



**Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director - Place**

Report to:	<b>Executive</b>
Date:	<b>5 October 2021</b>
Subject:	<b>Lincolnshire Enhanced Partnership Scheme &amp; Bus Service Improvement Plan</b>
Decision Reference:	<b>I022772</b>
Key decision?	<b>Yes</b>

**Summary:**

Bus Back Better - the Government's national bus strategy - was launched in March 2021. This strategy expects every Transport Authority across England to implement either an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with which to improve bus services or a Franchising Scheme - akin to the bus regulatory model adopted in London. For Lincolnshire, an Enhanced Partnership is considered the optimal choice.

In advance of the formal Enhanced Partnership, the County Council must prepare a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31 October 2021. A BSIP is a high-level document that sets out the Council's ambitions and its plan to improve the bus offer in Lincolnshire, which has been developed in close collaboration with bus Operators, users, the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (GLLEP), District Councils and other stakeholders. The BSIP will act as a bidding document, assessed by Department for Transport (DfT) to determine the amount of funding that the Council will receive to deliver the stated schemes and achieve the BSIP outcomes.

Following publishing of the BSIP, the next step is to draft the formal documentation that delivers BSIP outcomes 'on the ground'. For an EP this comprises an EP Plan (high level vision and objectives) and one or more EP Schemes (providing precise details of the measures/schemes to be delivered). The Government requires Enhanced Partnerships to be in place by 1 April 2022. This is a statutory process, as set out in the 2017 Bus Services Act, that commits the County Council and the Operators that sign up to the Partnership to deliver on what is contained within the EP Plan.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Executive:

- (1) Approves the preparation and publication of a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) for Lincolnshire.
- (2) Approves the themes and schemes proposed in the Report as the basis for the preparation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan for Lincolnshire
- (3) Delegates to the Executive Councillor for Highways Transport and IT authority to determine the final form and approve the submission of the BSIP for Lincolnshire
- (4) Notes the indicative timetable for the making of an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme set out at Appendix A
- (5) In respect of the statutory process under the Transport Act 2000 ("the Act") for making an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme, delegates to the Executive Director – Place in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT authority to:
  - determine the final form of the draft proposed statutory Plan and Scheme;
  - approve the giving of notice of the proposed statutory Plan and Scheme to operators of qualifying local services in accordance with section 138F(1)(c) of the Act;
  - determine whether a sufficient number of operators of qualifying local services have objected to the Plan or Scheme for the purposes of section 138F(5) of the Act and the Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018; and
  - approve the giving of notice under section 138F(1)(d) and the content and process for the carrying out of statutory consultation under section 138F(6) of the Act.

**Alternatives Considered:**

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| 1. | An alternative to developing an Enhanced Partnership Scheme is to implement a Franchising Scheme whereby the Authority takes on all financial risk for the delivery of bus services across Lincolnshire. Even if Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) wanted to pursue a Franchising Scheme, it would take a number of years to prepare, so DfT would still expect any Authority to implement an Enhanced Partnership Scheme in the short term. |
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	A Franchising Scheme requires Transport Authorities to have control over planning policy as well as have in place an elected Mayor, neither of which Lincolnshire has at the current time.
2.	The second alternative is to do nothing and continue providing bus services in the current way. This will mean LCC would not be eligible for a share of £3bn of Central Government funding, and any future discretionary funds focussed on public transport investment would not be available to LCC. In addition, local bus operators in Lincolnshire, as well as LCC with regards to its supported bus services, would not be eligible for continued Covid Recovery Funding which could lead to a significant reduction in bus services provided by the private sector, and lead to greater demand on LCC to financially support more bus services as operators find services to be loss making due to reduced patronage/fares income compared to pre-COVID levels.

