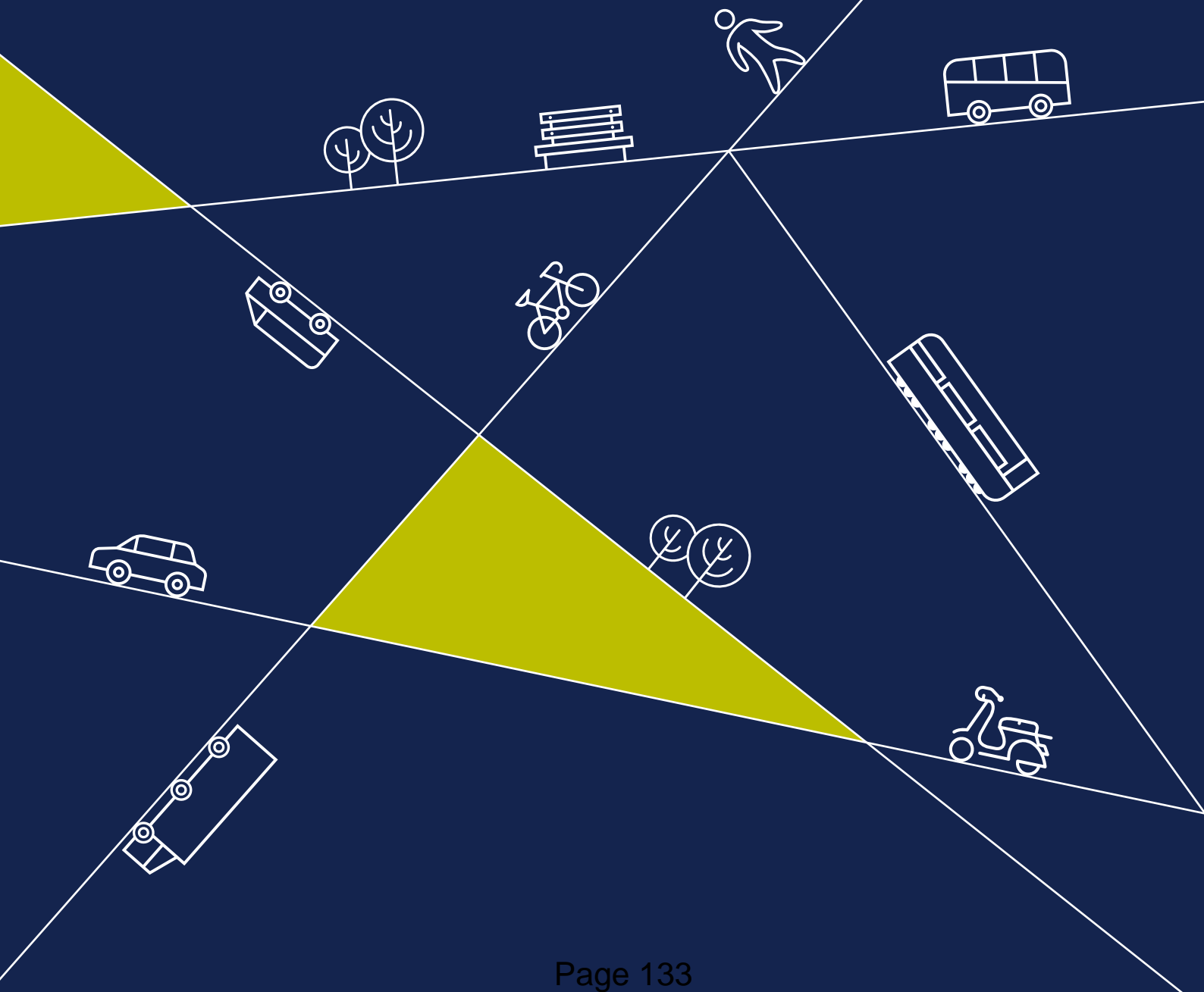


Lincolnshire Local Bus Strategy



Strategy overview

This strategy builds on previous work carried out on behalf of the county council, including:

- A consideration of the impacts of COVID-19 on the bus industry and how COVID-19 could influence bus policy nationally and across Lincolnshire in during the term of LTP 5.
- An appraisal of local transport strategies across the county and nationally.
- A review of the Bus Services Act 2017 to understand the powers that the Council has to deliver bus services.
- An assessment of mobility aspirations in Lincolnshire.

