Policy, NCO, Parks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding to support practical wildlife gardening projects across the City 	<p>GWLL</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declare 2 x proposed LNR (Highway Spinney and Glen Hills Nature Reserve) 	<p>LCC NCO, NE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review grassland management strategy for the City to incorporate a range of sustainable methods to implement management regimes and disposal of arisings etc. 	<p>LCC NCO, Parks</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence formal monitoring programme at grassland sites x 2 (Piggy’s Hollow and Goss Meadows) 	<p>LCC NCO, GWLL, Parks</p>		

5. habitat action plans cont'd

History of biodiversity strategies in Leicester

9E Buildings & Built Structure

In addition to the large built structures; walls, bridges, tunnels, underground sites, hard surfacing and railway ballast, urban commons and brownfield sites are included in the definition. The ecological value of built structures is poorly studied and the dynamic changes brought about through demolition, re-development and disturbance are continuance. Fragmentation of land ownership makes it difficult to provide a co-ordinated approach to ecological management, but the Biodiversity SPD (2003) has provided a good basis for Biodiversity and Development guidance.

Where we are now

The Conservation Area guides provide information on built structures of conservation value and their ecological value. EMAS guidance on LCC action required has been updated in 2010 to inform on actions necessary to minimise disturbance to wildlife. Regular guidance to Planning officers re development and biodiversity opportunities is provided with the implementation of Wildlife legislation and Planning Policy Guidance re Biodiversity.

The Leicester and Rutland Environmental Record Centre provide records of species in the City. This is supplemented as collation of data from the City through casual observation and surveys.



6. habitat action plans cont'd

37

Strategies in Leicester The programme 2011–12	Lead & Partners	Looking forward 2011–2015	Lead & Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policy and guidance on actions to conserve buildings whilst enhancing structures for wildlife 	LCC NCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate 3 x green/brown roof or green wall design into City development 	LCC Urban Design, Planning, City Architects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policy on SUDs for incorporation into planning system 	LCC Urban Design, SWMP Steering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify areas suitable for wildlife verges and adopt 2 into favourable management 	LCC HTD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate data on brownfield sites across the City (co-ordinate monitoring of 2 x brownfield sites) 	LCC NCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor 2 x brownfield sites per year and identify and declare 2 x sites as LWS 	LCC NCO





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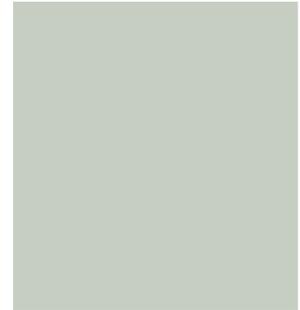
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acronyms

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BES	Biodiversity Enhancement Site
BW	British Waterways
EA	Environment Agency
EMAS	Environmental Management Monitoring Systems
FOGs	Friends of Groups
GI	Green Infrastructure
GUC	Grand Union Canal
GWLL	Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire
HTD	Highways, Transport & Drainage
LRERC	Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Resource Centre
LCC	Leicester City Council
Leics CC	Leicestershire County Council
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
LRWT	Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust
NE	Natural England
NI	National Indicator
NCO	Nature Conservation Officer
OPAL	Open Air Laboratories
POS	Public Open Space
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SWMP	Surface Water Management Plan
SUDs	Sustainable Urban Drainage
TPO	Tree Preservation Order





Leicester's biodiversity
action plan

**Groundwork Leicester
& Leicestershire**
Parkfield
Western Park
Leicester LE3 6HX

Leicester City Council
Planning Policy and Design
A11 New Walk Centre
Leicester LE1 6ZG
Tel: 0116 252 7268

Biodiversity Action Plan Programme 2018/19

Aims	Objectives	Progress towards achieving objective	Next steps	Estimated/Actual Date of Completion	Press release?	Linked target	Lead
Strategic Objectives							
Encourage Participation and Raise Awareness of Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Across Leicester	To provide a 5-yr review of 2011-2021 BAP with updates on habitat and species action plans. Provide evidence base and inform on actions	Agreement reached on format of action and species plans. Individual plans circulated internally for comments	Collate comments and amalgamate plans into Plan. Internal consultation before final draft and seek advice on endorsement/adoption by CM	Estimated August 2018	Yes to launch new BAP CARRY OVER		HOB
	To promote biodiversity in Leicester through a public-facing document – “Making Wildlife Count”	Making Wildlife Count 2017/18 completed Promote partnership working with LRWT, UoL, TCV and others to deliver Biodiversity Projects	Distribution – to Community Centres, Libraries, Visit Leicester, Parks and at Events Collate information on completed projects for inclusion in forth-coming document	Completed January 2018 2018/19 document estimated November 2018	Placed on Comms tracker		RK/NCO
	Partnership working, local events and websites	LCC Website updated, Events within Making Wildlife Count report to be organised with assistance from partners TCV, LRWT	Promoting Biodiversity webpage updated with Events and opportunities to participate Making Wildlife Count Year Planner to be published on LCC website and a series of events promoted as detailed below. Review to be done when NCO in post	On-going	Yes, regular press release by LCC		HOB/NCO
	Organise Bioblitz Event at Belgrave Hall Gardens and St Peters Churchyard 17 th and 18 th May 2018	BioBlitz Event held in partnership with Parks, TCV and other specialists	Continue to promote prior and take bookings via Event Brite up to day of event	To be held 17th/18th May 2018	Yes - pre and post event - Leic Mercury, social media etc	Sustainability Action Plan 18.5	HOB/NCO
	Involve 50 children from local schools in the wildlife event	120 children from Mellor and St Peters Primary Schools attending BioBlitz event	Continue to work closely with EcoSchools and Education Co-ordinator to encourage wildlife projects in schools (no specific target but part of UB Project targets)	To be held 17th/18th May 2018	Yes - prior to event, during and post	Sustainability Action Plan 18.5	HOB/NCO
	Update Promotion material to include Biodiversity Green Networks, Wild About Leicester and Making Wildlife Count Projects	Draft pop-up posters and displays for Projects HOB – GI Networks	NCO to draft material when recruited to post	Estimate August 2018			NCO
	Promote Wild About Leicester programme of work by recruiting and training Biodiversity Champion volunteers	Annual monitoring programme set up at Aylestone Meadows to monitor grasslands with LRWT Snr NCO set up 10 x days to monitor Bee Road Project areas, Ellis Meadows, Western Park, Castle Hill CP, Bennion Pools and Ocean Rd Open Space Specialists to deliver training to volunteers – agreement with Naturespot,	Priority sites for monitoring to be confirmed based on planned Project work Agree target number of Biodiversity Champions To be agreed and led by NCO when in post 2 x specialist training days to be delivered via Urban Buzz project	Annual Monitoring Programme to commence May 2018 Jul and August 2018	Yes pre and post event, posters		HOB/NCO /UBO

	Organise 5 Walk on the Wildside sessions with Walking to Health	Link opportunities of walking in natural POS to health and promote through both Planning and Transportation	NCO agreed 11 walks in POS Jan – Dec in partnership with Walking for Health on main parks and riverside. Led by specialists and UBO. On-going promotion by Snr NCO and Health & Well-being until NCO in post	Jan – Dec 2018			RK/UBO
Identify and advise on opportunities to incorporate biodiversity and improve ecological networks using strategic GI principles through Planning and Policy	Incorporate GI mapping into centralised City mapping database for use across Council departments. Identify 6 sites with potential to declare as LNRs	Commenced mapping of GI layer on City Maps for use across Council and transfer onto Aurora mapping system. Small and medium OS evaluated,. Potential LNRs put on GI Layer	Continue works with IT to put GI network layer onto Aurora. Deliver presentation across services via In-Depth briefing	August 2018		Sustainability Action Plan	HOB
	Provide opportunities for biodiversity through planning in major development schemes	Advise on Phase 2 Ashton Green and delivery of GI first phase on Ashton Green, A46 road network scheme, St Marys Allotments, Pioneer Park, Waterside, Franklyn Fields, Scraftoft	Next Phases of major development support with ecological advise continuing when necessary	On-going			HOB
	Identify GI Projects associated with LLEP funding along Soar and GUC water corridor	Priority sites are Pioneer Park/Abbey Pumping Station, Swans Nest Weir Aylestone Mdws and Loughborough Rd/Beaumanor OS	Work with Economic Regen Team and LLEP Board to formalise plans, costs, Complete pre-commencement surveys and risk assessments. See below for Project delivery	On-going with bi-monthly reports directly to LLEP Board	Yes - put on tracker	CMS 19/20 BAP	HOB/CT
Maintain a database to record species data and status of designated sites to help inform on constraints, opportunities and priorities for biodiversity and improving the ecological network	National recording and network - survey and monitor existing LWS to determine condition and advise on appropriate management	Visit sites throughout the year, complete reports, provide advice to improve mgt where necessary	Collate data and statistics, produce statement to Env Team, presented findings to November 2017	Completed November 2017		Single data-set ISO40001	HOB
	Increase the number of designated LWS by 10% by 2018/19. Total number = 50 sites	Identify potential sites from mapped database and link to blue-green mapping and site assessments. Survey 1-2 annually	Candidate LWS that meet criteria to be added to database – Hamilton Ponds, Birstall GC to be designated	Estimate September 2018		Sustainability Action Plan 14.1 ISO 40001	HOB
	Designate 35 council-managed mature/veteran trees per yr as LWS and manage them to prolong their life and nature conservation value	23 trees surveyed and meet LWS criteria for designation to March 2018	Target of 35 trees to be designated in 2018/19. To be reviewed and led by NCO when in post	March 2019		Sustainability Action Plan 14.5	RK/NCO
	Collate species records and maintain database	QC check and verified. On-going, update database from sources (planning and public)	Continue with data exchange agreement and send records to LRERC annually. Database currently maintained by Snr NCO until NCO post recruited to	On-going			HOB

Create, conserve or enhance Priority Habitats to increase biodiversity value

Trees & Woodlands	Conserve varieties of old orchard fruits and diversify existing orchards sites	Orchard to be created in nature community area at St Marys site as part of compensation for loss	Agreements to be made with developers, Parks, TCV with Friends Group	Estimate autumn/winter2017 Carried over to autumn/winter 2018	Yes – put on tracker		HOB
		Plant orchard trees at The Old Orchards, Aylestone	Parks briefed on project and maintenance programme agreed. NCO to advise on project delivery when in post	Estimate autumn/winter 2017 Carried over to autumn/winter 2018	Yes – put on tracker	CMS 19/20 BAP	NCO
		Plant orchard trees at Tip top Meadow, Aylestone Meadows LNR	Partnership to agree works for delivery by IYN Group (AMAS) with UBO	Completed Winter 2017/18	Yes – put on tracker		UBO
		Tree compensation planting at CHCP to mitigate/compensate for A46 road scheme	Liaise with Country Highways, T&W, Parks and Economic Regen to deliver suitable compensation within CHCP	Estimate Autumn/Winter 2018			T&W/Geoff Mee
Wetland (Rivers, Streams, Ponds)	Wetlands and ponds to be created to increase biodiversity value of sites along River Soar and wider catchment areas associated with Flood storage	Wetland creation at Loughborough Rd (Phase 3) with EA/LCC depts. Input into NEAS Project list, Input into Riverside Strategy	Planning approval and first stage of construction of culvert and cycle access in Summer 2017. Gi Wetland completed. Attend regular meeting and advise re Riverside Strategy and links to GI	Estimate Autumn/Winter 2018/19	Yes - put on tracker	CMS 19/20 BAP	HOB/PT
	Mitigate against vegetation flood control works through biodiversity improvements along banks of River Soar/GUC	Agree with EA on areas to plant coir rolls along banks to mitigate and compensate for habitat losses at Bede Park and St Augustines Rd	EA to tender contract, obtain consents and deliver scheme. LCC to support and maintain.	EA still to confirm CARRIED OVER	Yes - put on tracker	CMS 19/20 BAP	HOB
	Improve conservation status of ponds and wetlands in Parks & OS	Agree priority programme of work with Parks at 6 ponds per year as part of Puddle Ducks	Works completed with volunteers over autumn/winter 2017 and scheduled in with Park Force Programme for 2018/19 tba when NCO in post	COMPLETE March 2018		CMS 19/20 BAP	RK/NCO
		Complete projects with Froglife and Parks at Castle Hill CP awarded funding through Tesco Carrier Bags	Publicity campaign to maximise funding received for Project. Froglife and LCC to deliver improvements to ponds using volunteers and local residents	COMPLETE March 2018	Yes – put on tracker and media release – various throughout Project	CMS 19/20 BAP	Parks/HOB
		Improve wetland habitat at Braunstone Park Lakes awarded funding through Tesco Carrier Bags	2 x Conservation Days held in August and October. Habitat creation completed Sept/October by Parks	COMPLETE Autumn 2017	Yes – put on tracker and media release – various throughout Project	CMS 19/20 BAP	HOB/Park
	Improve species diversity and conservation value of grasslands	Grazing review. New tenancies implemented from Apr 2017 but still non-compliance. Additional resources for monitoring and enforcement needed	TCV to submit bid to secure funding for delivery of Grazing project – deliver with LCC-NCO – possible HLF. Still work in progress following change of mgt at TCV. Briefing paper to be presented when agreed	Estimate August 2018	Yes – put on tracker	CMS 19/20 BAP	HOB/Property

		Advise and agree new conservation works required on sites previously managed by TCV and now under new mgt regime of LEVs	Site status and priorities collated and agreed with Parks. LEV programme of works agreed. Sites to be monitored by Nat Con team to assess improving status On-going advice by Snr NCO until NCO in post	Programme agreed November 2017			HOB
	Increase the number of wildflower sites in Leicester to attract pollinating insects	Identify and deliver 7 key target areas with UBO on public and/or private land. Areas now identified and agreed with Parks	Work commenced on site Oct 2017 – priority sites are Western Park, Bennion Pools, CHCP, Ocean Rd OS, Aylestone Mdws LNR	COMPLETE Autumn/Winter 2017		CMS 19/20 BAP	UBO
	Improve roadside verge management to create wildflower areas and enhance wildlife connectivity – BEE ROAD PROJECT	Agreed priority areas with Parks to link in with green network. - Works commenced Oct 2017 – Goodwood Ave, Saffron Lane, New Parks with delivery by UBO and Parks	Agreed preparation and seeing of 10 roundabout and road verge sites as part of Bee Road Project	COMPLETE Autumn/Winter 2017	Yes – put on tracker - Parks	CMS 19/20 BAP	UBO
	Biodiversity improvements to SuDs/grassland at Gipsy Lane Claypit SSSI and SuDs	Detail of plans and design to complete, consents and agreements obtained. This now forms part of Wild About Leicester Project	SuD areas and wetlands created, volunteer days to be completed with LEV, additional tree planting with landscape works. Works to be completed when NCO in post	Carried over to Autumn/Winter 2018	Yes - put on tracker	CMS 19/20 BAP	RK
Meadows and Open Space	Re-align grazing fields layout at Pebble Beach to bring fields back into proper rotation	TCV completed vegetation clearance. Estimates obtained for fencing works	Agree with tenant and Property services, public consultation, deliver via LLEP as part of wider flood storage works at Aylestone Meadows.	Spring/Summer 2018		CMS 19/20 BAP	HOB
Hedgerows	Conserve, manage or create hedgerows to improve connectivity and dispersal for wildlife	New hedgerow planting at Water mead CP planned as compensation/mitigation	Hedgerow to be planted autumn/winter. Awaiting Parks confirmation	Autumn/Winter 2018			Parks
		New hedgerow planting at Evington Arboretum as compensation/mitigation for loss	Hedgerow to be planted autumn/winter. Awaiting Parks confirmation	Autumn/Winter 2018			Parks
		New hedgerow planting at CHCP as compensation/mitigation for A46 road scheme	Hedgerow to be planted autumn/winter.	Autumn/Winter 2018			Parks/Geoff Mee
Conserve Priority Species in Leicester by ensuring compliance with wildlife legislation and guidance and working with landowners and developers	Prepare Species Action Plans for Priority Species associated with urban habitats in Leicester	Prepare Peregrine falcon, Black Redstart and Swift/Swallow/House Martin Species Action Plans	Swift/Swallow House Martin Action Plan complete. Swift Project Group formed and	Estimated October 2018	Linked to BAP launch - not specific		HOB
	Provide opportunities for nesting sites around the City	Work with partners to identify suitable nesting sites to support sand martin colony on banks of Soar	Planning and flood Consent Application submitted by LROS in May 2017. Awaiting further approval from structural engineer	Works delayed Estimated October 2018	Yes - put on tracker		LROS/HOB
		LCC partner in Swift Partnership Project. Delivered Conservation Workshop, Produced a Planning Advice Leaflet and Public Leaflet	Link into Swift Awareness Week in June. Public awareness conservation day planned for June with LROS. Work to be taken on by NCO when in post	Workshop delivered Mar 2018 On-going June 2018	Yes - put on tracker		LROS/HOB