### **Reasons for Recommendation:**

Of the three options, doing nothing will lead to a much-reduced commercial bus network and greater demands on County Council funding to support bus services certainly in the short and medium term. Franchising is not feasible, and even if it was, DfT would expect LCC to implement an Enhanced Partnership arrangement in the short term due to the time it would take to implement a Franchising Scheme (at least several years). A formal Enhanced Partnership will enable the County Council to build on the work it has carried out over the past 20 years (through an informal partnership with operators) to greatly enhance the existing bus offer across the County.

### **1. Background**

In order to deliver the Government's 'Bus Back Better' National Bus Strategy (NBS), it is necessary to implement an Enhanced Partnership Scheme from April 2022 onwards.

The National Bus Strategy (NBS), released in March 2021, makes it very clear that future funding from central Government will be intrinsically linked to the implementation and outcomes detailed within the National Strategy. It is also intimated that the current Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), which is subject to review next year, will also become linked to adoption of the Strategy.

There are three distinct phases expected by the DfT all with specific timelines.

Phase 1 required Local Transport Authorities (LTA) to commit to establishing an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with notice of intent being published by the end of June 2021. Authority to publish LCC's Statutory Notice was provided by the Executive Director for Place.

Phase 2 requires LTAs to prepare and publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by the end of October 2021. This is a necessary part of the process in order to obtain a share of the £3bn funding pot set aside by Central Government for delivery of the Strategy. This project now seeks Executive support and authority to publish a Lincolnshire BSIP.

Phase 3 requires the 'making' of an Enhanced Partnership and all of the statutory processes and associated documentation in preparation of this.

The NBS project is being managed by a team made up of senior representatives from Communities, Transport Services, Highways, Commercial and Transformation Teams, and is chaired by the Executive Director of Place. The project team is also supported by an external transport consultancy resource.

Members from the project team have been engaging on the development of a BSIP since May 2021 following receipt of guidance from the DfT. Officers have been engaging with local bus Operators, District Councils, MPs and the GLLEP to gain their views on what the Lincolnshire BSIP should focus on. It is proposed that nominated representatives from these organisations will form part of an external Enhanced Partnership Board. The team is also engaging the public and businesses through surveys and social media to understand their views on enhancing local bus services and factors that influence their use of public transport.

Once the BSIP is published the formal Enhanced Partnership will begin to be established in more detail, with a draft being made of the Enhanced Partnership Plan (a clear vision of the improvements to bus services that the EP is aiming to deliver, mirroring the BSIP) and an accompanying Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s) document (that sets out in detail the schemes and measures being delivered to achieve the BSIP outcomes). The formal responsibility to 'make' the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme sits with the Local Transport Authority as laid out in the Transport Act 2000 (inserted by the 2017 Act) and there are statutory requirements for the content of the documents which are set out in s.138A of the 2000 Act.

There are also statutory requirements the authority must meet before formally 'making' a Plan and Scheme. This includes issuing notice that a plan has been prepared, formal public consultation, notice of intention to 'make' the Plan and Scheme and the decision to 'make' the Plan and Scheme which must be in place by 1 April 2022.

The statutory requirements are currently under review by a legal expert, but they have provided an indicative timeline (see Appendix A) which outlines the mandatory steps and decision-making requirements of an EP.

This timetable is extremely tight and cannot be achieved if Executive or Executive Councillor decision-making is to be accommodated at all stages. This Report therefore seeks authority to delegate decision making of the initial procedural steps (Notices and Consultation) to the Executive Director - Place in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Highways, Transport and IT. This will ensure that the Council's internal decision-making processes are as responsive as possible up to and including the carrying out of public consultation.

However Executive or Executive Councillor approval will be sought to 'make' the EP Plan and Scheme in March 2022.