This strategy initially considers the current passenger offer, examining existing bus services, networks and operators. It then examines the challenges faced by operators and the county council in providing bus services in Lincolnshire. The next step is to document the core strategic objectives and start to identify areas for intervention to enhance the bus offer and the sustainability of bus provision. Interventions and schemes are then identified and appraised before measurable outcomes are identified to assess the success (or otherwise) of this bus strategy in meeting the Council's strategic objectives.

The current bus offer

This section considers the current bus offer across Lincolnshire before examining bus usage and the demand for bus travel. This provides the context against which this Lincolnshire Bus Strategy can overcome the challenges faced and transform rural mobility and connect all areas of the county to jobs, education, health and leisure services.

Bus supply

A key part of the last countywide Bus Strategy in Lincolnshire was to develop a clear hierarchical structure for local bus services to meet the differing needs of users in different areas. This has led to the following structure that remains in place today:

- Commercial urban bus services.
- Supported urban bus services – including into town services which were provided with initial support to encourage them to become commercially viable over time.
- Interconnect (interurban) services to create a frequent (hourly) service between all towns across the county and to towns and cities near the county's boundaries.
- CallConnect services to provide a dependable service to all rural areas of the county without an alternative service.

Complementing the above services, the county council is responsible for providing transport for different groups – some being statutory responsibilities while others are decisions taken by the Council. Additional services funded by the Council include:

- Home to school transport;
- Special educational needs transport; and,
- Adult social care transport.

When considering home to school transport, the Council aims to support the commercial bus network by encouraging scholars to travel on that network where there are suitable services, with travel funded by the county council. Where there no suitable services, the Council funds dedicated school bus services, many of which are integrated into the commercial bus network before and after providing the school service. This helps to provide an efficient use of vehicles and the cost of supporting the school bus then helps to underpin the commercial viability of services.

There are 276 live local bus service registrations, operated by 29 different operators, as presented in the table below. The largest operator is Lincolnshire Road Car (Stagecoach East Midlands) with 81 registered services, although this underestimates the total number of actual services as some registrations include more than one service, for example, the registration for service 7 between Lincoln and Ermine Estates includes service 8. P C Coaches, Transport Connect and Brylaine Travel all have between 20 and 30 registrations, while F Hunt, Centrebus North, Sleaford Taxi Co and T C Mini coaches have between 10 and 20 local bus registrations. 21 of the 29 operators have 8 or fewer registered services. This highlights that while there is a broad operator base across the county, the majority of registered bus services are provided by a small number of operators.

Operator	Services	Operator	Services
Lincolnshire Road Car	81	Marshall's of Sutton-on-Trent	3
P C Coaches of Lincoln	28	Phil Haines Coaches	3
Transport Connect	26	Gem Mini Travel	2
Brylaine Travel	24	GHP Trading	2
Sleaford Taxi Co	17	Kettlewell (Retford)	2
Centrebus North	16	Robert Dent & Linda Horstwood	2
F Hunt	13	Travel Wright	2
T C Mini Coaches	11	Amvale	1
Delaine Buses	8	Eyms	1
Grayscroft	8	GDS 2016	1
Mark Bland Travel	5	Mark James Curley	1
W H Fowler & Sons	5	Nigel Dickson & Julie Overton	1
Cambus	4	Stuart & Jane Oakland	1
National Express	4	Vectare	1
Go West Travel	3		

Of these registrations:

- 77 receive de minimis support from the county council to a total annual value of approximately £1.2 million.
- 45 local bus services are tendered by the county council, with an annual cost of approximately £1.3 million – some of these are tendered school services.
- 26 services are CallConnect contracts, with an annual cost of £2.9 million.

Interconnect

The following services are designated Inter Connect services providing connections between the urban areas of Lincolnshire:

- 1 Grantham – Lincoln (Stagecoach)
- 37 Peterborough – Spalding (Stagecoach)
- 51 Grimsby – Louth (Stagecoach)
- 53 Grimsby – Lincoln (Stagecoach)
- 56 Lincoln – Skegness (Stagecoach)
- 57 Skegness – Spalding (Stagecoach)
- 59 Mablethorpe – Skegness (Stagecoach)
- 100 Lincoln – Scunthorpe (Stagecoach)
- 505 Kings Lynn – Spalding (Stagecoach)
- IC5 Boston – Lincoln (Brylaine)
- IC7 Boston – Skegness (Brylaine)
- X57 Skegness – Boston (Stagecoach)

While not branded as an Interconnect service, Delaine Buses operates interurban services between Bourne and Peterborough with 30-minute headways on service 101, and between Bourne, Spalding and Stamford at hourly headways.