	Co-ordinate Peregrine Project with LROS to raise awareness and conserve species	Monthly programme of watch points at Cathedral by LROS. Webcam operational Webpage set up	Monitoring of Peregrines and links to webpage updated via LROS and LCC . Chicks recently hatched	On-going	Yes - put on tracker - Regular press releases and chicks recently hatched	LROS/RK
	Develop strategy for Bees and other Pollinating Insects	Liaise with Parks and Buglife to develop action plan	Draft plan and consult with statutory organisations and specialists. Publish as part of Leicester BAP	Estimated October 2018	Yes - put on tracker	UBO
	Control invasive species through programme of work to limit spread	Conservation day organised with EA, C&RT and LCC to control Floating Pennywort. AMAS mapping of Pennywort and Balsam	Mapping to be completed by Biodiversity Champion volunteers. Attend workshop with main partners to agree and co-ordinate programme of work for 2018	Delayed due to major staff changes in Biodiversity team at EA January 2018		NCO

Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Review

**A review of The Bus Services Act
2017 – the impacts and
opportunities**

**A Review Report of Economic
Development, Transport and Tourism
Scrutiny Commission**

6th September 2018

CONTENTS	PAGE
Chair's Foreword	1
Executive Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations	2 - 7
Report of Findings	8 – 26
Financial, Legal and Equalities Implications	26 – 28
<p data-bbox="295 952 502 996">Appendices:</p> <p data-bbox="295 1041 1125 1209">Appendix A – A guidance briefing paper for local authorities by the Campaign for Better Transport '<i>Three Stages to better bus services – using the Bus Services Act</i>'.</p> <p data-bbox="295 1254 1053 1332">Appendix B – Executive response to scrutiny template.</p>	29

The Bus Services Act 2017 Task Group
Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny
Commission

Chair's Foreword

This is a challenging time for Council budgets following ongoing reductions in central government funding. This means that Leicester City Council needs to find more creative ways of providing & supporting others to deliver transport services in the future.

The new Bus Services Act provides opportunities and powers for local councils and bus operators to modernise & improve bus services. The task group was established to review the impacts and potential benefits of the new Act.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my task group colleagues and Cllr Adam Clarke, Deputy City Mayor. Also lead officers Andrew Smith, Director; and Julian Heubeck and Stuart Maxwell, lead transport officers for their expertise and support to this review.

I am very grateful to the Leicester Bus User's Panel representatives and the Directors of the Leicester Bus Companies who attended meetings to provide evidence and share their views with us.

There is a great deal of common ground and enthusiasm amongst all of us to take this work forward to benefit bus passengers.

Councillor Jean Khote

Chair of Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

1. Executive Summary, 2. Conclusion and 3. Recommendations

Task Group Membership:

Councillor Jean Khote (Chair)
 Councillor Hemant Rae Bhatia (Vice-chair)
 Councillor Patrick Kitterick
 Councillor Rita Patel
 Councillor Susan Barton
 Councillor Harshad Bhavsar

- 1.1 The Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission set up a task group to review how the new Bus Services Act, introduced by the government in 2017, impacts on Leicester City Council and local bus services.
- 1.2 The Bus Services Act 2017 presents local authorities with new powers to bring about change and unlock the potential for the bus industry to achieve more for passengers than it does today.
- 1.3 Evidence from the **‘Greener Journeys’ campaign group** supports the importance of buses in society: *Buses are Britain’s most widely used mode of public transport but despite being vital to our society and economy, they don’t always get the recognition they deserve. People use buses to get to work, to do their shopping and enjoy leisure activities. Buses carry more commuters than all forms of public transport combined, helping to generate £64bn per year for local economies. They also keep families close, protect society’s most vulnerable from isolation and connect people in poverty to economic opportunities.*
- 1.4 The Bus Services Act provides Leicester City Council with ‘toolkit of options’ to use the powers in the Act to influence, negotiate and develop a partnership framework. The task group preferred the ‘Enhanced Partnership’ scheme option as a model for partnership working as this provides the council with a broader range of powers to improve bus services in the city.
- 1.5 The task group gathered evidence to better understand the key challenges, the opportunities and risks relevant to addressing the Bus Services Act 2017, summarised in Table 1 below.

1.6 Table 1 – key challenges, opportunities and risks

Challenges	Opportunities	Risks	How do we maximise the opportunities?
Maintaining adequate levels of funding to support bus services network.	The Bus Services Act provides new opportunities to work with bus operators and 3 rd sector partners to develop new and innovative	Funding pressures to provide essential core services. Transport operating costs continue to rise	Develop formal Partnership to work with bus operators to improve bus services and bus routes in the city.

Challenges	Opportunities	Risks	How do we maximise the opportunities?
	approaches to sustain funding.	therefore reducing the appetite for innovation amongst operators.	Explore additional funding options for the future.
The number of bus passengers has been diminishing, reflecting a national trend.	The Bus Services Act provides new opportunities to work with bus operators to modernise the bus services and attract new passengers e.g. introduce discounts and incentives with new multi-ticketing systems.	This cost pressure has the unintended consequence in the current economic climate of contributing to the difficulty in maintaining the frequency and convenience of services that customers would prefer.	Pressures will remain on local councils to address this – however a formal Partnership offers hope e.g. new data sharing powers can provide info on people’s travel habits and needs to improve services.
Meeting the transport access needs of an increasing elderly population	The Bus Services Act encourages bus operators to improve / adapt services accessibility which could increase the use of public transport services.	Lack of funding could limit the ability to improve quantity and quality of bus services.	Develop a formal Partnership to work with operators to improve access provision for all passengers e.g. data sharing to better understand travel trends and needs.
To improve information and technology on and off bus to improve the users experience and reduce boarding times.	The Bus Services Act encourages working with operators to ensure a consistent approach to allow interoperable ticketing on journeys across Leicester/shire and regions.	Operators may not work together to share information and revenue. IT infrastructure unable to provide a stable environment to enable a variety of travel modes to be shown in a clear, readable format.	Implementation of contactless payments of bus and smart card top-up off-bus. The Act includes provision for audio /visual information on local bus services. The Department for Transport (DfT) will issue guidance on implementation.
Finding new funding streams to maintain the public transport network at a time when government funding is reduced	The Bus Services Act encourages new approaches to work with operators and other authorities to share best practice, work together to reduce costs and bid for funding at national / regional level. Working with neighbouring councils and developers to raise awareness of transport issues and bid for developer funding. Consider other innovative funding options.	Competing for funding. The availability of funding streams could diminish.	Working closely with Department for Transport and other local authorities to prepare and bid for resources along with improved marketing of services through incentivising systems and ticketing offers. Seek freedoms and flexibilities from government / bus operators within a partnership arrangement for innovation.

Challenges	Opportunities	Risks	How do we maximise the opportunities?
All public services buses should be accessible to people with disabilities including those who need to remain in wheelchairs	Requirements have been introduced to various classes of vehicle over the last few years, now including buses and coaches to comply by January 2020.	May reduce flexibility to utilise a range of vehicle types to provide socially necessary transport services.	Through Enhanced Partnership working, seek freedoms and flexibilities in order to maintain services for some members of the community where there would otherwise be no transport option.
All public buses and coaches should reduce emissions to improve air quality, e.g. introduce new electric buses or bio-methane vehicles.	Work with operators to replace old fleets with modern buses In March 2018 Leicester City Council was successful in a bid for £2.2m from the Government's Clean Bus Technology fund. Local bus operators were applauded for their commitment to improving bus fleets.	Lack of funding and transport operating costs continue to rise therefore reducing the appetite for innovation amongst operators City council funding pressures and meeting air quality targets.	The Bus Services Act encourages local authorities and bus operators to improve air quality in their local areas. Leicester bus operators have signed up to a new commitment with Leicester City Council to deliver a clean air zone by the end of 2020. Bus Services Act will aid meeting air quality objectives and targets for Leicester.
Supply and demand of bus routes in the city to meet passengers needs	The Bus Services Act encourages working with bus operators to ensure essential bus routes and the frequency of buses is improved.	May not be financially viable for operators.	The concept of "Mobility-as-a-Service" or "MaaS" is central to the idea of change in transportation. Generally understood as a vision of future mobility where travel happens through a combination of public, private and shared transportation modes. The Bus Services Act will allow councils to address this.
Traffic congestion is making bus journeys slow and unreliable, which deters people from using them.	The Bus Services Act encourages working with operators to identify bus pinch points in the city and introduce bus priority measures to help the flow of buses. To build on the long standing pro-bus options that already exist in Leicester e.g. bus lanes, park & ride schemes and parking controls.	Reducing road space for cars to give priority to buses. Funding pressures	Develop formal partnership to work with operators to share data on journey times, bus speeds and vehicle location to help tackle congestion hotspots. The Act provides new opportunities to explore people's travel habits to achieve modal shift.
Improve bus services publicity and marketing	The Bus Services Act makes it easier for passengers to	Operators may not work together.	Develop formal partnership to work with the operators to increase publicity and

Challenges	Opportunities	Risks	How do we maximise the opportunities?
information to passengers	access information about routes, fares and timetables.	Impacts on competition. Funding pressures and lack of staff time	promotion of bus services citywide e.g. creating a Leicester network brand buses and online web promotion material.
Improve ticketing structure and pricing for passengers.	The Bus Services Act states the requirements for bus operators to introduce multi-operator ticketing at set prices with potential for discounts and incentives to benefit passengers.	May not be commercially viable for all bus operators. Ticketing arrangements are anti-competitive. Operators continue to have freedom to set individual ticket prices	Potential under a partnership to ensure that a comprehensive suite of tickets are available with various payment methods and valid on all services. Multi-modal ticketing system could also be introduced.
Improved facilities for supporting the bus services network in the city	The Bus Services Act encourages working with bus operators to improve the facilities and journey experience for passengers.	Funding pressures	Under partnership proposal, the council has flexibility and freedom to provide improved bus facilities and measures e.g. bus stops and bus priority measures.
Addressing social value impacts on bus services	The Bus Service Act encourages local councils to address social value considerations.	Social Value Act 2012 implications not being met.	The council is developing a social value charter. Consider impacts on social groups that depend on bus services for quality of life e.g. non-car ownership.

- 1.7 The task group submits supporting evidence at **Appendix A** ‘*Three Stages to better bus services – using the Bus Services Act*’ – a guidance briefing paper for local authorities by the Campaign for Better Transport
<https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/bus-services-act-guidance.pdf>

2. CONCLUSION

- 2.1 The task group concluded that by adopting a strong formal Partnership model arrangement Leicester City Council could encourage bus operators to include a broader range of requirements to improve bus services in the city, such as:

- the vehicles used to operate bus services, including their appearance (livery);
- providing better information about bus services to the public and the publicising/branding of local services;
- the dates on which timetables may be changed; and
- tickets - including:
 - how tickets can be purchased and fares paid;

- how entitlement to travel can be evidenced by passengers;
- the publicising of fares or ticketing arrangements;
- the appearance of tickets;
- the price of multi-operator tickets;
- standardised ticketing zones, ticket lengths, or concession eligibility; and arrangements that facilitate the operation of the scheme.

2.2 The Department of Transport guidance to local council's states:
Powers in legislation do not help anyone unless they are put into practice. We would ask every local authority to consider how bus services can help achieve their economic, environmental and social objectives and whether the powers in the Bus Services Act will help to do this.

2.3 *The guidance the Department has produced is the starting point for local authorities. In 2019, the Department of Transport will be looking to see what has been achieved and how the bus industry stands two years after the Act received Royal Assent.*
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-act-2017-new-powers-and-opportunities>

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Mayor and Executive are asked to approve the report findings and recommendations.

The Bus Services Act provides an opportunity for Leicester City Council to improve its bus services by working more closely with local bus companies, with the following approaches recommended:

1. To consider the creation of a formal partnership arrangement to support coordinated investment and give the council greater influence on the delivery of bus services. The task group considered that the Enhanced Partnership model may offer some advantages over other approaches.
2. To consider introducing more incentives and discounts as part of the multi-ticketing and multi-modal ticketing systems in Leicester and across boundaries.
3. To work with bus operators to share data to inform service improvements.
4. The council to encourage bus operators to promote smarter & integrated cashless methods of payments on all bus travel journeys to promote bus use, whilst taking into account social needs.
5. In light of recent survey findings by *Transport Focus* in February 2018 'Using the bus: what young people think' - The council and bus operators to consider options to encourage increase in bus use by young people and students in Leicester.

6. The council to support the importance of social value considerations through delivering public transport network in the city.
7. To consider the guidance briefing paper, case studies and best practice submitted at Appendix A.
<https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/bus-services-act-guidance.pdf>
8. The Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission to receive a progress report in 12 months.

4. REPORT

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Buses are England's most used form of public transport, accounting for more than 60% of all public transport trips. For millions of people the bus is a fundamental part of each and every day. Buses help commuters get to work, students to school and shoppers to the high street, and help people, wherever they are, to enjoy a wide range of services and leisure opportunities.

4.3 New Government legislation introduced the 'Bus Services Act 2017' on 27 June 2017 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/21/contents/enacted>. The aim of the Act is to improve bus services for passengers by providing local authorities, the Secretary of State and bus operators with a new toolkit to enable improvements to be made to bus services in their areas.

4.4 The Act includes requirements for opening up data on bus services and fares, and for audible and visible information on buses. All local transport authorities, including Leicester City Council have access to the following powers:

- Advanced Quality Partnerships
- Enhanced Partnerships
- Multi-operator ticketing schemes
- Access to financial data

4.5 Under the Act, combined mayoral authorities have full powers to introduce bus franchising, as in London. In Leicester the City Mayor commented, as below, in relation to public control over the bus services. The bus operators response is shown in this evidence captured.