There are significant challenges faced with preparing a BSIP and implementing an Enhanced Partnership Scheme in Lincolnshire:

- Timescales are heavily constrained due to Government deadlines, leaving little scope for settling any potentially difficult issues with stakeholders.
- It is necessary to consult and engage across many stakeholders in a very short space of time. Bus operators, District Councils, GLLEP, neighbouring local authorities, rail operators, the public and local businesses must all contribute to the preparation of the BSIP and implementation of the EPS. Effective engagement and involvement within the space of a few months is particularly challenging.
- Decision-making timescales are challenging for the County Council as well as District Councils to agree to the content of the BSIP by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. Regular briefings take place with the portfolio holder, but wider member engagement is important to ensure buy in across the Council. Through these briefings, the Council's ambitions need to be identified to help steer the preparation of the BSIP and EPS.
- Once the BSIP has been submitted to DfT, it is necessary for the County Council to start preparing for the implementation of the EPS. The content of the BSIP will form the Enhanced Partnership Plan, which will commit the Council, operators and other stakeholders to delivering its contents over an agreed period of time. This will be prepared at a time when the Council does not know how much funding may be received from DfT with which to deliver the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership Plan.
- There is currently no confirmation of how BSIPs will be assessed and how funding will be allocated across local authorities. Guidance suggests authorities should be 'ambitious' but fails to set out how this ambition will be scored and funding assigned to different 'ambitious' schemes. This is particularly challenging for the County Council as it may be required to commit to delivering schemes without knowing the available funding.
- DfT's guidance of promoting 'ambitious' schemes highlights the Government's aspirations and high expectations for the delivery of its National Bus Strategy. This places pressure on the County Council to produce an aspirational BSIP, whilst taking into the account the challenges we face.

The risks discussed above are not unique to Lincolnshire - all other LTAs are facing similar challenges.

In addition to the risks and challenges, the preparation of the BSIP and implementation of an EPS by April 2022 provides different strategic opportunities for the County Council. Despite the rurality of the county, Lincolnshire is starting from a strong starting position as it has a clear strategic network of InterConnect (inter-urban), Into Town (urban) and Call Connect (demand responsive) services ensuring every resident in Lincolnshire has access to a bus service and the essential goods and services that they need to access.

From a funding perspective alone, a successful BSIP would allow the Council to further invest in the strategic bus network and strengthen its offer to residents to improve opportunities to travel and make bus services more attractive to more people for more journeys. This supports the development of a 'thriving environment' making the county a more attractive place to live, work, relax and visit.

From a 'levelling up' perspective, an ambitious BSIP helps those without access to a car or other private modes to be able to independently access employment and education opportunities to gain the skills required locally. In addition, an improved bus network supports access to Council services, as well as other essential services that they may need to access.

Bus services also offer a significant opportunity to support the reduction of carbon emissions from our transport network, while supporting the improvement of air quality in our towns. Encouraging journeys historically made by car to be made by bus instead, particularly within our towns, can reduce the negative external impact of vehicle emissions on air quality in particular. Alongside a reduction in emissions from buses – which will be a key component of the BSIP, see below – this should help the Council meet its broader strategic aspirations of enhancing health and life-chances by delivering an improved environment.

### BSIP CONTENT

According to DfT guidance the BSIP should be structured as follows:

- Overview of the scheme area
- The current bus offer
- Targets for improving bus services - patronage, journey time, service reliability, user satisfaction levels have been proposed by the DfT (as a minimum)
- Proposed schemes and measures to improve bus services (and achieve the targets above)
- Reporting timetable

A key part of the BSIP, and what the DfT will likely base its funding decisions on, is the schemes and measures proposed and their expected impacts. There is presently a lack of guidance from DfT on the BSIP appraisal methodology and there is no guarantee that any such guidance will be given before the due submission date of 31 October 2021.

The precise schemes to be included within the BSIP are yet to be finalised, but the key themes and schemes that have been identified to date across all stakeholder engagements are presented below. Work is ongoing to ensure the compatibility of these suggestions and proposals with other LCC ambitions and commitments. It is envisaged that these will broadly form the deliverables under the BSIP and therefore political views are important in establishing both principles and detailed scheme ideas for inclusion in the BSIP.