Within the 2006 Bus Strategy, the target for interconnect services was to provide a minimum of an hourly service between the towns of Lincolnshire. At the time of writing, all of these services are being operated at a maximum of 60-minute headways, although morning, evening and weekend service provision can vary.

Headways on Interconnect services have typically deteriorated over recent years as operators have reduced service frequencies. Service 51, for example, previously operated at 30-minute headways, but reverted to hourly headways in 2012. Equally, Service 505 between Kings Lynn and Spalding operated at 30-minute headways when operated by Norfolk Green, but has again been downgraded to an hourly frequency service in the past few years.

Into Town

There are Into Town services in the following towns towards the south of the county:

- Grantham (Centrebus) – 2 services typically operating at 30-minute headways between 07:00 and 18:00 Monday to Saturday (at the time of writing in February 2021).
- Spalding (Brylaine) – 2 services operating between 07:45am and 17:30pm Monday to Saturday.
- Sleaford (Sleafordian) – 3 services that operate on an hourly headway between 09:00 and 13:00 Monday to Saturday.
- Boston (Brylaine) – 4 services (IT1, IT2, IT5, IT6) operating on an hourly headway between 08:00 and 17:30 Monday to Saturday.

In addition, the Louth Nipper (P C Coaches) service provides a similar level of service to Into Town in and around Louth with one service operating at hourly headways between 07:00 and 17:45. Of these five services, three continue to receive support from the county council.

CallConnect

There are 39 CallConnect services providing access to essential goods and services for all those living in rural Lincolnshire without access to other local bus services. The whole of Lincolnshire is served by CallConnect, except for the City of Lincoln which has sufficient coverage of local bus services to provide local residents with the access they require to essential goods and services.

Geographic provision

Lincolnshire is wholly covered by local bus service provision, as illustrated below. Urban, Into Town and Interconnect services provide comprehensive coverage across the county within and between the larger settlements. Away from these fixed route bus services, CallConnect provides a local bus service for residents that require a service to be able to access essential goods and services. In summary, the local bus offer provides a minimum level of local bus provision to all Lincolnshire residents.

Temporal provision

While the geographic coverage of bus services is complete, the hours and days that local bus services operate is key to whether there are services at the times people want to use them. In Lincolnshire, the temporal provision of bus services can vary greatly, and varies by service and by operator. The following analysis was carried out in February 2020 before any COVID-19 travel restrictions were lifted, thus some timetables may reflect winter service levels as opposed to summer levels (impacting on Skegness and the east-coast towns more than others), while COVID-19 timetables may also reflect lower service levels on some services.

Within urban areas, bus services typically operate longer hours and over more days of the week. As shown in the following table, services in Lincoln, Skegness and Grantham have frequent services of half hourly or better, particularly in Lincoln. These services operate every day of the week in Lincoln, although Sunday frequencies are reduced for most services, while outside of Lincoln urban services do not typically operate on Sundays. Urban services in Lincoln operate into the evening, with the last buses departing Lincoln on services 6, 9 and 15/16 being after 21:00. Outside of Lincoln, the last service of the day is before 18:00 during weekdays.

Interurban services, most of which operate in Lincolnshire under the Interconnect brand, typically operate at hourly headways. All services commence before 0800 during weekdays (except the IC7) while there is a mixed picture during evenings. The last departure on service 56 between Lincoln and Skegness is later in the evening (21:00) but for most other services, the last service of the day is before 19:00.

Away from fixed route bus services, CallConnect services operate from 07:00 until 19:00, six days a week.