Evidence captured:

The City Mayor commented: *"Leicester residents would benefit if the bus services were returned to public control, as was the case for most of the 20th century. While local authorities still spend money subsidizing some routes, all bus services are run by national and local companies. The council would be able to do what it used to do which is to cross-subsidise services. The old Leicester Transport would run later on into the evening, it would run into the housing estates where it was an essential part of linking those estates to the city centre".*

IN RESPONSE to the City Mayors comments, the two biggest bus companies serving Leicester commented:

"We oppose the idea to bring services back under council control. Leicester benefits from a comprehensive network of bus services, supplied by several privately-run bus operators, to all corners of the city and further afield into the county. We constantly strive to deliver a reliable service for our customers, offer a range of travel ticket options, provide a comfortable enjoyable journey experience, and we have invested a great deal in technology to improve air quality in the city, with new buses being introduced and retro kits fitted to older buses that emit less harmful emissions into the environment. We believe that bus services are better managed by the private sector, especially under the present circumstance with limited funding and resource available

through our local authorities. We believe working in partnership with local authorities is the best way to make bus travel an even more attractive choice and linking people to work, education and employment opportunities throughout Leicester”.

4.6 **Scope**

4.7 The task group gathered evidence through sessions held with local bus operators, the Bus User’s Panel and the Council’s Executive Lead for transport services. Viewpoints and comments from transport campaign groups, and research publications and media articles informed the review.

4.8 The Department for Transport guidance documents and best practice have also informed the review.

4.9 The task group gathered evidence on the key impacts of the Bus Services Act including partnership models, open data and ticketing and passenger information. Other factors impacting on bus services were also explored such as traffic congestion; air quality; health and economy; modal shift and social value.

4.10 The task group submits supporting evidence at **Appendix 1 ‘Three stages to better bus services – using the Bus Services Act’** guidance briefing by the Campaign for Better Transport.

4.11 **Bus Services – the challenges**

4.12 The Department for Transport data reveals that for the full year ending December 2017 bus patronage fell by 1.8% - around 79 million journeys – across England. The Campaign for Better Transport commented:

‘Almost 3,000 bus routes cut in 8 years’ – Freedom of Information (Fol) requests to 110 local transport authorities revealed that 2,900 bus services were either scrapped or reduced between 2010/11 and 2016/17. More than 134m miles of bus routes have been lost over the last four years in England and Wales. Since 2010 council bus funding has dropped by a third - £100m - with two-thirds reducing spending on supported bus services.

4.13 Nationally, the bus industry continues to face a number of challenges including:

- High levels of car ownership
- More on-line shopping and people working from home, reducing the need to travel
- Traffic congestion, making bus services slower and less reliable which in turn make them less attractive to passengers and more expensive for bus

companies to provide (*Transport Focus* data shows that congestion and road works are among the top factors which passengers identified as factors affecting bus patronage).

- A growing focus on air quality, particularly in urban areas with the potential for restrictions on the use of certain classes of diesel powered vehicles, including older buses.
- Competition from new players such as Uber and car clubs
- New housing, urban edge retail development and out of town employment sites, often in places hard to serve by bus.
- The perceived affordability of bus fares compared to other options.
- Concessionary travel entitlement changes, with older people waiting longer before they receive a card.
- The negative image of bus travel amongst certain groups of potential passengers, often based on their past experience.

4.14 Despite these challenges, there have been some exceptions to this reduction in bus usage, with cities such as *Oxford, Bristol, Reading and Brighton* all seeing growth in passenger numbers. **Evidence of why these areas have seen a growth is that they have strong partnership working arrangements between bus operators, the local authorities and other interested stakeholders.**

4.15 **Bus services in Leicester**

4.16 Private commercial companies including Arriva, First bus, Centre bus, Kinch and Stagecoach operate most of the bus services in Leicester.

4.17 **Bus operators informed the task group that:**

- a) They welcomed the new Bus Services Act and want to build on the good working relationship with Leicester City Council.
- b) They are responsible for setting the routes, timetables and fares in a way which they feel best meets their financial and business objectives, taking into account changing demand and market conditions.
- c) They are struggling financially to meet the demands of the services, especially with the need to modernise buses. They reinvest any profits made through bus revenue to improving the bus services.

4.18 Leicester City Council is exploring innovative ways to continue providing much-needed local bus services with the aim of increasing patronage. For example, Cornwall Council is putting in place an integrated network linking bus, rail and ferry services, with smart ticketing for residents and visitors. **Cornwall council is doing this initially through an 'Enhanced Partnership' model with the bus operators.**

4.19 The task group heard evidence from Cllr Clarke, Executive lead for Transport Services, Leicester City Council. **Cllr Clarke outlined the council’s key objectives for the future:**

- a) Developing the Strategic Transport Partnership with Leicestershire County Council
- b) Exploring different approaches to formalise partnership working with the bus operators.
- c) In discussion with Bus Transport Campaign Groups for guidance.
- d) Potential to influence and improve bus ticketing methods e.g. smartcards, incentives and discounts, and using mobile apps. By using bus company’s mobile apps, we could create multi-operating ticketing resulting in redistribution of the revenue across all the operators involved.
- e) Addressing the bus pinch points in the city
- f) The council has recently submitted a bid to the ‘Transforming Cities Fund’ - awaiting decision.
- g) Exploring ‘Mass Transit’ potential studies to be carried out to bring new capacity to public transport e.g. survey of people’s commuting needs and habits.
- h) Leicester North West Transport Plan, the 1st phase is in progress re: regeneration of waterside area in the city.

4.20 Leicester City Council has a commitment to manage the road network in support of the strategic objectives set out in governments transport strategy, and Leicester’s Local Transport Plan. Leicester City Council supporting plans and strategies include:

- Leicester’s Local Transport Plan 2011- 2026
- Air Quality Action Plan 2015 – 2026
- Economic Action Plan – Leicester: Great City 2016 – 2020

4.21 **The table below shows the spending on non-commercial supported bus services by Leicester City Council and other local councils.** This evidence shows significant reductions have been made year on year (except Nottingham).

	2010/11 spend	2016/17 spend	2017/18 spend	2018/19 budget
Leicester City	£1,280,494	£601,344	£482,705	£375,000
Leicestershire	£4,896,005	£1,520,057	£1,449,563	£1,336,770
Derby City	£285,116	£8,870	£8,569	£8,290
Nottingham City	£3,264,004	£4,494,821	£4,312,264	£4,312,264

Data extract from ‘Campaign for Better Transport’ publication

- 4.22 The task group cited Nottingham as an example of best practice for the largest local authority-owned operator in England. ‘*Transport Focus*’ reported that Nottingham has the highest customer satisfaction of any bus operator in the UK. The amount of bus lanes in Nottingham has grown from 200 metres in the year 2000 to 24 kilometres today. Nottingham was the first city in the UK to have smart passes, three years before the launch of the Oyster card in London. Nottingham City Transport provides a dividend of £2m a year to the City Council. Workplace Parking Levy funds are available for investment in bus services.
- 4.23 The task group were informed that in Leicester (about the same size and same number of people as Nottingham) the council privatised its bus fleet in the 1990’s, and now contributes less than £500,000 a year to subsidise private operators.
- 4.24 Recent media headlines (below) supports evidence that patronage has been declining and Councils are struggling with reduced budgets, impacting on how much can be spent to support bus services.
- 4.25 **Local Government Association spokesperson said:** “*Councils are finding it an almost impossible task to fund additional services and commercially unviable routes while having to fund the cost of free bus pass schemes and find billions of pounds...to protect other vital services*”. (Meanwhile, **Northumberland County Council** has blamed budget cuts for its removal of timetables from bus stops, with passengers urged to instead check information online).
- 4.26 **Public Transport Campaigner quoted:**
- “it is disappointing to see bus use falling again, but hardly surprising given year on year cuts to local authority bus budgets. The good news is councils now have new powers in the Bus Services Act to improve bus networks, restore connections and set standards. There’s huge opportunity here to make bus services more attractive, affordable and environmentally friendly, bringing benefits not just to passengers but to the wider community”.*
- 4.27 According to the ‘**Campaign for Better Transport**’ bus services across the country have seen significant reductions in public funding since 2010. These cuts have come from three different directions, such as:

- Bus Service Operators Grant, which goes to all bus operators was cut by 20% in 2012-13, and has not increased since.
- Funding for local authorities has been cut in general, and this has fed through to cuts in support for bus services, which have less legal protection than other local authority services
- The free travel scheme for pensioners and the disabled is underfunded by the Government, meaning that operators are having to carry people for free without proper funding to reflect the cost of this.

4.28 The task group were informed that in April 2018 the Department of Transport announced that disabled and older people in England will continue to benefit from free off-peak bus travel for the foreseeable future, keeping them connected with their local towns and cities. **Government Buses Minister Nusrat Ghani said:**

“Being able to get out and about is hugely important for older and disabled people to keep their independence and play a role in their local community. Buses help connect people, homes and businesses and nearly 10 million people in this country are already benefitting from free off-peak bus travel. The legislation behind the concessionary travel scheme has been amended so that it no longer needs to be reviewed every 5 years”.

4.29 Task group members raised concerns about funding pressures and maintaining current subsidies for the scheme. The task group agreed with the comments made by the Local Government Association,

*“Councils are spending at least £200 million a year to subsidise the concessionary fares scheme, which comes at a cost of other discretionary subsidised bus services and other local services like collecting bins and filling potholes. **Giving councils control over the Bus Services Operators Grant, a fuel duty rebate currently paid directly to bus operators could enable councils to protect vital bus routes, and give them the funding they need to support effective and efficient bus services”.***

4.30 **Local Government Association (LGA)** commented: *“It’s nearly impossible for councils to keep subsidising free travel while having to find billions of pounds worth of savings and protect other vital services like caring for the elderly, filling potholes and collecting bins.”*

The Urban Transport Group (UTG) commented: *“Cuts in available funding for local government to support bus services, rising car ownership among older people and competition from rapid growth Private Hire Vehicles are among the factors behind this decline. We need the government to commit more funding for buses. We are working together to pool research and evidence on these various causes of bus patronage decline and effective ways of responding. **Our members are also taking up the enhanced powers available to them in the 2017 Bus Services Act to improve services”.***

4.31 **How can the Bus Services Act improve bus passenger experience?**

4.32 The Bus Services Act makes it easier for passengers to access information about routes, fares and timetables, and ensures ticketing schemes meet passengers' needs. Better use of open data also has the potential to provide more accurate door-to-door journey planning. The potential benefits include:

- Placing requirements on bus operators to open up data collected and share with local councils
- Placing requirements on bus operators to be able to publish the required data digitally
- Allowing passengers to be able to effectively plan their journeys, identify and purchase best value tickets and travel knowing their bus arrival and journey times, thus taking the uncertainty out of bus travel.
- To specifically improve facilities for disabled and elderly persons requiring operators to make available information about local bus services. This includes the setting of standards for audio, visual and displayed information.

4.33 The task group were informed that the Department for Transport in collaboration with the Open Data Institute (ODI), held workshops during Nov / Dec 2017 to give bus operators, local authorities, transport data providers and technology suppliers an opportunity to share their views on the open data policy and also provide solutions as to how data provision could work in practice. This was positive and encouraging news that the Department of Transport will work with the industry to implement bus open data.

4.34 **Evidence of the different options under the Act for ticketing and the requirements that can be placed on bus operators are outlined in the table below:**

Can a requirement be put on bus operators to:	Ticketing Schemes	Advanced Quality Partnership	Enhanced Partnership	Franchising
Sell and accept a multi-operator or multi-modal ticket (including in a specific format, such as on a smart card)?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Market particular tickets in a certain way (including promoting multi-operator tickets nor just their own tickets)?	x	✓	✓	✓
Set all their tickets and fares on standard set of 'zones' that apply to all operators?	x	x	✓	✓
Follow common ticket rules for their own tickets (such as a standard length of 'period' tickets or age to qualify for a youth concession if offered)?	x	x	✓	✓
Sell or accept any ticket on a particular technology (such as a smart card)?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charge a set price for a multi-operator ticket?	x	x	✓	✓
Charge a set price for their own, single-operator tickets?	x	x	x	✓

Published by the Department of Transport

4.35 Evidence in the table above supports the views of the task group and suggests there maybe additional benefits from the ‘Enhanced Partnership’ model and that this is the best option as it allows Leicester City Council flexibility and freedom to stipulate additional ticketing requirements upon the bus operators, such as charging a set price for a multi-operator or multi-modal tickets.

4.36 **The Bus Users Panel and the Disabled Group forum commented** that on average disabled people take ten times as many trips by bus as they do by rail. With one in twelve people being disabled, it is essential that bus services meet the needs of everyone wishing to use them. Under the powers of the Bus Services Act we would like Leicester City Council to consider:

- Bus vehicles in the city meet acceptable accessibility standards
- Encouraging the provision of enhanced accessibility features e.g. audible and visible information identifying routes and upcoming stops, second wheelchair space or the acceptance of mobility scooters.
- Ensure that ticketing systems are accessible e.g. websites and ticket vending machines.
- Encourage bus operators to accept cash payments for passengers who prefer to use cash to travel instead of cashless options, and these passengers should not be penalised by paying higher prices for the same journeys (concerns raised that this would particularly impact on regular passengers on lower incomes; the older and vulnerable passengers and people who don’t have cars e.g. areas of Western Park ward with low car ownership).
- Encourage bus operators to make publicly available information on features of their service which assist disabled passengers.
- Encourage more joined up transport services e.g. health / hospital transport and school transport services.

4.37 **Local Bus operators commented** that some improvements are already underway to enhance the bus journey experience for customers, such as:

- New buses with Wi-Fi and USB sockets.
- Better bus networks serving more or different locations and operating at night or weekends.
- Easier, contactless payments
- More tickets that work across operators and modes
- A step change in information – know when your bus will arrive and how much it will cost.
- Improved services that are more accessible for passengers with disabilities.
- Introduction of more than 50 brand new high- specification Arriva buses over the past three years. Arriva has also developed the first fully national

real-time bus app, which has full trip planned and provides access to timetables, fares and real-time information for every bus route operated by Arriva. This app has had more than a million downloads since its launch in June 2014.

- Leicester First Bus Depot staff were proud to be awarded 'Depot of the Year' at the 'First Excellence Awards' recently.
- Stagecoach Midlands has just invested £4.2m in 25 of its new Gold Luxury vehicles for the No48 service between Coventry, Bedworth, Nuneaton, Atherstone and Leicester.
- Arriva mentioned their new 'Demand Responsive luxury minibus service' is being trialled in other places. This new service combines the features of a taxi ride and a bus journey and the service can be ordered through an app. (If the trial is a success then Leicester may benefit in the future).

4.38 Leicester City 'Bus Passenger Survey in 2016' by Transport Focus shows customer satisfaction data as:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither / nor	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Overall satisfaction with the bus journey	44%	42%	11%	3%	-
Satisfaction with the value for money	27%	35%	14%	15%	9%
Satisfaction with punctuality	32%	33%	16%	11%	8%
On-bus journey time	43%	37%	14%	3%	2%

Data extract from Transport Focus 'Bus Passenger Survey 2016'

4.39 The data (above) shows that overall satisfaction with bus journeys in Leicester is good. However, it also highlights that there is room for improvement in the bus fares pricing and bus punctuality areas of the service.

This being the case, the task group were concerned to hear that the two main bus companies in Leicester 'Arriva' and 'First Bus' announced bus fare increases for single fares by 10p from February 2018 (similar to price rises in 2015 and 2016). **The Bus Users Panel said** that they were disappointed that bus fares have increased once again.