## THEME/SCHEME PROPOSALS: -

### Resources

There is a known shortage in Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) drivers and other transport crew resource across the County and that position is worsening. The intention is to collaborate with Boston College to develop a Training Academy offering courses for bus drivers, passenger assistants and other transport professionals to enable operators to reduce their costs in training drivers and providing the market with a locally skilled and qualified workforce.

There needs to be an easily identifiable, comprehensive source of information on what transport services are available in Lincolnshire. It is proposed to develop an operator managed website (or other appropriate solution) and a mobile app to provide all-operator information and a user-friendly journey planner, offering fares and ticketing information and the ability to purchase tickets through the app. This will pull together all travel information in one place, giving clear information to the customer and provide support to those smaller operators without an online presence and those who find it difficult to maintain their own current online offer.

### Service Enhancements

Lincolnshire currently has a fundamentally sound and structured bus offer: InterConnect inter-urban routes, Town and 'IntoTown' services and CallConnect demand responsive services that provide a minimum level of access to bus services for every Lincolnshire traveller. The focus of the BSIP will be to enhance existing services as follows:

InterConnect – augment the 7am-7pm service to a half hourly frequency Monday – Saturday (currently hourly). Earlier and later than these times, services to operate broadly hourly or be targeted to meet local demand i.e., connecting specific rail services, serving health and employment sites (meeting shift patterns), or support for the evening economy where there is identified demand. Sunday services should operate on an hourly basis during core daytime hours.

Town services – to operate half hourly (or better) between 7am and 7pm Monday-Saturday with hourly frequencies in the evenings and on Sundays. Town networks to be reviewed to ensure they serve new and future developments.

CallConnect – maintain the existing services but augment the County's demand responsive transport (DRT) offer through the development of app-based booking and a more responsive service level that offers dynamic bookings i.e., within half an hour of booking. These uber-bus type services will be targeted more towards younger user groups, reducing the dependency on the youth to have to run a car. It is also anticipated that this type of service will be attractive to workers. Higher fares could be charged for this degree of responsiveness and outside of core hours.

Where two or more operators compete on the same corridor, we would consider implementing a quality corridor e.g., between Boston and Skegness, to coordinate the offer to bus users in preference to the existing on-street competition which creates an erratic and confusing timetable.

### Bus Stop Infrastructure

We will seek to develop our own tiered standards and specification for bus stops across Lincolnshire and roll out significant and consistent improvements to all our bus stops.

These tiers could be as follows:

- Consistent bus stop flags, up to date timetable information (as a minimum) and availability of accessible kerbing at an appropriate number of locations within every community.
- Consistent bus shelters (for any new provision) providing a dry waiting area with seating, up to date timetable information (including real time information where appropriate) and raised kerbs
- Consistent community travel interchanges in market towns with high quality shelters and seating areas, plus clear timetable information (including real time)
- Introduction of minimum standards with bus stations in locations where they are both used and needed by users and operators. These will include high quality shelters and seating areas, in addition to CCTV and real time information.

Local circumstances will be taken into account in the delivery of all of these bus stop and interchange improvements such as conservation areas, available space etc.

Where appropriate, modal hubs and facilities in village centres will be introduced to enable access to bus stops by cycle where residential developments have grown away from the main bus corridor.

### Bus Priority

Traffic light priority to be introduced at all Scoot controlled junctions across the County. This will allow automated review of the 'lateness' of a bus and permit late running buses to trigger the junction priority cycle.

Bus lanes in urban areas, possibly including (but not limited to) the following:

- Lindum Hill-Broadgate area, Lincoln (downhill flow)
- High Street (Lincoln) (convert the little used inside lane)
- Canwick Road, Lincoln (potential use of the current tidal flow system)
- Roman Bank (Skegness)

## Fares & Ticketing

One of the negative outputs from a deregulated bus market is that bus operators all have their own policies on the age of eligibility for child and young person bus tickets. The BSIP will seek to align operator policies to ensure that there is a consistent age of eligibility across all operators and a broadly consistent discount for those young people.

