

The background features abstract, overlapping shapes in shades of teal and grey. A large, light teal shape is on the right side, and a darker grey shape is on the left. The text is centered over these shapes.

# Bus Lanes Session 1

## Overview of Bus Lanes and benefits

04 September 2024

# Context

- The scrutiny commission have previously reviewed bus lane operations in 2013 and 2016.
- On both occasions, the recommendation from the commission was for bus lanes to continue operating 24 hours a day to maintain consistency of approach, outside of locations that could evidence a specific local need (for example, parking to support local businesses).
- Members of the Economic Development, Transport, and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission requested the topic be revisited in 2023. Officers suggested this be deferred whilst awaiting promised government guidance.

# Government Guidance



Department  
for Transport

## Local Transport Note 1/24: Bus User Priority



March 2024

- In October 2023 the sitting government published its *Plan for Drivers*, which include a commitment to introduce further guidance to local authorities on the deployment of bus lanes.
- This guidance was finally published as Section 7 of Local Transport Note 1/24 *Bus User Priority*, and has been shared with scrutiny members prior to this session.
- The National Bus Strategy maintains that there must not only be a ‘significant increase’ in bus priority, but also that bus lanes should be full-time and continuous

# Bus Lanes

- A length of running lane reserved for the usage of authorised vehicles.
- Majority found along the 13 key bus corridors in the city.
- 77 services make use of bus priority at some stage of the route.

- Award winning enhanced partnership underpinned by legally binding commitments to invest from both the city council and operators. 94 (of 120) completed to date.
- Significant improvements in Leicester over the lifetime of the partnership:
  - Half the bus fleet now electric with **134** electric buses
  - **14%** increase in passenger numbers from 22/23 to 23/24 – now at **97%** of pre-Covid levels, 25m trips within the city each year.
  - Expansion of commercial timetables to provide additional evening and daytime services across the city, **180** hours of extra bus services from Firstbus alone.

## Leicester Buses Partnership Bus Service Improvement Plan 2024-2036



Working in partnership



May 2024



# **BUS LANE BENEFITS**

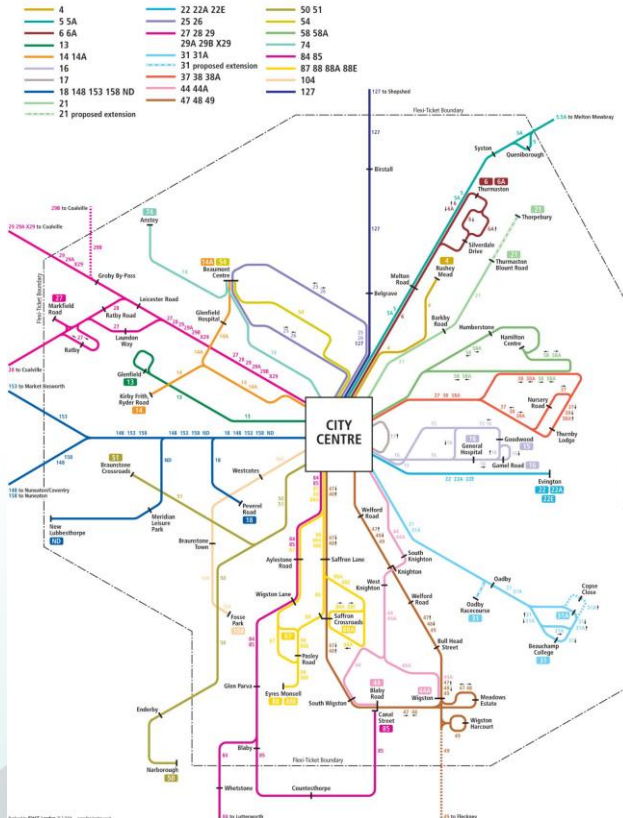
# Bus Lane Punctuality and Reliability



- Groby Road corridor - **6%** reduction in overall journey times and **30%** reduction in journey variance at peak times, punctuality now at **81%**
- Melton Road corridor – **89%** of buses now running to time.
- Overall bus punctuality citywide – **85%**
- Overall bus reliability citywide – **98%**
- **76%** of bus users were happy with bus punctuality, England average **70%** (Your Bus Journey – Passenger Focus)