Selection of core bus services in Lincolnshire

Operator	Description	Services	Headway	Start	Finish	Days
Stagecoach	Lincoln – Leadenham	1	30 mins	05:20	18:15	7
Stagecoach	Lincoln – Branston	2	30 mins	06:45	18:45	7
Stagecoach	Lincoln – Birchwood & county Hospital	6 / X6	10 mins	05:20	21:30	7
Stagecoach	Lincoln – Birchwood	9	20 mins	05:40	21:00	7
Stagecoach	Lincoln – North Hykeham	15 / 16	10 mins	05:50	21:30	7
Stagecoach	Lincoln – Louth	50	2 hours	05:55	17:15	6
Stagecoach	Lincoln – Market Rasen	53	1 hour	06:40	18:20	6
Stagecoach	Lincoln – Skegness	56	1 hour	06:00	21:00	6
Stagecoach	Lincoln – Gainsborough	100	1 hour	07:35	18:05	6
Stagecoach	Louth – Grimsby	51	1 hour	05:50	18:15	6
Stagecoach	Skegness – Chapel	1 / 3	30 mins	06:25	19:05	7
Stagecoach	Skegness – Boston	57	1 hour	06:20	18:15	6
Brylaine Travel	Lincoln – Boston	IC5	1 hour	07:50	18:00	6
Brylaine Travel	Boston – Skegness	IC7	1 hour	09:10	16:40	6
Brylaine Travel	Spalding Town	IT1 / IT2	1 hour	07:45	15:00	6
Brylaine Travel	Boston Town	IT1 – IT6	1 hour	08:04	17:04	6
Delaine Buses	Bourne – Peterborough	101 / 102	30 mins	06:10	19:30	7
Delaine Buses	Spalding – Stamford	301 / 302	1 hour	07:35	17:15	7
Centrebus	Grantham – Alma Park	1	30 mins	06:25	18:05	6
Centrebus	Grantham – Earlsfield	1	30 mins	07:00	17:35	6
Centrebus	Grantham – Barrowby Gate	3	1 hour	08:00	17:45	5
P C Coaches	Lincoln – Saxilby	777	6 svcs/day	06:45	17:45	6
Hunts Coaches	Skegness – Alford	7	6 svcs/day	06:45	16:05	6

Inter-urban services Urban and suburban services

Bus fleet

The county council does not keep a formal record of the age of all buses plying services across Lincolnshire. However, according to ukbuses.co.uk, the average age of buses operating from Stagecoach East Midlands' Lincolnshire depots (Lincoln, Gainsborough, Long Sutton and Skegness) is between 13 and 13.5 years. The average age of buses operated by Brylaine Travel, according to Bus Times.org, is around 16 years per bus, while Delaine Buses has an average fleet age of between 10 and 11 years across all of its current registered buses, according to its own website. Across the three operators, which account for more than 75% of all local bus mileage in Lincolnshire, the average age of buses in service at the current time is between 13 and 14 years.

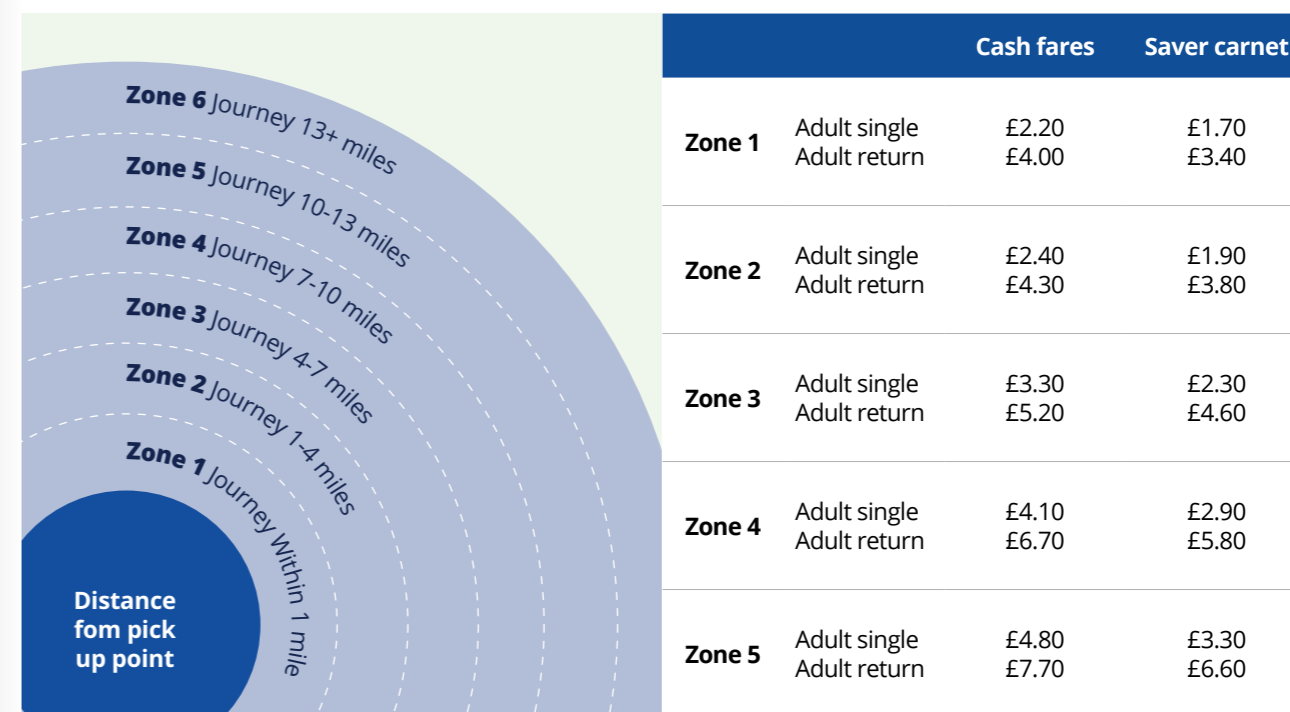
In 2019/20, the average age of the bus fleet in England was 8.8 years old¹. Therefore, the bus fleet in Lincolnshire is significantly older than buses used elsewhere in the country. This is likely to contribute to higher levels of CO₂ emissions from the bus fleet directly, while older buses may also contribute to poor air quality in some parts of the county.