4.40 The bus fare increases were justified by the **Bus Companies, who said:**

"the move was due to increases in their costs with a continual growth in business and operational costs – many ticket prices will remain unchanged if people buy their travel using their mobile phone e.g. the 'mTicket app' is proving to be really popular and allows people to pay without cash and saves time. This method of payment is not only a more convenient way to pay for bus travel but also helps with

improving boarding times and delivers a faster journey to destinations. We're also introducing the ability to purchase a travel ticket by direct debit and have the ticket sent directly to a customer's phone – with no contract.”

- 4.41 Task group members were provided with an explanation of modern ticketing systems such as ‘mobile apps’ and ‘smartcard’ technology, for example:

Smart and integrated ticketing (Smartcard) has the potential to revolutionise the way passengers use public transport, with benefits for passengers, authorities and operators. Smart tickets, usually embedded in a micro-chip, can also be held on a mobile phone. They offer more innovative products than conventional tickets, such as an electronic purse, where passengers can top-up a smartcard with credit. This offers greater flexibility and reduces the need to queue and have changes available. Smart ticketing technology can also support a variety of fare options, for example providing discounts after a certain number of journeys or enabling the passenger to build up ‘loyalty’ points that buy free or discounted additional journeys.



4.42 **The Bus Users Panel commented:**

- a) We need to be encouraging travel by children (as future passengers) and family groups at sensible fares with incentives. Marketing smartcards for ‘Multi-operators’ ticketing schemes for use in Leicester and across the country may encourage family groups to use bus travel”
- b) We support contactless ticketing payments as a positive move by bus operators e.g. Smartcards and Mobile Apps as a way to save time when boarding buses and to make it easier for passengers to travel. However, we feel that existing cash methods of payment should be an option available to passengers, in particular to help elderly, vulnerable and low-income passengers

- 4.43 The ‘Greener Journeys’ research report <https://greenerjourneys.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Greener-Journeys-Value-for-Money-Update-FINAL.pdf> supports smart ticketing stating:

If London-style cashless buses with contactless payment and smart ticketing could be extended to the rest of the UK, bus journey times could be improved by up to 10% by halving dwell time at bus stops. In urban conditions dwell time makes up between 25% and 33% of total journey time.

The big five bus operators in the UK have set a target to introduce contactless bus transactions by 2022. They should do everything possible to accelerate this, and it is realistic for them to achieve this goal in the large conurbations within three years.

4.44 According to evidence collected by *Transport Focus in February 2018 'Using the bus: what young people think'* <https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/using-bus-young-people-think/> the survey identified:

- More young people use the bus than any other single group of passengers, yet they are the least satisfied group of passengers.
- That young people want the systems they use to be straightforward, intuitive and inviting, this applies to all the different parts of bus travel; planning the journey, finding information about routes and stops, getting advice about tickets and fares, through to actually buying the ticket.
- That young people want value for money; availability of Wi-Fi and comfortable journeys; and buses to be punctual.

4.45 The task group felt that the survey provides valuable understanding of young people's needs, experiences (aged 14 to 19) and aspirations for bus services. The survey findings and recommendations are crucial for the bus operators and local councils working in collaboration to attract and retain young people as the bus users of the future

4.46 The Bus Services Act also makes provision for local authorities to make ticketing schemes across local authority boundaries so that ticketing schemes could encompass neighbouring local authorities, the task group welcomed this as it would benefit bus users in and outside Leicester

4.47 **Essex County Council** was mentioned as an example of a good practice initiative for better partnership working between commercial bus operators to benefit bus users: -

In January 2018, Essex County Council initiative 'Route 88 Partnership' signed a joint commitment with two bus companies to formalise an agreement to accept each other's tickets.

"There's often a lot of confusion about which operator runs a certain bus route and it can be very frustrating for residents to have to watch a bus go past because your ticket is not valid on that service. The 'Route 88 Partnership' is a great demonstration of two bus operators who have come to the table with a solution and have worked with Essex County Council staff to deliver the best possible bus service for residents.

Hopefully this will be the first of many examples of commercial bus companies working together for the benefit of bus users".

Other benefits to this partnership included:

- *More flexibility in journeys thanks to better aligned schedules and routing.*
- *Improved vehicle standards and accessibility.*
- *Bus stop infrastructure improvement at key stops*

4.48 The task group noted that the Enhanced Partnership model includes the introduction of a statutory ticketing scheme which compels bus operators to accept multi-operator / multi-modal tickets e.g. hopper services

4.49 **How can the Bus Services Act improve partnership working with bus operators?**

4.50 'Local transport problems require local transport solutions' – essentially the Bus Services Act provides partnership models for local councils to adapt the approach to local circumstances: Advanced Quality Partnership (AQP), Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPs), or Franchise model.

4.51 **Guidance from the Department of Transport outlines the key criteria for each model (below).** The guidance is for local councils to work with local bus operators to decide which of these options (if any) will best improve local services.

AQP	EPPS	Franchise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area-based statutory partnership replacing Quality Partnerships Minimum 5 years LTA commits pro-bus facilities <u>and/or</u> measures LTA can prescribe vehicle standards, payment methods, information and publicity requirements Can additionally prescribe maximum fares and service frequency/timing but <u>only if no "admissible objections" from "relevant operators"</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New area-based statutory partnership policy/objectives framework under which one or more partnership schemes made Can be indefinite, varied and/or revocable No mandatory requirement for LTA to commit pro-bus facilities or measures LTA can prescribe not only the same characteristics as an AQP but also entitlement passes, on-bus information equipment, vehicle and ticket appearance, ticketing arrangements (including multi-operator ticket prices, timetable change windows and other scheme facilitating arrangements) Plans and schemes cannot be made where a "sufficient number" or "operators of qualifying local services" object 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replaces Quality Contracts At outset only mayoral combined authorities to have Franchising Authority powers(non-delegable) Granting of an exclusive right to operate specified local services on specified terms (including frequency, fares and standards) and which may include public authority payments Service permits may be granted to others to operate in franchise area if it benefits local service users in the area and "will not have an adverse effect" on franchised services Based on assessment, auditing, consultation and, if it proceeds, procurement. Authority may require local service operators to provide information to further a franchise exercise
<p>Available (subject to consultation) where LTA satisfied will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to implementing local transport policies; AND Improve service quality; or Reduce/limit congestion, noise or air pollution; or Increase or prevent decline in patronage 	<p>Available (subject to consultation) where LTA satisfied will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve service quality or effectiveness; or Reduce/limit congestion, noise or air pollution 	<p>Available (subject to consultation) where mayoral combined authority has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compared to "one or more other courses of action" Assessed following a "consideration" of a five-case business case covering strategic fit, value for money, feasibility, affordability, and deliverability Obtained an independent audit of the quality of its assessment (information and analysis) and compliance with guidance
<p>All subject to mandatory regulations and guidance yet to be made</p>		

4.52 The table (above) shows that the range of outcomes that can be achieved through an Enhanced Partnership option is potentially broader than can be delivered through an Advanced Quality Partnership. The task group agreed that the Enhanced Partnership model may have some advantages as it provides additional powers and influence to negotiate with the bus operators.

4.53 **The Bus Users Panel said** that the Enhanced Partnership model option would give the council more influence to use the powers in the Act to achieve the council's objectives towards improving bus services.

4.54 **Local Bus Operators evidence** supports a formal partnership arrangement and encouraged the council to consider the 'Advanced Quality Partnership'

model as this was their preferred option. However, they also stated that their second option was the 'Enhanced Partnership' scheme, and they would be open to discussions with the city council to give consideration to this.

4.55 **The bus operators informed** the task group that they want to work with the city council in a formal partnership arrangement to develop an improved, more efficient, joined-up public transport service that benefits passengers, such as:

- A forum for the city council to collect and publish statistics on bus speeds, improving visibility of the problem to operators, officers, and elected members, and allowing remedial actions to be taken.
- Measures that enhance the passenger experience in Leicester and the wider areas.
- A strategy for tackling specific local issues affecting bus operators and public transport users e.g. bus priority at certain key junctions, such as exit from Causeway Lane into the inner ring road.
- Strategies to improve the flow of traffic around the city e.g. around Highcross / John Lewis and the Rugby and Football grounds.

4.56 Task group members recognised that the city council already has a good relationship with the local bus operators and that the council plays a lead role to improve the quality of local bus services through infrastructure, information and ticketing projects and initiatives.

4.57 Evidence from Cllr Clarke, Assistant City Mayor and lead for Transport highlighted the achievements to the bus services network in the city:

- a) The Beaumont Leys Public Transport Interchange Schemes.
- b) The development of the new £13m Haymarket Bus Station in the city centre.
- c) 2.4km of new bus lanes on the A426 (increased bus patronage by 13% benefiting people in the city and the county).
- d) Digital bus stops e.g. 100 Real Time information signs at bus stops (slow impact, but not all bus stops will have this facility, as the future is mobile apps).
- e) Introduction of the 'One Card' for flexible bus trips (limited lifeline, as the future is multi-ticketing options).
- f) Level access kerbs at bus stops
- g) The re-design of Humberstone Gate East
- h) New bus gate enforcement on Charles Street and Causeway Lane
- i) A phased 'Bus Pinch Points' programme to improve punctuality.
- j) Further improvements to Real Time information and Smart Ticketing.
- k) Encouraging the replacement of fleets to meet Air Quality Targets as part of the proposed Low Emission Zone.
 - Invested in Euro 6 (with Clean Air Zone funding) green bus fleets with 150 buses retrofitted, so less polluting engines.

- l) £25 million for bus fleets funded by bus operators (Clean Air Zone funding) – on track to deliver across the city by the end of 2020. Developing a Strategic Transport Plan with Leicestershire County Council.

4.58 Best practice of ‘Enhanced Partnership’ models was cited as supporting evidence:

- **The Liverpool City Region Bus Alliance** – represents successful Enhanced Partnership agreement that will deliver more than £25 million worth of investment in bus services in just the first year. The agreement includes a commitment from operators to provide modern bus fleets with an average age of no more than seven years, and to be partners on a range of initiatives including marketing campaigns, on-bus cleaning and customer service training. According to Arriva, this partnership has seen significant benefits with bus usage increasing by 16%.
- **Cornwall Council** – as part of its Devolution Deal had the opportunity to adopt a Franchising model of bus transport, however it appears Cornwall council is working closely with local bus operators to establish an ‘Enhanced Partnership’ model instead.

4.59 The task group concluded that evidence gathered suggests the Enhanced Partnership model is potentially the best option for Leicester City Council to take forward

4.60 **How can the Bus Services Act improve the economy and health?**

4.61 Across the UK large towns and cities are suffering from deteriorating air quality and chronic levels of traffic congestion, which affect public health as well as the economy. Over 40,000 deaths a year in the UK are attributable to poor air quality, with air pollution being directly linked to cancer, asthma, strokes, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and dementia, according to recent research by Oxera Compelling Economics Group in 2017
<https://www.oxera.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Cities-in-crisis.pdf.pdf>

4.62 The UK has the most congested road network in Europe. The Department for Transport forecasts that traffic will grow by between 19% and 55% between 2010 and 2040.

4.63 **Evidence from local bus operators:**

- Endorsed the view that traffic congestion was a significant problem and challenge for them. Congestion extended bus journey times, contributed to the reduced reliability of services and meant that more buses were required to maintain services at an acceptable level. The bus companies felt that they needed to be ahead of the game to compete with car users.

- Cited best practice - Nottingham City Council has introduced a Workplace Levy to tackle problems associated with traffic congestion, by both providing substantial funding for major transport infrastructure initiatives and by acting as an incentive for employers to manage their workplace parking provision.
- 4.64 Leicester City Council and bus operators have implemented a range of measures over the years to help reduce congestion and give priority to buses e.g. bus lanes, park and ride schemes, and parking controls.
- 4.65 A recent scrutiny review report into 'Bus Lanes in Leicester' by this commission, identified that the majority of bus lanes helped to reduce journey times, but the biggest challenge was reducing traffic congestion with the increasing growth in car use, key findings:
- a) That the barriers to modal shift are the cost, time and reliability of travelling by public transport and lifestyles, habits and comforts.
 - b) That the biggest challenge for Leicester City Council is to bridge modal shift from car to public transport, walking and cycling, by introducing measures and initiatives.
 - c) Key points made by the bus companies on the advantages of bus lanes:
 - Bus services are more reliable and timetables more achievable.
 - Speedier and more punctual bus services to improve customer confidence and provide good reasons for modal shift.
 - Reduces pollution and reduces traffic congestion for buses
 - For a person travelling by bus it can be cheaper than paying for car parking in the city centre.
- 4.66 Nationally statistics show that approx. 6% of NOx emissions are caused by buses, whereas diesel cars are responsible for 41%. Therefore, we need to think how we get people out of their cars and onto public transport.
- 4.67 30% of Leicester's households do not have a car, and with the cost of running a car likely to reduce in real terms, and the cost of public transport rising, delivering improved public transport is paramount to Leicester's future.
- 4.68 How can the Bus Services Act improve Air Quality?**
- 4.69 The Bus Services Act encourages all local authorities to consider how they can use the tools in the Act to improve air quality in their local areas. Buses can be part of the solution to air quality problems. Low emission buses – such as electric or bio-methane vehicles – offer significant carbon dioxide savings and improved air quality.
- 4.70 The Governments recent introduction of Clean Air Zones (CAZ) to discourage the use of older, more polluting, vehicles has enabled Leicester City Council to carry out its commitment towards tackling air quality issues in the city.

4.71 During the course of this review, in March 2018, Leicester City Council announced: **“Leicester extends ambition for bus clean air zone”** – Leicester’s five major bus companies (Arriva, centre bus, First, Kinchbus and Stagecoach) have signed up to a new commitment with the city council to deliver a clean air zone for buses by the end of 2020.

‘Leicester bus companies agree on clean air zone by end of 2020’

Leicester City Council was recently successful in a bid for £2.2m from the Government’s Clean Bus Technology Fund. This will allow the council to work with operators to retrofit clean air technology to over 100 more buses running on city routes. A new agreement signed by bus operators will help ensure that Euro 6 standard for diesel buses is achieved across the city within the next three years – with a shared ambition for zero emission by 2020.



(Steve Burd, Managing Director Stagecoach Midlands; Deputy City Mayor Cllr Adam Clarke; Nigel Eggleton, Managing Director First Midlands; Alex Kerr, General Manager of Kinch Bus; City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby; Kevin O’Leary, Regional Engineering Director for Arriva; and Chris Mosley, Operations Manager, Centrebus).

Cllr Adam Clarke, Deputy City Mayor – who leads on environment, sustainability

and public health said “tackling emissions from diesel vehicles is vital to achieving better air quality. Our local bus operators are leading by example and should be applauded for their efforts and investment in cleaner air vehicles. Bringing emissions from the city’s bus fleet down and achieving at least Euro 4 standard was one of the key aims of the Leicester Air Quality Action Plan. We’ve now exceeded that”.

Arriva said “delighted to be working with Leicester City Council on this. We are committed to positioning bus travel as a viable alternative to car travel. We need to ensure that our customers are given access to transport that meets their growing expectations in terms of technology and comfort, but that also delivers with regards to environmental standards”.

Centrebus said “we are pleased to be working in partnership with the city council to help reduce harmful emissions from road transport in Leicester. Whilst buses still generally offer the lowest form of emissions per occupant compared to other types of motor transport, we are happy to take things a stage further”.