The Government would like to see a tap and cap model (akin to the system deployed in London where there is a ceiling on daily travel costs, irrespective of the number of journeys you make). There are significant technical barriers to overcome for this to be achieved not least the fact that, unlike London, within Lincolnshire there are multiple Electronic Ticket Machine (ETM) makes and models deployed. The Government would also like to ultimately see multi-modal integration [e.g., one ticket across bus, rail, Light Rapid Transit (LRT), Tram journeys].

The majority of Lincolnshire bus operators are also relatively new to ETMs and associated back-office systems, we are therefore proposing to set out a roadmap towards a Lincolnshire 'tap and cap' model in the medium term, which will see cap values introduced once multi-operator capping becomes technically feasible. This roadmap will include introducing day tickets applicable within specific market towns which will be multi-operator where required and development of a Lincolnshire Day Rover ticket to enable all-county travel in the short term.

Through the Enhanced Partnership, we will also develop a plan for the roll out of contactless and Account Based Ticketing across all local bus operators.

## Traffic and Parking Management

The BSIP will explore the option for modal interchange hubs around our larger urban areas. Lincoln, Skegness (summer months), Boston and Grantham lend themselves well to the potential for interchange hubs to minimise the negative external impacts of the car in our larger towns and encourage a greater use of bus services. There is already a successful 'pocket' hub operating at Waitrose in Lincoln and we could seek to formalise more of these types of arrangement going forward.

Provision of bus layover locations in Sleaford, Lincoln, Mablethorpe and other areas where buses require space to park up to enable driver breaks, wait for school closing times etc.

The request has been received for loading/unloading times to be restricted in areas such as Skegness during the summer months to support the continued flow of vehicles around the town.

Advanced parking notifications in and around Skegness in summer months has also been called for. Variable Message Signage (VMS) parking signs will be considered in order to direct cars to available parking spaces to address the issue of cars cycling round the town looking for available spaces.

The BSIP will also propose various schemes across the county to reduce the impact of indiscriminate on-street car parking to enable buses (and indeed all other traffic) to flow through our market towns more efficiently. This includes introducing some parking restrictions and the possible introduction of 'no-stopping' infrastructure (e.g., red routes).

### Bus decarbonisation

LTAs are mandated to develop a decarbonisation roadmap as part of their BSIP. The roadmap proposed will include, but will not be limited to:

- Obtaining funding for retro-fit emission capture technologies (ideally using local suppliers such as EminoX in Gainsborough). We will identify the optimal solutions for the entire Lincolnshire bus fleet to reduce the environmental impact in the short term.
- We will look to develop one or two electric bus projects to demonstrate the potential for electric bus use in the County. This is a project being developed by LCC in discussion with the Districts. Boston and Grantham are considered appropriate for trial schemes to include within the BSIP.
- Development of a bus renewal programme, working alongside our operators, to gradually reduce the carbon emissions from our bus network over the next decade or more.
- We should also look to gradually increase the requirements on contracted bus operators to use vehicles compliant with higher Emission Standards than at present. Currently the standard insisted on is only Euro 3 (or 10 years maximum age for smaller vehicles). There is likely to be an increase in contract prices as a consequence of this requirement, as operators will need to expend money on newer/cleaner emission vehicles, this should also be factored into the BSIP costs.

The decarbonisation agenda aligns well with the Council's Green Master Plan. Additionally, as part of the local transport work an Alternative Fuels Strategy has been produced. This should help to inform the options for greening the bus network.

### Passenger Charter

The BSIP process also mandates the need for a passenger charter to document what users can expect whenever they use a bus service. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Wi-Fi and/or USB chargers on every bus (targeting InterConnect services initially)
- Levels of on-board sanitisation
- Cleanliness of vehicles
- Age of vehicles and carbon emissions
- Driver behaviour and attire

In the spirit of the partnership the Operators have been tasked with producing this charter, which will set out what commitments they are willing to make in enhancing the bus offer in Lincolnshire.