Bus fares

As much of the fixed route bus network is commercial or supported through a minimum subsidy tender, operators have full control over control bus fares and products. Fares scales for all operators are graduated, so passengers are charged a higher fare the longer distance they travel. All local bus operators offer single and return tickets, while day, carnet and longer period tickets are typically offered by only the 'largest' operators. All operators typically have fare products for adults and children, while have their own commercial scholar products.

In the case of CallConnect services, the county council determines the price of fares using a distance-based zonal structure. Cash single fares range from £2.20 (2021 prices) to £4.80 for a journey between 10 and 13 miles. Discounts are offered for those purchasing a return ticket – typically between 21% and 30% compared to the equivalent cash fare - while a further discount is offered to those willing to purchase a 10-trip carnet product. This latter discount ranges from 11% to 15% when compared to the equivalent cash fare.

CallConnect Fare Zones (at February 2021)



While operators have their own fare products, there are few examples of integrated fares across multiple operators. When using CallConnect, passengers can connect onto commercial services using the ticket purchased on CallConnect, and vice versa. This arrangement is a 'knock for knock' agreement where there is an acceptance of tickets on CallConnect and other local bus services but no exchange of fare revenue between operators. Other than CallConnect, all fare products provided by operators are for those individual operator's services only, and there are no integrated fares or multi-operator ticketing schemes in place at the present time.

The price of bus travel to the passenger is an important contributory factor to bus use across the county. The county council does not retain historic fares data for Lincolnshire bus operators, but it does retain the average bus fare across all operators that are part of the Lincolnshire English National Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Change in average ENCTS scheme bus fares in Lincolnshire

Year	Scheme avg.fare	Change	CPT cost index	RPI
2012/13	£1.727			
2013/14	£1.790	3.6%	2.2%	3.0%
2014/15	£2.084	20.7%	4.9%	5.5%
2015/16	£2.105	21.9%	5.8%	6.5%
2016/17	£2.162	25.2%	5.8%	8.4%
2017/18	£2.294	32.8%	8.0%	12.3%
2018/19	£2.379	37.8%	11.4%	16.0%
2019/20	£2.460	42.5%	15.8%	19.0%

The table below shows the average fare for the Lincolnshire ENCT scheme since 2012/13. This shows that fares increased by approximately 42.5% between 2012/13 and 2019/20. During this same period, RPI increased by approximately 19% while operating costs for bus operators in 'the Midlands' increased by 15.8% according to the Confederation of Passenger Transport.

It appears that bus fares have increased by more than inflation and by more than operating costs, although Lincolnshire may not be typical of the broader 'Midlands' region which may include numerous large urban areas where operating costs may be substantially different. There could be a variety of reasons for the proportional change in bus fares over this period and it is important to explore these reasons in greater detail so that any interventions by the county council can be targeted where they would have the greatest impact.

Bus ticketing

All local bus operators have their own ticket offer, with cash options available on all operator services. Some operators provide their own proprietary smart cards to customers, notably Stagecoach and Brylaine Travel. Mobile ticketing is available on Centrebus and Stagecoach services, while contactless C.EMV options are available across many operators including Delaine Buses, Stagecoach and several others, including on CallConnect services.