First Leicester said “We understand the vital role we play in helping to find solutions to reduce air pollution and so we’re proud to be part of the Leicester CAZ for buses. Road congestion continues to be one of the biggest issues facing bus services and so it’s important that we continue to work jointly to encourage less car usage across the city and entice more people to travel by bus”.

Kinchbus said “Air pollution caused by congestion in our cities and towns is a problem for everyone. While no one organisation can tackle this challenge alone, we are committed to play a leading role. It’s a sign of our commitment that we’ve recently invested a considerable amount of money into brand new cleaner buses for our skylink route that will provide existing customers with a great journey experience that also tempts car drivers to make the cleaner switch”.

Stagecoach said “We have introduced 25 new Gold Standard Euro 6 ADL Enviro 200MMCs, single-deckers on our service 48. This £4.4m investment demonstrates Stagecoach Midlands’ commitment to the Leicester Bus Clean Air Zone. We will continue to work the city council and other operators to seek to achieve the desired improvements to emissions by the end of 2020”.

4.72 Speaking at a recent Bus Summit, Government Transport Minister, Nusrat Ghani said: *“The government funding boost will allow councils to retrofit vehicles with technology to reduce tailpipe emissions of nitrogen dioxide, as part of a drive to help ensure that more buses and coaches can contribute to improving air quality in UK cities. Road transport is going to change dramatically over the next couple of decades – and we have to make sure that the bus industry is ready to benefit from those changes”.*

“We have to move away from nose-to-tail car traffic at peak times, endless engine idling, stop-start travel and rising pollution and carbon emissions. Rather than contributing to the problem – buses and coaches very much form part of the solution”.

4.73 All cities are facing the challenge of tackling air pollution, recent headlines in June 2018 shows that the London Mayor is leading the way with bold and drastic measures to tackling air pollution: -

Mayor unveils ultra-low emission zone plans

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has unveiled details of his plan to introduce an “ultra-low emission zone” covering a huge swathe of the capital in the next few years. The scheme, which will see the most polluting vehicles charged for entering the centre of the capital from April next year, will be extended to the North Circular and South Circular roads in 2021. Mayor Khan said: “Tackling London’s lethal air and safeguarding the health of Londoners requires bold action. Air pollution is a national health crisis and I refuse to stand back as thousands of Londoners breathe in air so filthy that it shortens our life expectancy, harms our lungs and worsens chronic illness

4.74 **The new Bus Services Act reinforces** Leicester City Council’s approach of working in partnership with the bus operators to maximise the benefits of bus services in reducing congestion, in order to deliver services attractive enough to create a shift away from car use. A number of long standing pro-bus options exist in Leicester e.g. bus lanes, park & ride schemes and parking controls, which can help to encourage increased bus patronage and modal shift.

4.75 The evidence from the last 15 years and the new Bus Services Act suggests that more people will use buses if significant investment and modernisation is put into making the bus more attractive and buses are given priority on the road network. This can be seen in other cities such as London, Brighton, and Oxford.

4.76 For Leicester City Council and the bus operators the biggest challenge will be to bridge modal shift from car to public transport, walking and cycling - knowing that for many people the barriers to modal shift will be the cost, time and reliability of travelling by public transport and lifestyles, habits and comfort.

4.77 **Social Value and the Bus Services Act**

4.78 A report commissioned by the Department for Transport <http://www.socialvalueuk.org/app/uploads/2016/07/DfT-final-report.pdf> looked at the impacts of public transport in general and concluded that there are several social groups who benefit from local public transport interventions. Those who benefit the most are on low incomes, older people, younger people, disabled people and those living in remote and rural areas. The main common denominator with these groups 'being the tendency towards non-car ownership', which creates significant barriers such as social and economic exclusion. The report also highlights the benefit of public transport; 'access to employment, education and labour market participation is a key benefit for many groups as is the ability to independently partake in social activities, shopping trips and get to other essential public services, especially healthcare.'

4.79 The task group recognises that bus operators are businesses and that in a deregulated market they are free to set bus fares. However, the task group believe that lower fares and discounted tickets promote bus use and would help meet social needs, in particular for those on low-incomes and young people in the city

4.80 Leicester City Council is in the process of finalising a 'Social Value Charter' (as recommended by *Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission review report in 2016*) this evidence supports the importance of social value considerations through delivering public transport in the city.

5. Resources

The Department for Transport has issued guidance on the use of the powers contained in the Bus Services Act 2017.

Website links to key documents can be found on: [Bus Services Act 2017 on the government website](#). The Department for Transport (DfT) has issued [additional guidance on the Bus Services Act 2017](#).

Link to guidance for local councils: 'Bus Services Act 2017 – new powers and opportunities': <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-act-2017-new-powers-and-opportunities>

Link to guidance for local councils: 'Enhanced Partnership creation' <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-act-2017-enhanced-partnership-creation>

6. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

Financial Implications

No significant financial implications arising from this review in general have been identified, however the implications of any specific actions should be reviewed ahead of implementation.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081

Legal Implications

The Bus Services Act 2017 ("the Act") received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017 and aims to improve bus services for passengers by providing local authorities, the Secretary of State and bus operators with a new toolkit to enable improvements to bus services.

As set out in the report, the Council has a number of options available to enable improvements. The Council needs to decide which option will best improve local services in the Leicester/shire area. Additionally, the Council has Clean Air Zone obligations and Social Value obligations.

The Act replaces existing ticketing scheme powers and the new powers, known as "Advanced Ticketing Schemes" allow the establishment of multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing schemes to enable local authorities to be more involved in the services provided by bus operators.

The Act also requires local authorities to consider cross boundary working as well as working proactively with bus operators.

Jenis Taylor, Principal Solicitor (Commercial)

Equality 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 duty 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, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

As outlined with in the report, those who benefit most from accessible and reliable public transport which meets peoples' need are often people on low incomes, older people, younger people, disabled people and those living in remote and rural areas, particularly where those groups do not own a car which can create significant barriers to social and economic inclusion, as well as barriers to accessing services and opportunities.

The report outlines potential benefits arising from the Bus Services Act and the recommendations within the report. For example, the potential for the council to have greater influence on how bus services are operated and managed, improve access for protected groups (via standards for audio, visual and displayed information), to secure greater quality of life and social value outcomes.

Whilst there are opportunities for positive impacts across all protected groups (in particular for those groups who are more frequent users of public transport and who may be more likely to face barriers to access) it must also be considered that as work progresses and the recommendations are taken forward, there is the potential for unknown or negative equalities impacts, if changes are not thoroughly considered from an equalities perspective, as part of any decision making process.

The council will need to work with partners to ensure that, through the partnership arrangement, there are mechanisms set up to ensure that the equalities implications of any more detailed proposals for change (for example, the introduction of multi ticketing or multi modal systems or the introduction of non-cash methods of payment) are fully analysed and that

the Council can demonstrate 'due regard' for the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. This may be achieved by following the City Council's Equality Impact Assessment process, when considering changes which will affect bus users. Equalities considerations must also be made in terms of accessibility of information to people from across all protected characteristics (particularly age, disability and race), when considering publicity and marketing, as well as potential improvements to how users are provided with information about bus services.

Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager ext. 37 5811

7. Summary of Appendices

Appendix 1

'Three Stages to Better Bus Services – using the Bus Services Act' guidance for local authorities by the Campaign for Better Transport
<https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdfs/bus-services-act-guidance.pdf>

Appendix 2

Executive Response to Scrutiny

8. Officers to Contact

Anita Patel, Scrutiny Policy Officer
Email: Anita.Patel@leicester.gov.uk
Tel: 0116 454 6342

APPENDIX 1

'Three Stages to Better Bus Services – using the Bus Services Act' guidance for local authorities by the Campaign for Better Transport – Click on website link below:

<https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdfs/bus-services-act-guidance.pdf>

APPENDIX 2

Executive Response to Scrutiny

The executive will respond to the next scrutiny meeting after a review report has been presented with the table below updated as part of that response.

Introduction

...

Scrutiny Recommendation	Executive Decision	Progress/Action	Timescales

Three stages to better bus services

using the Bus Services Act



Introduction

The Bus Services Act 2017 is ready to be used to make bus services in England better.

This is a guide for local authorities who want to make bus services in their area better by using the powers of the Bus Services Act 2017. The legislation offers a flexible approach with two main ways of working. Either bus operators and local transport authorities can partner to improve services, or the local transport authority can assume the role of franchisor, specifying every aspect of the service and invite operators to tender.

Why buses?

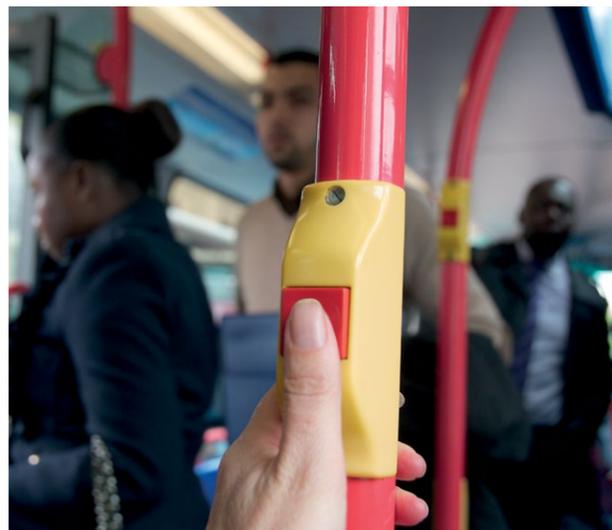
Buses are essential to freeing up congested road space; to cleaning up the air that we breathe and above all to connecting people to jobs, friends and life opportunities. For any local authority which wants to make an impact on employment, pollution and quality of life, the opportunities presented by the Bus Services Act are exciting.

08

Contents

Stage 1	Take buses seriously
Stage 2	Work out what powers are available
Stage 3	Decide what benefits you want to see

Annex I	Bus partnerships
Annex II	Bus franchising



Stage 1: Take buses seriously

People

Appoint people at a senior level to champion buses. Councillors and officers are needed with the power to make positive change happen. Assemble stakeholders, including bus operators and passenger groups. You will need their help to develop the kinds of services passengers want.



Planning

Buses are the best used form of public transport and the most efficient users of road space. They must be central to transport plans and be integrated with local plans and other strategies, including health and clean air. The Bus Services Act includes various new powers and opportunities to improve bus services, so it makes sense to review transport and other policies to see how to make the most of these.



Targets

Set out ambitious targets to increase bus patronage, or at least halt its decline. The powers of the Bus Services Act can help you achieve this. Compare your local area to the performance of other authorities.



Budget

Buses need a budget. Well resourced partnership working with operators can provide better value than tendering, but needs funding for planning and delivery. Make sure you know and access the full range of funding streams that are available.



Evidence

Collect quantitative and qualitative data about bus patronage, fares, usage and passenger experience, both on and off the bus vehicles. Find best practice from other cities. This will help build the case for using Bus Services Act powers.



Stage 2: Work out what powers are available

Outside London, bus services are deregulated – bus operators register the services they want to run and deregister them if they lose money on them. If services are not being provided commercially, local authorities can step in and subsidise services. However, it has increasingly been recognised that buses work better with local council support and involvement. The Bus Services Act includes various new powers and duties for local authorities (and for operators) to make buses work better. Review these to see what your area can use.

All local transport authorities have access to the following powers:

- Advanced Quality Partnerships
- Enhanced Partnerships
- Multi-operator ticketing schemes
- Access to financial data.

The Act also includes requirements for opening up data on bus services and fares, and for audible and visible information on buses. We cover these in detail in this report.

Quality partnerships have been around for a while. Essentially they are partnerships between bus operators, often with commitments to investment in new vehicles, and local authorities, with commitments to improve bus stops and other bus infrastructure and to introduce bus priority measures like bus lanes. The Act broadens these partnerships significantly and includes new opportunities – for example allowing local authorities to take on the registration of bus services (currently this is done by little known officials called traffic commissioners). More details on partnerships are in Annex I.

The Act also includes provision for bus franchising. This means that local authorities rather than operators decide what bus services are run and what fares are charged. Under the Act, combined authorities with directly elected mayors have full powers to introduce bus franchising, subject to making the case. Franchising powers are in principle also available to all other local transport authorities, but they have to seek agreement from the Transport Secretary.

What is a local transport authority?

Local transport authorities are mayoral combined authorities, combined authorities, county councils and unitary authorities. Where any of these types of authorities overlap, both are local transport authorities and can use the powers in the legislation.

Stage 3: Decide what benefits you want to see

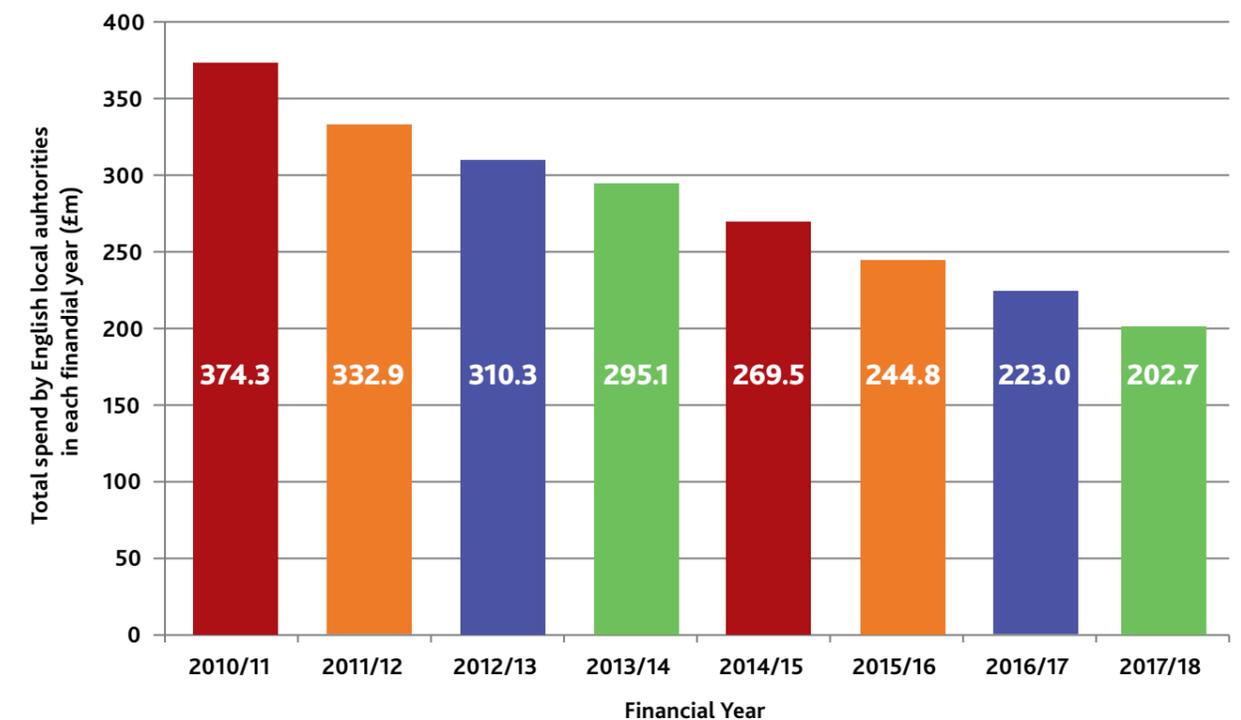
Depending on the transport need in your area, the Bus Services Act could be used to provide:

- More, not fewer, buses
- Affordable buses
- Better bus information
- Better bus vehicles
- Buses that are better integrated with other transport modes.