Overall, the BSIP will provide a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan to make significant improvements to the Lincolnshire bus offer, supporting increased access and mobility for all wishing to travel in and around the County. It will also be an important step towards reducing the need for a car to access the goods, services and opportunities that the County offers its residents and visitors.

The next steps in relation to the BSIP is the request of operators to supply detailed passenger data (supported by a Non-Disclosure Agreement) and for the Project Team to develop and evaluate each of the themes and individual schemes within them. Schemes will be tested against a range of criteria such as technical feasibility, political support, anticipated cost, deliverability, risks, interdependencies etc. This will serve to eliminate any schemes that are not considered to be feasible, to determine scheme prioritisation and to identify anticipated delivery timescales, project timelines and headline costs. It is anticipated that some of the schemes (e.g., Vehicle Decarbonisation) could take in excess of 10 years to fully deliver.

All entries within the BSIP submission will carry a caveat along on the lines of 'Subject to receiving the necessary funding from the NBS grant allocations the Council intends to.....'. The only exception may be where a scheme is already in train with LCC and we elect to include that within the BSIP, showing any LCC funding allocation as a 'contribution'. There is no clear steer that LTAs are required to provide any element of match funding, but this may be viewed favourably by the DfT and help to demonstrate the authority's commitment to schemes within the BSIP.

Any shortfall in requested grant allocation will result in paring back of BSIP schemes in scale and/or scope prior to the EP Plan and EP Schemes being formally taken forward.

The BSIP proposal should be, and is, in line with the emerging local transport plan. In particular, the ambitions to increase the number of passengers using public transport and 'greening' transport through alternative fuels.

## **2. Legal Issues:**

### Equality Act 2010

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The relevant protected characteristics are age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons 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.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in section 149 may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.

The duty cannot be delegated and must be discharged by the decision-maker. To discharge the statutory duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory obligations in mind. If a risk of adverse impact is identified consideration must be given to measures to avoid that impact as part of the decision making process.

An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the project has been completed. No negative impacts on people with a protected characteristic have been identified. Enhanced bus services can be expected to impact positively on older people, people with a disability and women caring for young children as it will improve mobility and accessibility and address issues of social isolation and access to opportunities. Individual EIA's will be undertaken once the proposed schemes are identified.

Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS)

The Council must have regard to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) in coming to a decision.

Transport is already a theme within the JSNA. It is expected that the schemes proposed within the BSIP will have a positive impact on both the JSNA and the JHWS.

Crime and Disorder

Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment), the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area and re-offending in its area.

It is not anticipated that the measures delivered under the BSIP will have any impact on crime and disorder within the Lincolnshire.

**3. Conclusion**

The County Council has little option but to implement an Enhanced Partnership Scheme from April 2022 onwards, and the preparation of a Bus Service Improvement Plan is an essential part of obtaining funding from Central Government to support the delivery of the EPS. This report has set out the current thinking around what the BSIP will include. Detail will be added over coming weeks as we engage further with operators, the public and our district partners to define precisely the measures and schemes that will be included.

It is recommended that the Executive approve the continued preparation of this BSIP and provide some guidance towards the precise schemes and measures that will be included within it.

**4. Legal Comments:**

The Council has the power to make an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme under the Transport Act 2000 and the Report seeks approval for the making of a Bus Service Improvement Plan as the first stage in the making of such a Plan and Scheme.

The statutory process is described in the Report along with proposals for delegated decision-making to achieve the timetable laid down by the government.

The decision is consistent with the Policy Framework and within the remit of the Executive.