Contactless C.EMV payment options in Lincolnshire are typically 'model 1' in nature. Model 1 is a single-tap, fixed price pay as you go model for on-bus ticketing, akin to the purchase of a product from a retailer. For the sale of single, return, day or other period tickets, the transaction is carried out once and a paper ticket issued which is used for any subsequent journeys. Model 2 is an aggregated pay as you go model where C.EMV card taps are aggregated at the end of the day per period and the optimal fare is determined. At the present time, this model has not been introduced in the county as there have been technology limitations to allow for graduated fare scales. Technology does now exist to enable a 'tap-in and tap-out' model for bus operators, but none have adopted this technology at the time of writing.

The Lincolnshire ETM loan scheme

During 2020, the county council implemented the 'Lincolnshire ETM loan scheme' that enabled bus operators across the county to acquire modern electronic ticket machines (ETM) and other ticketing equipment through the scheme. The loan scheme, funded by the county council, allows smaller operators who would typically not be able to afford a modern ETM and back office system to acquire this equipment and pay a loan fee each year for a period of five years.

Due to COVID-19, the loan scheme did not initially intend to include C.EMV readers on the ETMs, but due to the need to minimise cash handling, the loan scheme was enhanced to allow operators to acquire C.EMV readers through the scheme. At the time of writing, three bus operators have acquired ETMs and offer C.EMV payments, while many more are in the process of signing up to the scheme.

Bus demand

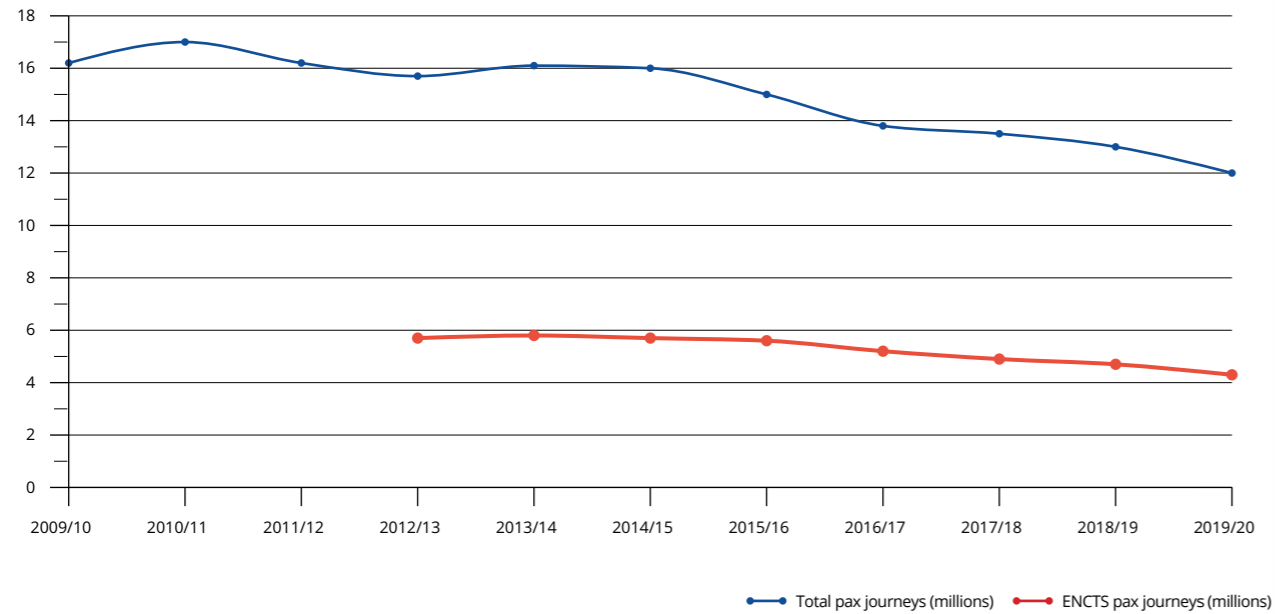
As discussed, Lincolnshire has had in place a structured local bus network for more than a decade. During this time, passenger journeys have been typically in decline. Between 2010/11 and 2019/20, total bus passenger numbers in Lincolnshire declined by 28.8%. Much of that decline occurred between 2013/14 and 2019/20 as total bus passenger journeys reduced from 16.09 million to 12.03 million journeys. At the same time, concessionary passenger trips declined by 20.6%, suggesting that there has been a greater reduction in local bus use amongst commercial and other non-concessionary passengers.

ENCTS passengers account for around 37.5% of all passengers using local bus services. This highlights the importance of concessionary reimbursement to operator revenues, and appears to substantiate operator claims in recent years that concessionary reimbursement underpins the commercial network across the county.