More, not fewer, buses

Total spend by local authorities in England on supported bus services

All sums adjusted to 2018 using RPI



In 2017-18 **290** bus services have been reduced, altered or withdrawn

Since 2010-11 **3,088** bus services have been reduced, altered or withdrawn

Stopping cuts and getting an expanding bus network

For many people and communities, the main priority is to stop cuts in services and to have more rather than fewer buses. As we've said above, buses are a commercial business and generally the companies run services where they can expect to make money or at least break even. Where this doesn't happen, local authorities can step in and subsidise services. But as our Save our Buses campaign has shown, with cuts in their general funding local authorities have cut back on funding these unprofitable but socially necessary services. In addition, various issues have hit the profitability of bus services:

- Underfunding of the free travel scheme for older and disabled people: this has been a boon to these groups but the Government funding for it does not cover the costs of provision
- Cuts in grants to bus operators (Bus Service Operators Grant was cut back in 2010)
- Cuts in funding to school transport services, which can form a network with ordinary bus services
- Increased traffic congestion, which means that to keep to schedules operators have to run more buses.

On top of these, changes in the wider economy have hit bus use, including the move to internet shopping, out of town developments and the consequent decline in town centres and high streets.

What are the options for communities facing bus cuts or who want an increased service?

A first option will be for local transport authorities to stop cutbacks or fund increased services. But local authorities will respond that they have no funding to protect or enhance services. So here are some ways in which this has been or could be done.

Communities do it themselves

In some more well resourced places, not-for-profit community transport organisations provide local transport services. These have tended to be relatively modest – volunteer car schemes to give people lifts, or dial-a-ride services on request, but increasingly community transport groups are providing ordinary bus services. West Norfolk Community Transport has stepped in and taken on services withdrawn by Stagecoach in and around Kings Lynn.¹ In some cases, parishes and town councils have taken on providing local services. Witney Town Council in Oxfordshire has helped establish West Oxfordshire Community Transport Limited. This is a not-for-profit organisation, running town services that enable residents from surrounding estates to easily access the town centre.² Similarly, Henley on Thames town council has been subsidising bus services in the town since Oxfordshire County Council withdrew their subsidy in 2016, and has recently agreed a new contract with the local Reading Buses.³

Total transport: bring together funding and contracts

Most areas – even the most remote rural places – have specialist transport services provided by public bodies. These include home-school transport, social services transport, non-emergency patient travel, college and university transport for students and staff and also staff transport for prisons. 'Total transport' is about bringing these contracts together and where possible opening services for the public or recycling funding for mainstream bus services. There were a series of pilots from 2015-17 with this, which produced modest results and some areas are pursuing this approach.⁴

Kickstart funding: upfront funding to bring in new services

Some bus services have the potential for being commercial but need funding in the initial years to build up use, or to demonstrate to operators that they are viable. Operators sometimes take the risk themselves, but in other places local authorities have provided start-up funding.

Access to financial data

Previously, when an operator withdrew a service, very little information was available about usage. How many people were using it? Did it merit being subsidised as a socially necessary bus route? The local authority or other operators contemplating taking on the route would have to make a decision in the dark, or take claims about revenue and patronage on trust. Section 19 of the Bus Services Act requires operators to disclose information about revenue and patronage to the local transport authority when an operator cancels a service. This means that if the local authority decides to put the route out to tender, all potential bidders can see this information upfront and make an informed decision about whether to bid. It also means that local authorities don't mistakenly spend money on subsidising bus routes which are in fact commercially viable.

Reducing operating costs and making buses more attractive: giving buses priority over other traffic

One of the biggest challenges facing the bus industry today – perhaps the biggest, after the lack of bus funding – is road congestion. Research by David Begg shows that in the last 50 years, bus journey times have risen by almost 50 per cent in the more congested urban areas. Road congestion slows down bus speeds, and moreover makes it far more difficult to keep reliably to schedule. Passengers value timely buses, and will quickly opt for other forms of transport if they can't rely on buses turning up on time. Begg estimates that a ten per cent reduction in bus speed leads to, on average, a ten per cent decline in bus patronage.

Bus priority can be instituted in a number of ways. The most straightforward is to introduce bus lanes – either for the exclusive use of buses; or the exclusive use of buses at certain times of day. Local authorities can also introduce bus gates, where rising bollards or gates only allow through buses (and emergency vehicles) to certain areas such as city centres. But bus priority can be more high-tech than this: modern traffic light technology can shorten red lights or extend green lights to give priority to buses. When this technology, known as Selective Vehicle Priority (SVP), was introduced in Hazel Grove, Manchester, journey times fell by three minutes and the variability in journey times fell by

Case study: South East Hampshire Bus Rapid Transit

This is a high specification, sub regional public transport network. Phase 1 of the project opened in April 2012. The project aimed to improve access to job opportunities, public health services and tertiary education by public transport. The new route delivered up to £6.94 in economic benefits for each £1 invested. The project resulted in improvements to transport accessibility, safety, and the environmental impact of travel. The project also improved the image of public transport and increased the demand for public transport services, with patronage growing by 48 per cent over the first two years of service. Passenger satisfaction has gone up by more than 20 per cent on average and the project achieved a monthly reliability between 85-99 per cent.



Photo by Spsmiler on wikimedia

50 per cent. Congestion levels for all traffic fell by 75 per cent. In Luton, a bus gateway that prioritised buses over other traffic was developed by the council with the local bus operator. Since its construction in 2014, passenger numbers on that route have tripled from around one to three million bus users a year. Bus services can also be helped by other transport policies, notably introducing controls on parking spaces and also charging for on- and off-street parking. In some places traffic wardens are employed specifically to enforce bus lanes and to stop parking in bus stops.⁵

Case study: North Somerset and kickstarter funding for buses



New buses arriving on the Portishead to Bristol corridor in 2014



Promotional activity with customers

With local authority budgets reducing in recent years, North Somerset Council had to find new ways to fund local bus services. Funding secured through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) provided the ideal opportunity to test kick-start funding to improve bus services on two key commuter routes.

The council undertook an innovative procurement process. Following market engagement, it declared the amount of funding available and invited operators to submit proposals on how they would use the funding to deliver improvements. A strong emphasis was on quality and long-term commercial viability.

The first of the two key commuter routes was between Weston-super-Mare and Bristol, with £150,000 of kick-start funding available. Operators were invited to submit proposals and First were awarded the investment. First provided the following:

- Increased frequency from 30 to every 20 minutes
- Newer vehicles
- Enhanced quality including leather seats, greater leg room, and Wi-Fi
- New 'Express Yourself' 'X' branding and supporting marketing materials

- Comprehensive publicity campaign
- Full commercial adoption of services following investment.

The enhanced service began operation in April 2012 and delivered 52 per cent growth in patronage by May 2014. Growth of services on this route led First to make further investment, with brand new vehicles introduced onto the route in 2013. The route is now operated entirely commercially thanks to the growth in patronage, replacing the need for any local authority top-up funding.

A year later, a second kick-start project was undertaken on the route between Portishead and Bristol. A further £150,000 funding, made available through LSTF, was awarded to First to provide the following enhancements:

- New simplified routes and numbering
- Increased frequency from three journeys per hour to a clock-face 15 minute frequency
- Adoption of tendered service to commercial operation
- Newer vehicles
- Enhanced quality including leather seats and Wi-Fi
- Further roll out of new 'X' brand
- Enhanced marketing/promotions campaign.

The route began operation in March 2013 and by May 2014, the route had delivered 17.3 per cent growth in patronage. Similar to the success of the Weston-super-Mare to Bristol route, the growth of these services led First to make further commitments on this route, with brand new vehicles arriving in summer 2014.

Following the success of these projects, the Council now uses kick-start investment projects alongside a traditional contract approach for more marginal services. As well as using funding from projects, such as LSTF, the Council has also used section 106 funding from developers to improve local bus services using the kick-start approach.

Kick-start investment is a way of securing public transport services that are sustainable in the long term, by giving the market the opportunity to determine what can be achieved with a set amount of funding, rather than tendering a route and hoping the price is affordable. Kick-start funding is also a way to boost services that are close to commercial viability so that local buses are not reliant on public funding year after year.

Partnership working was vital for these projects and relied on local authority and operator staff working together, particularly on some of the joint publicity and marketing activities.

New sources of funding for buses: workplace parking levy

It is possible for local authorities to raise funding specifically for transport. The congestion charge in London is an example of this and powers to introduce such charges are available to other local authorities. The legislation (the Transport Act 2000) also gives local authorities the power to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL), charging employers a fee for every car space they offer to their employees. The fee could vary depending on different kinds of vehicle (for example, lower fees for electric vehicles) or depending on time of day. Revenue raised from the levy has to be put into local transport. The only authority so far to

implement a levy is Nottingham City Council, which charges around £300 per space, per year for employers with more than ten spaces. This currently raises around £9 million a year, which has been used to pay for two new tram lines and new 'link' bus services for places not served by commercial bus routes.

The levy also incentivises people to travel to work by public transport, car sharing, cycling or walking and puts pressure on employers to make it easier for their employees to do so.⁶

Getting buses into new developments

New housing and developments can be bus-friendly, or can be designed in ways that prevent buses serving them well, or in some cases at all. Guidelines on practical ways of designing new developments for buses and case studies have been published recently.⁷ It is as yet unclear how the Bus Services Act can be used to ensure new developments get good bus services, but partnerships and franchises could in principle both be used to support such services. The aim should be to give certainty to developers and those in new developments that there will be high quality affordable services in place for when the first houses are inhabited. This will build in positive transport habits from day one while guaranteeing revenue for operators until housing occupancy rises to sustain the service commercially.

Partnerships and franchising to grow bus use

Enhanced partnerships in the legislation can be used to grow bus networks and bus use. The partnerships allow for action by local authorities to give buses priority and change wider transport policy, for example through car parking policy, and operators should for their part improve services, and invest in new vehicles. As subsequent sections show, partnerships can also expand bus use; they can be used to market bus services, improve bus infrastructure and make fares and ticketing simpler and more affordable. Franchising has been used in London and Jersey to increase funding (public and private) and support for buses. It has also grown bus use in those places.

Case study: Chelmsford and integrating bus routes with housing

First Essex introduced a new bus route in the City of Chelmsford, funded from Section 106 contributions.

Route 57 serves the new Beaulieu development on the northern fringe of the city. It is a luxurious and heavily marketed service. There is a 20-minute service from 0500 to 2300 Mondays to Fridays, half-hourly on Saturdays and hourly from 0700 to 1900 on Sundays, using brand new buses in a special livery. The back of each bus advertises 'Beaulieu to London in an hour' by connecting at Chelmsford railway station. The development hosts a high-quality bus shelter at the current terminus on the fringe of Beaulieu; there are others built amongst the new housing with notices explaining they will be brought into use as construction continues and the new service is extended further into the development.

The developer has agreed to fund new residents a free travel pass for a year for up to four people a household, a valuable benefit to families. The marketing publicity is of a very high standard and readily available. The service is well used, with the aim of ensuring that residents of the Beaulieu development do not really need a car. High quality buses running at a generous frequency and over a long day, coupled with superb marketing with a clear incentive to use the bus seem to be producing positive results.



Case study: Bus partnership in York

There has been a long-term bus partnership between City of York Council and the bus operators. It includes a lot of work on traffic signals, particularly making changes to their timings and phasing to improve the reliability of the bus service. There are two members of staff in the Council's traffic office who can see where all the buses are, so that they can tackle vehicles bunching up on routes, as well as the state of the traffic signals across the city. This allows the Council to:

- Change signals to speed up bus services which are suffering from congestion
- Get any broken signals fixed quickly – reducing the amount of congestion caused by broken signals
- Be in regular contact with the bus operators to tell them of any issues on the network (e.g. accidents, utilities works) which they might need to react to
- Direct two on-street staff (bus wardens) to deal with any incidents (e.g. broken down vehicles) which might be causing congestion. These members of staff also enforce parking and loading restrictions on the network.

The council also concentrates on maintaining other aspects of the highways network which can cause congestion, for example regularly repainting yellow box junctions, bus STOP clearways, replacing broken signs etc.

Service punctuality has improved in response to these interventions. It has particularly improved where the Council has tackled whole corridors – fixing signals, pinch points, road markings etc.

The council has put a lot of effort into bus information. It has real time screens at every stop in the city centre, and many in the suburbs. It has also taken production of roadside timetables over from the operators, with a resulting big improvement in quality of information. More recently it has enhanced the information put out about disrupted services so that it's easier for passengers to know what is going on and any impacts on them.

All of the above works have been funded through a Better Bus Area partnership with the bus operators. The bus operators, through this, forego around £200,000 of Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) from the Government, which is instead passed to the council to fund the shared services set out above. An additional £150,000 a year of operator BSOG is used to fund interventions on the road network to reduce congestion, principally improvements to traffic signals and small scale changes to road alignments to remove pinch points.

Using other funding pots, including a Better Bus Area grant from the Government in 2012, the council has also:

- Introduced a smartcard for bus passengers in York
- Overhauled the stops and shelters in York over the last four years, rebuilding several of the stop clusters in the city centre
- Installed camera enforcement of a stretch of bus-only route in the city centre
- Undertaken a big marketing exercise between 2012 and 2015.

The principal operator in York has also made some changes which have improved the quality of their services, particularly reducing many fares by around 25 per cent from August 2013. It also installed a local management team, which substantially improved management focus on the York operation.

As a result of these initiatives, York has seen an increase in passenger numbers of 12 per cent since 2012/13, against a regional decline of about five per cent. Bus passenger numbers in York were already high having doubled in the 2000-2005 period, and the city now has the 11th highest bus passenger trip rate (per capita head) of all of England's local transport authorities.

Further plans in York include:

- Introducing a passenger charter and publishing a monthly punctuality figure
- Reopening two large bus interchanges in the city centre which have been rebuilt
- Working with Network Rail and Virgin Trains East Coast on a plan to redevelop the area around York Rail Station. This will include a substantial improvement to bus stops/shelters/layover facilities and turning facilities for buses over the next two to three years.

**Case study:
Merseytravel youth fare**

In conjunction with bus operators, Merseytravel introduced 'Myticket', a £2.20 flat fare for all day bus travel for young people from five to 18.¹¹

The number of journeys made by young people has risen by 142 per cent in the three years following its introduction; and (whilst there are of course other factors at play) school attendance rates in the region have also improved.

As well as the level of fares, the availability and price of tickets that can be used on all bus operators is an issue. One of the perennial frustrations among bus passengers is that the return, day saver or

season ticket they buy from one bus company is not valid with other bus companies. This can mean having to wait longer to get on your way, when a bus going on the right route but from a different company will not accept your ticket.

To address this, a number of areas have implemented multi-operator ticketing schemes, either through paper tickets or alternatively with smartcards, mobile ticketing through passengers' phones (m-ticketing), or contactless payment via a bank card. Some of these are multi-modal, incorporating rail services and trams. The Bus Services Act enlarges the opportunities to develop such schemes.