# Frequency

## Mainlines Network

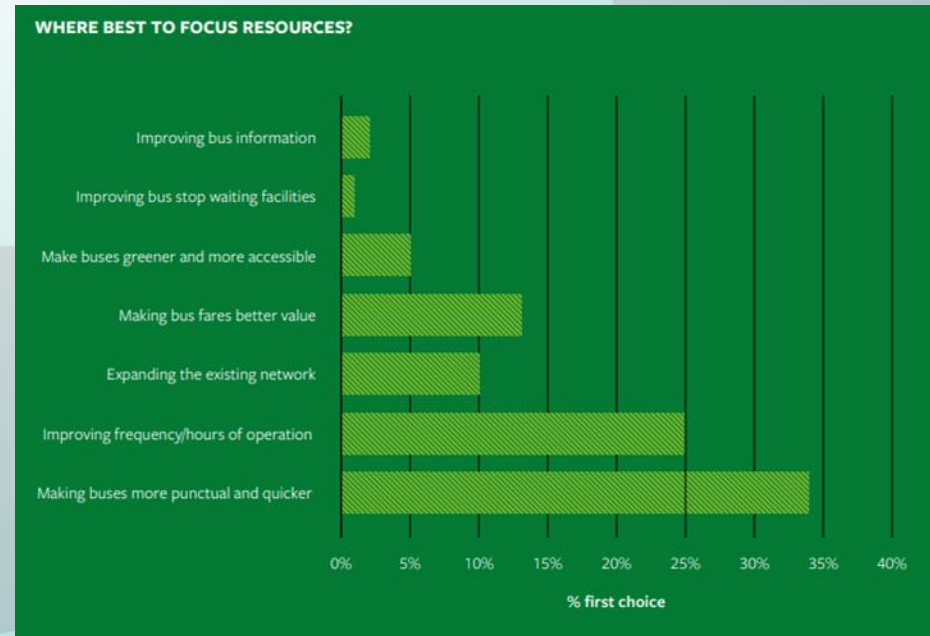


- Improvements to punctuality and reliability can create opportunities to increase route frequency – a key method of attracting new users.
- **21** mainlines now have a frequency of 15 minutes or better Monday-Saturday



# Usage

- Nearly **35%** of bus users requested funding be directed at making bus services more punctual and reliable
- Research by the DfT identified that priority schemes and the resultant improvements to reliability and punctuality can lead to increase in usage by up to **160%** over ten years.



# **BENEFITS TO 24/7 OPERATION**

# Clarity



- 24-hour bus lanes use simpler, clearer signs.
- These are easier for drivers to understand – particularly new drivers or those unfamiliar with the area.
- This reduces the risk of users inadvertently violating the bus lanes.

# Capacity

- Leicester's road network is usually quiet outside peak operating hours (7-7), with little congestion.
- There is very little benefit to be obtained from opening the bus lanes to general traffic at these times.

# Authorised Vehicles

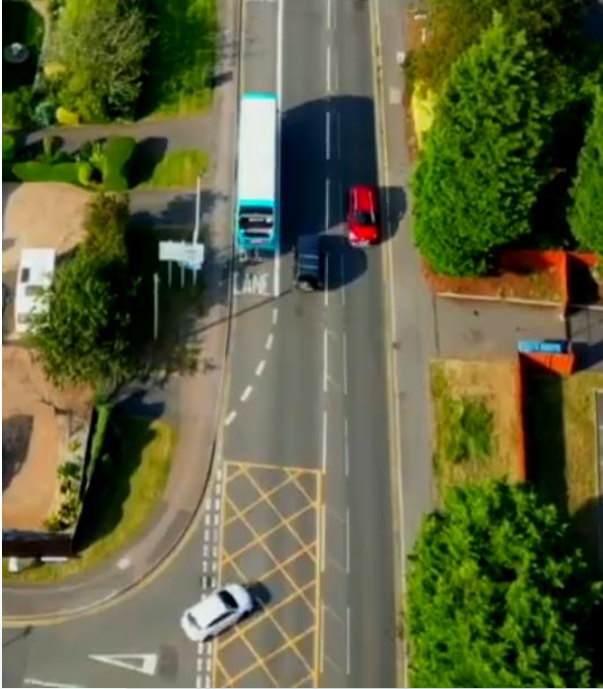
- Bus lanes can still be used by authorised vehicles even when limited services are running.
- Emergency service vehicles benefit from access to a dedicated lane that can bypass any other traffic on the network.
- Cyclist safety benefits massively from having access to a reserved lane with limited risk of vehicles.



# Service Growth

- Services may expand in future, making use of the bus priority network – there is already one 24hr service looking to improve frequency - Skylink along the A6 corridor.
- Operators are beginning to identify evening and later running services as being a potential market, and are slowly expanding commercial networks. For example – new Firstbus 4E, extensions to the 17

# Cost



- Removing or altering existing 24-hour bus lanes would require a considerable investment from the authority.
- This would have an opportunity cost against other transport improvements across the city.

**ANY QUESTIONS?**



# Next Session

- 23 September, 2024, 17:00 – 19:00
  - Evidence review
  - Representatives from bus operators
  - Address any further questions raised by members of the commission in the interim.