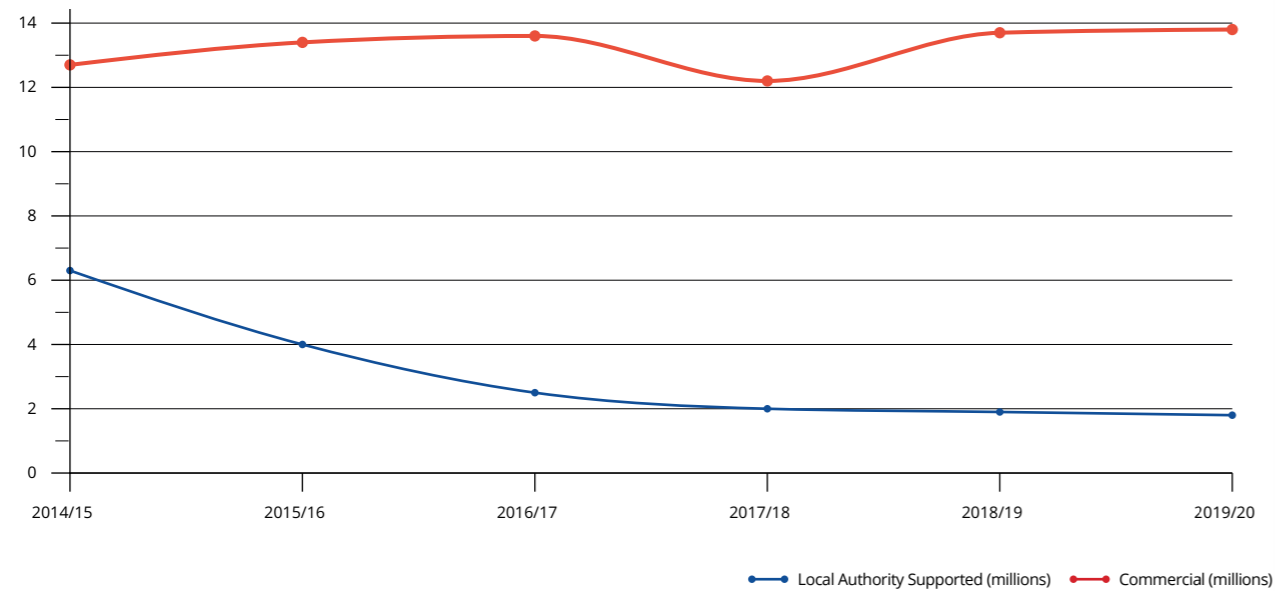
Comparing passenger numbers to changes in bus mileage help to explain why there are fewer passengers on bus services across the county. Since 2014/15, local authority funded kilometrage in Lincolnshire has declined around 70% from nearly 6.5 million km to 1.92 million km per year. Compared to the wider East Midlands, bus kilometrage reduced by 57% compared to 70% in Lincolnshire. During the same period, commercial kilometrage in Lincolnshire increased from 12.7 million km to 13.67 million km while total local bus kilometrage reduced by 18.7%. During this time, total passenger numbers declined 24.6% suggesting that the reductions in mileage have had a disproportionately negative impact on bus patronage.

Bus user satisfaction was last surveyed in Lincolnshire in 2018. 89% of customers were satisfied with the overall journey, compared to 88% nationally. Considering fare payers only however, the overall journey satisfaction rating was 85% compared to 85% nationally amongst fare payers. However, beneath those headline statistics are additional metrics that provide greater detail of passenger opinions. Journey times in Lincolnshire are rated at 88% compared to 85% nationally, while punctuality (71%) is below the national average of 74% and value for money in Lincolnshire is 56% compared to 64% nationally. This suggests that punctuality and value for money are two areas that Lincolnshire bus operators could improve upon compared to other parts of England.