85 More affordable buses

Bus fares have risen over the last few years, with the average bus fare up by 45 per cent in real terms between 1995 and 2016. Some of the hardest hit have been 16-18 year olds. This age group is one of the biggest users of bus services, often depending on buses to get to school or college. However, since the Government made it mandatory to be in full time education or training for this age group, 16-18 year olds often find that they are required to pay adult fares without receiving an adult wage. Job seekers are another group who often struggle to get to potential employment, or to job centres, because of high bus fares. Sixty-four per cent of job seekers have no access to a car or cannot drive.

In some places operators have reduced their fares. In Bristol, the main bus operator First Group cut their fares in 2013 following public feedback and some campaigning. The city has seen increased bus use since then, and although cash fares have increased, the fares on smartcards and with bank cards have been held down. Similarly the main operator in the West Midlands cut bus fares in Dudley and other parts of the Black Country by up to a third. In both cases, the operators are part of wider bus partnerships and alliances with local authorities aimed at growing bus use, though the fares cuts are not a formal part of these arrangements.

Some operators also offer flexible tickets. Cardiff Bus offers 'occasional travel' single journey tickets in bundles of 3 or 10; these can be bought using the operator's 'iff app' and stored until needed. The three journey 'easy three' day tickets save around 10 per cent on buying them individually. On the Isle of Wight, the main operator Southern Vectis also offers multi-day tickets, available in five, 15 and 30 day bundles giving unlimited travel across the network. Days do not have to be used consecutively and are valid for two years from purchase.⁸

In addition, local authorities can reach an agreement with bus operators to offer a particular group in their area (for example, students or job seekers) a concessionary fare without tying it to a partnership scheme or franchise. Transport for Greater Manchester offers free travel for jobseekers and new employees for their first month, and Reading Buses offers discount fares for jobseekers.⁹ Kent County Council offers free travel for 16-19 year olds in full time education or training, though there is an upfront charge.¹⁰

Cheaper and smarter bus fares

The Bus Services Act gives a number of options to reduce or limit bus fares:

- A multi-operator ticketing scheme: the Act enables multi-operator tickets, including on smartcards, mobile phones or bank card
- An advanced quality partnership can place a requirement on bus operators not to exceed a maximum fare for a particular route
- An enhanced quality partnership can include a requirement on all bus operators to charge a set price for a multi-operator or multi-modal ticket
- Under bus franchising, all fares can be set by the local authority.

The table below sets out clearly what options are available.

Smart ticketing speeds up bus use significantly, freeing up drivers from the task of having to fuss over fares and change. This means that even passengers who still use cash benefit from faster boarding times.

The act includes specific powers to set up multi-operator schemes with smart ticketing. In addition, advanced quality partnerships, enhanced partnerships and franchising all enable local authorities to require that operators accept people paying for their journeys with smartcards, contactless or mobile ticketing and sell all their ticketing products using one or more of these formats.

There is increasing evidence that simplifying fares encourages bus use by reducing uncertainty and anxiety for passengers. Bus operators and local authorities may wish to consider introducing a simple zonal structure, or a set fare across all journeys. A requirement on all operators to set their fares with reference to the same zonal structure can be implemented through franchising or an enhanced partnership scheme, though not through an advanced quality partnership.

The Bus Services Act also makes provision for local authorities to make ticketing schemes across local authority boundaries, so that ticketing schemes could encompass neighbouring local authorities.

Can a requirement be put on bus operators to:	Multi-modal ticketing scheme	Advanced Quality Partnership	Enhanced Partnership	Franchising
Sell and accept a multi-operator or multi-modal ticket (including a specific format, such as a smart card)?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Market particular tickets in a certain way (including promoting multi-operator tickets not just their own tickets)?	✗	✓	✓	✓
Set all their tickets and fares on a standard set of 'zones' that apply to all operators?	✗	✗	✓	✓
Follow common ticket rules for their own tickets (such as a standard length of 'period' tickets or age to qualify for a youth concession if offered)?	✗	✗	✓	✓
Sell or accept any type of ticket on a particular technology (such as a smart card)?	✗	✓	✓	✓
Charge no more than a maximum fare on a route?	✗	✓	✗	✓
Charge a set price for a multi-operator or multi-modal ticket?	✗	✗	✓	✓
Charge a set price for their own, single-operator ticket?	✗	✗	✗	✓

Case study: Devon and multi-operator ticketing

The Devon Day Rover is a simple scheme. It is entirely voluntary, with all participating bus companies agreeing to sell and accept the ticket at a price agreed by consensus. The price is set slightly above Stagecoach's own exclusive Day Explorer ticket.

Crucially, revenue stays where it falls, thereby avoiding complex and expensive administration and allocation of revenue. All participating companies accept that there is an element of 'win some, lose some,' i.e. they sell tickets to some passengers who move on to travel with other companies (= revenue gain), and they carry some passengers who have bought their tickets from another company (= revenue loss). The formal agreement is no more than a thirteen-paragraph two-page document.

The scheme was introduced in response to public comment, particularly in areas where the network is operated by more than one company. Whilst Stagecoach operate much of the network, there are significant areas of population where passengers may need to use more than one company's services to make certain journeys.

Publicity is via the county council's own outlets, plus leaflets and posters through the bus companies. Companies are encouraged to promote the scheme but it remains voluntary.¹²

Case study: Multi-operator tickets in Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire County Council has, since 2000, had a quality partnership covering the whole county. This partnership, marketed as 'Intalink', now includes a range of multi-operator fares. There are 'Busnet' all-operator day and weekly tickets in many of the main towns; an all-county 'explorer' ticket for day or weekly travel; and a saver card for 11-18 year olds. There is also a specific multi-operator ticket for the London Colney-St Albans corridor. This partnership also covers information and marketing (see page 16).

Case study: West Midlands, West Yorkshire and multi modal smart ticketing (rail, tram, bus)

Transport for the West Midlands has developed the 'Swift' card, which allows multi-modal travel on local trains, trams and nearly all bus services.¹³ This now includes a wide range of products: adult and child season tickets, pay as you go smartcards and cheap multi-day flexible tickets.¹⁴ A similar scheme now exists in West Yorkshire.¹⁵



Photo by Brandon Jones

Better bus services

Better bus service information and branding

Getting information about bus services – times, routes and fares – is a bit of a postcode lottery. In some areas there is good information, up-to-date and widely available. Increasingly, there is real time information too. However, elsewhere it can be harder to find; sometimes bus stops are managed by the operator, sometimes by local authorities. Real time information – enabling people to react to disruptions – is also very patchy.

This is one area that the Bus Services Act sets out to change. It includes a requirement for bus companies to publish information on their operations, making data on services and fares publicly available. The intention is to promote open data, putting information in the public domain, so others will be able to make it accessible in user-friendly formats. This data should include real time information on service running as well as the timetabled services.

This provision should improve journey planning, helping people work out the best fare and route for their journey. However, it also presents opportunities for operators to manage their services better, and for communities and passengers to look at the performance of local services. It can also provide insight into where and when bus disruptions are most likely to occur, helping transport authorities better target interventions like bus priority measures.

Unlike most parts of the Bus Services Act where local authorities can opt to take up powers, the open data clauses are mandatory everywhere, though the details are still being worked out. Local authorities can open up timetable and/or performance data now if they wish, as some have already done. Once the data is published, there are also questions about how this information is made available in a user friendly format. Some local authorities may wish to take a lead on making information available through their website and at transport hubs like railway stations. Others will take a more hands off approach, leaving it to third parties to use the data to develop websites or apps.

However, it's important to note that aside from the Secretary of State and local transport authorities, the data will be restricted to those 'who provide or facilitate the provision of information about relevant local services', rather than directly to users. In practice, this means that most of the users of this data are likely to be app developers. It will be important that accurate information about bus services is available in a range of ways, not just through apps, there are still plenty of places where phone reception is unreliable, and many people don't use smartphones or don't feel safe using a phone in the street or on the bus. Devon County Council is one authority that so far has continued to produce area timetable books and to maintain roadside timetable displays: it believes that while developing a user friendly website and a web and app-based real time information system, these online or other electronic formats should not be used as an excuse for cutting support for traditional formats and outlets which people still value.

Case study: Norfolk Bus Electronic Schedule

Norfolk County Council employed five people to keep their county-wide timetables up to date, updating it several times a year. Several smaller operators still submitted their timetables on paper, so the data entry was arduous and susceptible to mistakes.

Since 2011, the council has developed a comprehensive data management system where operators can upload their schedule data, effectively bringing in open bus data in advance of the Bus Service Act requirement to do so. The system has paid for itself in under three years and has meant that service changes can be uploaded in hours rather than days.¹⁶

There are also opportunities to improve the marketing and branding of bus services. The new powers in the Act offer operators and local authorities the opportunity to market buses better, setting a unifying theme (for example, a colour scheme for bus livery or logo) across all bus vehicles. This also enables joint marketing, so a city or area bus brand could be marketed across posters; link into the design of bus stations and stops; and be reflected in bus ticketing.

Better audio-visual information on buses

Outside London, few buses currently have audible or visual information available. This means that passengers who are unfamiliar with the route or who are hard of hearing or visually impaired are at a loss to know when to get off the bus. Section 17 of the Bus Services Act gives powers to the Transport Secretary to make regulations requiring bus operators to make accessible information in audible and visible formats.

87 The Government scoping note on this regulation suggests that it is intended to bring this requirement into force for larger bus operators (who provide about 70 per cent of bus services in the UK) in 2019 and for smaller operators by 2023. Unlike most of the Bus Services Act which applies mostly to England, this regulation would apply to the whole of Great Britain.

Case study: Intalink, Hertfordshire

As already noted, Hertfordshire has had a bus partnership covering the whole county since 2000. This partnership, marketed as Intalink, pools funding from bus and train operators and from the district councils to provide high quality information. The information now encompasses stop-specific timetables, real time information linked to the council's traffic management system, and investment in transport hubs at many of the county's town centres and railway stations. Bus stop management and maintenance is also included (as well as the joint tickets mentioned above). The Intalink brand is used on all the bus stops and information points, and on many of the buses operated in the county.¹⁷

Case study: Dorset and improving bus stops

Dorset County Council has improved its management of bus stops by cataloguing and assessing them. It has also introduced a map with real time information at each bus stop.¹⁸

Case study: Liverpool Bus Alliance 'Better by Bus'

The Liverpool City Region Bus Alliance, which brings together the transport authority Merseytravel with the main bus operators in a voluntary bus partnership, includes a jointly funded marketing campaign. 'Better by Bus' aims to market bus services at different stages of people's lives – going to school, starting or changing work, moving house, and also leisure travel. It has local advertising and a Better by Bus club.¹⁹

Case study: Oxford Bus Company

Some operators have already brought in audio-visual information on their buses and found ways to pay for it. In 2015, Oxford Bus Company embarked on an experiment to self-fund audio-visual equipment. The aim was to install equipment on 11 buses with the aim of recouping the capital investment through 3rd party advertising within three years. The experiment has been a success. By 2017, two years on, the investment was 75 per cent paid off with no additional staffing required to achieve this.²⁰

Better bus vehicles

In general the quality of buses on the road has vastly improved in recent years. There are legal requirements for all local buses to be accessible (without steps and with boarding ramps for wheelchairs), and pollution controls through European emissions standards. However, not all vehicles meet the latest standards. It's now possible using the Bus Services Act powers to set some minimum standards for the buses on the roads and the training of the drivers in them. Enhanced quality partnerships can be used for this purpose, by agreeing investment in new vehicles and the standards to be met in those vehicles. Under bus franchising, an authority can specify in contracts the types and standards of vehicles to be used.

These provisions can help at least four objectives:

Modern buses

Many people – especially people who never use them – have an image of buses as old, rattling, dirty, polluting and uncomfortable. This is increasingly out of date, the latest buses now being introduced have comfortable seats, free Wi-Fi, USB charging points and good information, often electronic. They are also fully accessible, with spaces for buggies and wheelchairs. Bus partnerships have been used in many places already to get such vehicles introduced, though some operators have invested in high quality vehicles under their own initiative. Such vehicles can revolutionise the way people see bus travel.

Greener buses

Many of our cities are choked with air pollution, which speeds up climate change; worsens breathing problems; and causes 40,000 early deaths a year. Most of this pollution comes from cars, and buses play a major part in reducing air pollution by giving people alternatives to driving. But bus emissions – especially diesel buses with older engines – also contribute to dirty air. Partnerships and franchises can agree emissions standards for buses. This is not just about getting new buses, older buses can be retrofitted with the latest Euro VI engine technology so, whilst they still run on diesel, they are much cleaner, even cleaner in some cases than cars. Greener Journeys estimates that this costs about £13,000 per bus.²²

Alternatively, local authorities could specify the usage of electric buses. While these have limits on battery life, the technology is rapidly evolving, with costs coming down and range increasing. Hybrid buses, which can operate electrically in clean air zones and switch to diesel in intercity parts of their route, where air quality is less of an issue, are also an option. Hydrogen buses, whose only emission is water, are also operational on the streets of London and Aberdeen. Bio-methane buses, running on gas from waste, can also be a cleaner alternative, and currently run on the streets of Bristol. Some cities are already promoting moves to hybrid and electric buses under existing partnership agreements.

More accessible buses

Using buses can be hard if you are disabled. Some progress has been made on bus access: since 2017, all single and double decker buses have had to be wheelchair accessible, but the design and specification of some buses still isn't great for those with disabilities.

The Bus Services Act offers a new route for local authorities to set standards and enforce bus accessibility. Indeed, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), as public bodies

Case study: Route 36

The Leeds-Harrogate-Ripon bus route has seen massive growth in use since 2003, when its operator invested in high quality vehicles with leather seats. Since then it has been upgraded several times and now has some of the most comfortable and well-equipped buses in the country.²¹



Photo by Alex Hornby

local authorities must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination against any person with a protected characteristic (e.g. age, disability) and to 'encourage those who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low'. Transport is essential for disabled and older people to participate in public life; and so in considering how they manage or guide bus services in their area, local authorities can carry out their Public Sector Equality Duty.

Local authorities can in partnerships or franchises set local standards for bus design, for example going beyond the statutory minimum on the size of the wheelchair bay, or putting hearing loops on all buses so that hearing aid users can communicate with drivers and hear announcements. As already noted, the Act also includes general requirements for audible and visual information. Under enhanced partnerships, local authorities can take over the registration of bus services from the traffic commissioner, and could make accessibility criteria a condition of bus registration in their area. Local authorities who opt to franchise one or more bus routes in their area can set accessibility standards as part of the conditions for bidding for a route or route area.

The experience that disabled and elderly people have of bus services is strongly influenced by the driver. Most drivers are helpful and considerate in the way that they operate their bus which makes older and disabled people feel safe and comfortable when using buses. However, sometimes they don't always get it right. Frequent complaints include not having enough time to sit down before the bus pulls away, or finding it difficult to step into the bus because the driver omitted to 'kneel' the bus or to pull close into the kerb. Worse, a small minority of bus drivers actively discriminate against disabled people, for example by failing to enforce wheelchair users' priority in the wheelchair bay, or by challenging bus pass holders with an invisible impairment. The impact on disabled people's employment and life opportunities can be significant.