## **5. Resource Comments:**

The Government's national bus strategy, Bus Back Better, repeated a pledge, first announced in February 2020, of £3bn to "level up buses across England towards London standards". Although the criteria for the allocation of this funding is currently unclear, what is clear is that development of a BSIP is an intrinsic part of the process to access funding.

This presents a risk that the Council may need to commit to deliver schemes without the security of allocated funding and it may therefore be necessary to qualify delivery of the BSIP as being subject to the availability of funding.

The report presents the key themes of the proposed interventions but details and costings of the schemes to be included within the Lincolnshire BSIP are yet to be finalised.

## **6. Consultation**

### **a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?**

N/A

### **b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?**

Yes

### **c) Scrutiny Comments**

On 13 September 2021, the Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Lincolnshire Enhanced Partnership Scheme & Bus Service Improvement Plan, and unanimously supported the Recommendations to the Executive.

The following points were highlighted:

- Members requested further clarity on how the public was being consulted and it was clarified that an engagement cycle had been undertaken via an online survey which received a good response level. A formal public consultation was also taking place in November/December 2021 in line with governmental guidance, to obtain views of both service users and members of the public. Information was being promoted online, through Parish Councils' notice boards and local magazines to raise awareness of the public and receive feedback.
- Assurance was given that bus service operators were getting advance notice when road works were taking place. Highways and Transport Services made efforts to ensure alternative routes were available where road works were taking

place, or where practicable that arrangements were made to allow buses through the roadworks.

- In relation to resources, Members were informed that Boston College was engaged to establish courses due to its major investment in a Digital, Transport and Logistics Academy with state-of-the-art facilities and advanced technological means of specialism in this field. Members were given assurance that Boston College, that also had facilities outside the area that may be used to provide markets with local skilled workforce, was used as a trial area and that going forward this could be rolled out more widely to other areas around the county through other additional service provider if necessary.
- Concerns were raised around the future and long-term security of pocket hubs where Park & Ride schemes operate in terms of ensuring that their viability was not affected (e.g., business could potentially cancel their cooperation). Members were assured that there were views of using designated pocket hubs going forward where schemes would be relocated at. There was, however, a range of these types of facilities and the optimum solution for each location would be considered. Legal agreements were in place to ensure viability of existing schemes and there were already providers (i.e., supermarkets) across the county that expressed interest in these types of schemes. Members emphasised on the need for such schemes in the East and West of Lincoln City on any land suitable for Park & Ride locations.
- In line with Resource Comments included in the report, members asked for assurance that funding for EPS & BSIP was still secured. Assurance was given that part of the funds was already being distributed by Government and that there were still funds available. Moreover, even where funds were insufficient it was to be ensured that only schemes for which there was sufficient funding should be contained within the enhanced partnership as this was a legally binding agreement under which delivery of stipulated schemes would then become mandatory. Every effort will be made to ensure that LCC is not exposed to financial risk.
- In relation to the electric buses scheme trial for which Boston and Grantham had been identified during the course of the feedback received from operators and District Councils. These areas were indicative rather than definitive and other areas were also being considered. Assurance was given that the areas were being reviewed based on a number of factors, such as the number of vehicles and services operated in the area plus the associated charging infrastructure requirements.

- In terms of the impact of the plan on crime and disorder (Section 17) a member emphasised that it should be acknowledged in the report that the agreement would have had a positive impact on Section 17 in terms of reduced crime and disorder as individuals would be encouraged to not *drink and drive* and also, young people would be better connected with areas they wished to visit reducing thus the antisocial behaviour exhibited in some areas.

#### d) Risks and Impact Analysis

The risks of not preparing a BSIP and implementing an EPS are greater for LCC than in preparing one.

### 7. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	TIMELINE CREATION OF LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ENHANCED BUS PARTNERSHIP

### 8. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Bus Back Better: National Strategy for England	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better</a>

This report was written by Anita Ruffle, who can be contacted on 01522 553147 or [anita.ruffle@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:anita.ruffle@lincolnshire.gov.uk).