This is getting better with many bus operators now offering some form of disability equality training; and this is likely to become mandatory across the UK, through European law. However, in advance of this, partnership schemes or franchising schemes can include an obligation on operators to provide disability equality training to all bus drivers. Brighton and Hove runs a scheme where people with hidden disabilities can apply for a special pass which they show to the driver, this is called the Helping Hand Scheme.²³

Safer buses

Buses are in general a very safe way to travel, and are much safer than cars or lorries. However, they are still involved in fatal and serious crashes; in 2015, 64 people were killed and 638 people seriously injured in collisions involving buses. Bus operators have a duty to record these incidents internally, through the Health and Safety at Work Act. However, there is no duty to share the details of such incidents, and so for over half of these, no details are known in terms of the operator involved; whether the victim was a pedestrian, cyclist, motorist or bus passenger; and what happened. Enabling the publishing and analysis of trends in bus collisions allows operators and local authorities to work together to tackle any risks and make bus travel safer.

Confidential Safety Reporting schemes have been established in goods vehicles and other work related driving, and can be applied to bus operations too, giving staff a way to report safety concerns anonymously so issues can be addressed before any incident happens. This form of reporting is routine in the rail, maritime and airline industries. Since 2016 Transport for London (TfL) has extended the rail industry's Confidential Incident Reporting and Analysis System (CIRAS) to all its contracted bus operators (many of which are already CIRAS subscribers for their UK rail operations) under TfL's own subscription. This could be extended to bus operators elsewhere. Some are now doing this voluntarily, but to ensure full coverage local authorities can make subscribing to CIRAS and/or publishing incident data a requirement in a partnership scheme, a condition of registration in enhanced partnership schemes where the authority takes on service registration and it can also be made a condition of a franchise agreement, as has happened in London.

Better transport networks

People don't start and finish their journeys at a bus stop, they need buses to be part of door to door journeys, with the ability to link easily to a wider bus network and other modes of transport. London is of course well known for having a long tradition of integrated public transport, and other cities have invested in bus stations and interchanges. However, integrated networks can also be developed in (and arguably are as important for) more rural areas.

Bus partnerships and alliances have already been used to improve the quality and level of bus services across whole networks. Hertfordshire's Intalink partnership (see case study on page 16) has seen a county council develop bus/rail interchanges. Cornwall is showing that this can be applicable in remote rural areas too, by developing an integrated network for the whole county, encompassing bus and local rail services.

Case study: Bus alliances and partnerships

There are a number of comprehensive bus partnerships covering whole areas. Some have been mentioned already. There are two bus alliances in the West Midlands and Liverpool city regions, both of which are intended to provide comprehensive improvements to bus services. The West Midlands one was launched in 2012 and has been rolled out to other districts in the area.²⁴

The Liverpool City Region Bus Alliance has, since its inception in 2015, seen increased bus patronage and improvements across the network. The alliance agreement includes a commitment from operators to provide modern bus fleets with an average age of no more than seven years, and to be partners on a range of initiatives, including marketing campaigns, on-bus cleaning and customer service training. The alliance also includes network reviews, with a detailed two-stage public consultation process in each city region district to agree changes to the bus network in each area.²⁵

Case study: One public transport system for Cornwall

Cornwall Council is bringing together public transport in the county by creating a single public transport network. More frequent train services on the Cornwall main railway line between Penzance and Plymouth, due to start in December 2018, are being used as a catalyst for an integrated bus-rail timetable, and also an integrated ticketing scheme for residents and visitors. This has partly been enabled by the County's devolution deal with the Government, but also by funding from a very wide range of sources. The bus operators, including First Kernow, have invested in new vehicles and technology; the Local Enterprise Partnership has funded the installation of contactless ticketing technology on the buses run by smaller operators, ensuring comprehensive coverage, and bus-rail interchanges have been created at some of the main railway stations. Cornwall is showing that even rural areas can create integrated public transport networks, and in particular the idea of using railway stations as hubs for rural transport networks has wider application.²⁶

Their network is based on transport hubs, using rail stations or town centres as the basis for public transport services, with integrated timetables and smartcards encompassing bus and rail. This model could be applied in many other rural areas.

Conclusion

This guide has shown that it is possible to improve bus services and link them to wider improvements in transport, local economic development and the environment. The Bus Services Act includes new powers that can be used to make these improvements – we hope that communities around the country will take advantage of these powers and the ideas in this guide, and give buses the attention and support they deserve. For more information on improving and saving bus services, contact info@bettertransport.org.uk

Annex I: Bus partnerships

Quality bus partnerships have been around for some years in various forms, and many of the case studies in this guide have come from partnerships. There are voluntary partnerships – subject to loose agreements – and statutory partnerships or Quality Partnerships Schemes, which are legally recognised. Both voluntary partnerships and quality partnership schemes pre-existed the Bus Services Act, but continue to be options for local authorities wishing to improve bus services for their residents.

Under the Bus Services Act, previous partnership schemes become 'Advanced Quality Partnerships'; there is a new category of 'enhanced partnerships', which go further than the partnerships currently existing and allow for a wider range of measures to be included. By agreement, local authorities within enhanced partnerships can take on service registration functions from the traffic commissioners.

Both enhanced partnerships and advanced quality partnerships are open to all local transport authorities, including Mayoral and non-mayoral combined authorities; county councils; city councils and unitary authorities. The Act also makes provision for more than one local authority to join up and develop an enhanced partnership, or an advanced quality partnership, across their joint areas.

To implement an enhanced partnership, authorities need to invite operators to join. In consultation with the operators, authorities then prepare a "enhanced partnership plan" which tells the story about the scheme and sets a context with its bus improvement objectives, and also a detailed "enhanced partnership scheme" with the registration objectives (frequency, timetables, vehicles, ticketing etc), which are then used as a basis for registering bus services in the partnership area. Authorities consult on the plan and scheme with passengers and also with bodies such as the Competition and Markets Authority, and can proceed providing most bus operators agree.

For more details on advanced and enhanced partnerships, see the guidance from the Department for Transport on the Bus Services Act.²⁷

Case study: Birmingham City Centre Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS)

Introduced in July 2012, the AQPS is the biggest of its kind in the UK. This covers multi-million pound investment in bus shelters, way-finding and bus lane enforcement in the city centre and requires all bus operators who enter the city centre to improve their quality standards, including exhaust emissions. Through the Bus Alliance, similar schemes are now being developed in other areas of the region.

Until 27th June 2017 the AQPS schemes were known as Statutory Quality Partnership Schemes (SQPS) but as part of the new powers under the Bus Services Act the name of such schemes have automatically changed to Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes. In terms of Birmingham City Centre there is no material change in the requirements of the scheme, only the name has been updated.

Quality partnerships can be enforced through traffic commissioners if operators are not meeting standards, or if they are using the facilities like bus lanes but are not a signatory to the partnership. Penalties include a fine, an order to invest in local services, to compensate passengers or changing registration to stop them operating certain services all together. Facilities can include bus stop poles, shelters, raised kerbs and bus stop clearways.²⁸

Annex II: Bus franchising

Franchising allows a local authority to set out the specifications for a particular bus route or routes, or alternatively for a bus network, and invite different companies to bid competitively to operate the route(s). Bus companies therefore compete not on the road for passengers, but through a tendering process. The Bus Services Act allows for local authorities to franchise their entire network, or to franchise small sections of it (corridor franchising).

There are many different models of bus franchising. Many people associate bus franchising with London, which has franchised its buses since 1986 when buses elsewhere in the country were deregulated. London's franchises are tightly specified, with TfL setting everything from routes and timetables to fares, vehicle specifications and driver training. TfL takes on all the revenue risk i.e. keeping all the revenue when a route is profitable and taking the hit when passenger numbers fall. This allows it to cross-subsidise unprofitable, but socially valuable routes (or sections of routes) with profitable routes.

However, the TfL model is only one way of doing bus franchising. London is, of course, highly idiosyncratic in many respects: it has high population density and the Congestion Charge and TfL has a high financial turnover with many employees. It's therefore important to appreciate that there are many different ways of operating a bus franchise, but franchising is a model that can work in different contexts, not just in the city.

For example, a local authority might wish to franchise a small section of its bus network, perhaps only one important route. Or in areas struggling to maintain unprofitable routes which are nevertheless socially necessary, a local authority might create a franchise bundle, inviting tenders for exclusive rights to a highly profitable route, on the condition that the winning bidder also took on the socially necessary routes.

Case study: Jersey

The Government in Jersey already has had bus franchising powers since 2002. In 2013 it revised this and let a new franchise contract which was won by Libertybus, a subsidiary of HCT Group. In this franchise, revenue risk lies with the operators, who design the network themselves within broad parameters and objectives. Although the Government set out its specification, non-compliant bids were actively encouraged. Since the new contract began, passenger numbers are up by a third, five new routes have been added, frequencies have improved, passenger satisfaction is up by five per cent and subsidy levels are down by £800,000. The Government and the operator put this down to the way the contract incentivises the operator to grow passenger numbers.²⁹

So, for example, the tender might link together a heavily used central town route together with a handful of feeder routes connecting outlying villages or suburbs to the centre of town. Some franchising arrangements leave the financial risk largely with the operator, thereby reducing the financial exposure of the local authority.

Under the Act, only places with mayors and combined authorities can franchise bus services without needing agreement by the Government. These mayoral areas with bus franchising powers are: Greater Manchester, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the West Midlands, the West of England, the Liverpool City Region, and the Tees Valley.

Cornwall is not a combined authority and does not have a mayor, but also has bus franchising powers.

In order to exercise franchising powers, a combined authority must demonstrate that it has:

- Compared a franchising proposal to 'one or more other courses of action'
- Consulted with bus operators, bus users, the traffic commissioner, Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), and local police
- Assessed the proposal following a 'consideration' of a business case covering strategic fit, value for money, feasibility, affordability, and deliverability
- Obtained an independent audit of the quality of its assessment (information and analysis) and compliance with guidance.

A number of the mayoral combined authorities are considering franchising and are at present working on these requirements.

Franchising powers are available to other authorities but only by permission from the Transport Secretary.

06 These powers have not yet been tested, though there have been active discussions within some authorities about applying for franchising powers.



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Campaign for Better Transport's vision is a country where communities have affordable transport that improves quality of life and protects the environment. Achieving our vision requires substantial changes to UK transport policy which we aim to achieve by providing well-researched, practical solutions that gain support from both decision-makers and the public.

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Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

Draft Work Programme 2018 – 2019

Meeting	Topic	Actions Arising	Progress
12 th July 2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Putney Road Scheme – Presentation 2. Procurement Social Value - full report back on progress and timetable 3. Business Workplace Portfolio – update report 4. Draft Work Programme 2018/19 – members to consider and comment. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Bus Services Act Scrutiny Review Update – Chair to provide verbal report on progress. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the results of the consultation on the Putney Road Scheme be noted; and • That the Commission endorses proceeding to the next phase of delivery of the Putney Road Scheme. 2) Agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the next steps required to finalise, adopt and implement the Social Value Charter be noted; and • That the Head of Procurement be asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Circulate the draft Social Value Charter and Social Value Guide as soon they are available to all members of this Commission and all Members who participated in the Procurement and Social Value Task Group; b) Include examples of good practice in the Social Value Guide, showing how social value has already been successfully secured through commissioning; and c) Ensure that the Equalities Implications of the Social Value Charter are added to documentation as appropriate. 3) Report welcomed and noted. 4) Work programme noted and Bus Services Act task group update reported. 	

66

Appendix D

Meeting	Topic	Actions Arising	Progress
6th September 2018 <i>Draft items tbc</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biodiversity Action Plan 2011-2021 2. Bus Services Act Scrutiny Review – Draft report of findings 3. Work Programme 		
25th October 2018 – <i>Draft Items tbc</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Major Transport Projects – progress report 2. Leicester's Draft Local Plan – update on progress 3. Strategic Growth Plan – update on progress 4. Procurement Social Value – update on progress 		

Meeting	Topic	Actions Arising	Progress
6 th December 2018 <i>Draft items tbc</i>			
17 th January 2019 tbc <i>Draft items tbc</i>	1. Employment Hub (launched June 2018) - report on progress		
14 th March 2019 <i>Draft items tbc</i>			

Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission 2018/19 Forward Planning

Date of meeting	Topic	Brief description of actions	Progress
ONGOING	City Mayor & Executive Plan of Key Decisions	Commission to keep a watching brief and receive regular reports / updates on executive key decisions planned relating to this portfolio.	Ongoing
ONGOING	Spending Review Programmes linked to:	Commission to keep a watching brief and receive regular updates on issues related to budgets with this portfolio	Ongoing

	<p>a) Councils General Fund Revenue Budget Report 2018/19 to 2020/21</p> <p>b) Capital Programme Projects</p>	<i>(Full council in February 2018 agreed Councils General Fund Revenue Budget report 2018 to 2021).</i>	
ONGOING	Connecting Leicester Projects	Commission agreed to be involved at the early stages of development of plans	Ongoing
ONGOING	<p>‘Leicester: Great City’ Economic Action Plan 2016-2020’</p> <p>Website Link: https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/57817/economic-action-plan-2016-2020.pdf</p>	Commission to receive regular updates and reports relating to the 5 themes within the Economic Action Plan.	Ongoing
ONGOING 2018 / 2019	‘Leicester’s Draft Local Plan’ updates on progress	Consideration of the draft local plan and monitoring progress – continuing to keep a watching brief on progress made	Ongoing (update in October – tbc)
ONGOING REVIEW	Bus Services Act 2017 and Bus Services Strategy	To investigate the impacts of the new Bus Services Act to Leicester (current task group review)	Task Group Review ongoing
TBC	Healthier Air for Leicester – Air Quality Action Plan 2015 – 2026	Progress update on actions (joint with health & wellbeing scrutiny)	tbc
July and October 2018	Procurement Social Value Scrutiny Review 2017	Executive report on progress made relating to the actions and recommendations (see minutes of March 2018 – commission members requested fuller report on progress)	July and October 2018
TBC	Railway Station Area Regeneration	Progress on the redevelopment	tbc
TBC	‘Leicester Flood Risk Strategy’	Progress update on flood risk programme in Leicester	tbc

TBC	Major Transport Projects and Management / Technology (including update on Midlands Connect (MC))	Report on progress	tbc
TBC	National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) update (including Bus Lanes update)	Report on progress	tbc
TBC	Climate Change Obligations	Update on progress	tbc
TBC	'Leicester Sustainability Action Plan 2016 – 2019'	Update on progress on actions	tbc
TBC	'Leicester's Parking Improvement Action Plan 2016 to 2019'	Commission members to receive report on progress on action plan	tbc
Jan 2019	Employment Hub update	Commission members to receive update on the new Employment Hub launched in June 2018?	Jan 2019
TBC	'Planning for People not cars – Leicester's Local Transport Plan 2011 to 2026'	Report on progress on the plan	tbc
TBC	'Leicester City Cycle Action Plan'	Report on progress on the actions	tbc
TBC	Energy & District Heating	Focus on Energy Efficiency and raising awareness e.g. businesses	tbc
TBC	Commercial Councils – Entrepreneurialism in local government	To investigate the position and impact on Leicester City Council services	tbc
July 2018	Business Improvement District	Report on progress on the delivery of the BID Board	July 2018

TBC	'Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2015 – 2020'	Report on progress on actions	tbc
TBC	Marketing Leicester & Leicestershire – Inward investment	Report on progress	tbc
TBC	Strategic Growth Plan (City & County)	Commission requested a report back following the City / County public consultation during 2018. (‘Leicester & Leicestershire 2050: Our Vision for Growth’ – Consultation Draft Plan January 2018) – WEBSITE LINK: http://www.lstrategicgrowthplan.org.uk/the-plan/	October 2018
TBC	Leicester, Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP)	Key Priorities and progress report e.g. Strategic Economic Plan	tbc

86