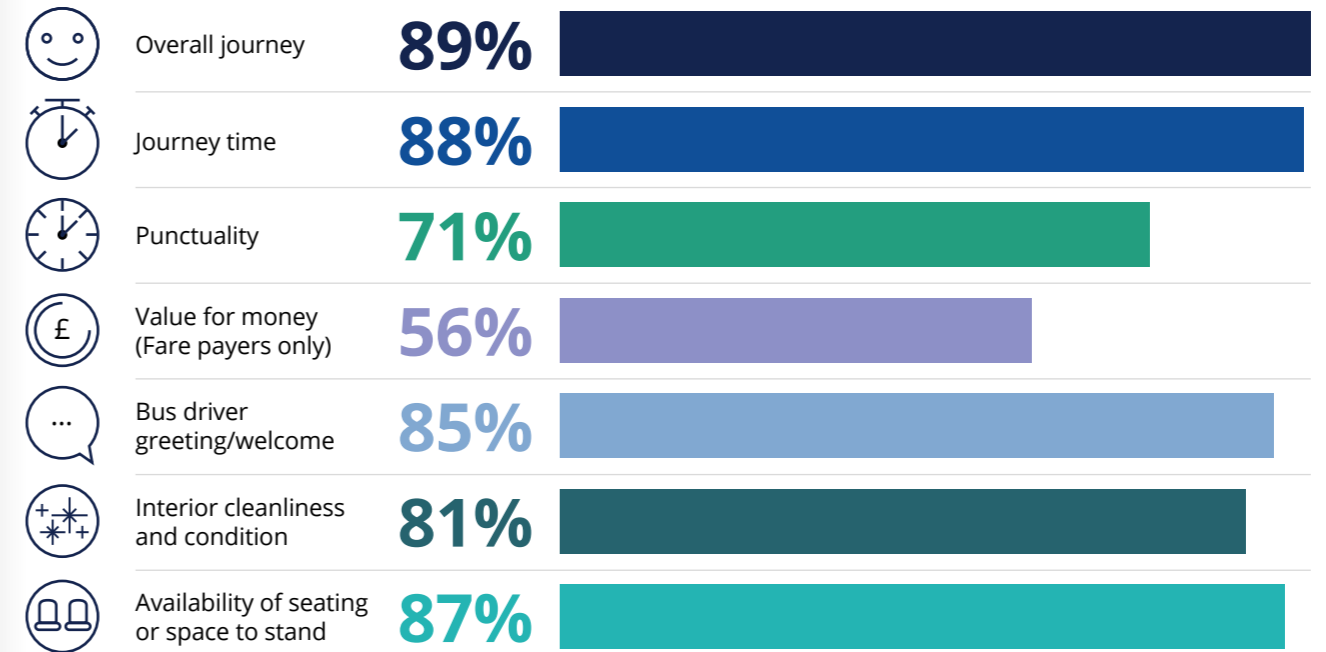
Local bus passenger journeys in Lincolnshire



Live kilometres travelled by commercial and local authority supported services



Extract from Passenger Focus 2018 Bus Passenger Survey



Country: England (excludes London) Local Transport Authority area: Lincolnshire Year: 2018

Consideration

Despite the deregulated local bus market, the county council plays a fundamental role in the planning and delivery of local bus services across the county. The 2006 Bus Strategy developed a formal hierarchical structure to local bus services with urban, interurban and CallConnect services ensuring every Lincolnshire resident can be mobile and have access to essential goods and services.

Where viable and safe, the council provides free travel for eligible scholars on the commercial network, and where this is not possible the council provides dedicated school bus services – the cost of which is significant. Alongside this direct support, the council also funds the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme which accounts for around one third of all trips made on the local bus network.

The council's policy to take on the financial risk of CallConnect services provides a minimum level of mobility for all, overcoming the challenge of the rural nature of much of the county. Alongside CallConnect, the council also supports the local bus network directly through minimum subsidy contracts, home to school, special educational needs and adult social care contracts.

The provision of local bus services varies across the county. Lincoln has a reasonable supply of morning, evening and weekend bus services, but outside of Lincoln there are few early morning, evening and Sunday services. In rural areas, local bus services are often provided to fit around school services, suggesting an efficient use of vehicles, but shows that the contracts provided by the Council for school services underpin the commerciality of large swathes of the local bus network.

Lincolnshire has a broad range of local bus and school bus operators, with a good geographic spread of operators across the county. This is healthy for competition for tendered services whilst it prevents monopolistic behaviour that is present in other local authority areas where there are a small number of operators. It is essential that Lincolnshire maintains this broad spread of operators for the future health of bus service provision.

There is no formal integrated ticketing in Lincolnshire and very few integrated fares. Only CallConnect tickets enable interchange with other bus services on a knock for knock basis and with no apportionment of sharing of revenue. The roll out of 'model 1' contactless payments on most bus operators in Lincolnshire provides a single electronic payment mechanism, but without any integrated fares to provide any form of capping or discounting when travelling on multiple operator services. While demand for multi-operator fare products would likely be low across the county, the lack of integrated multi-operator fare products may be a potential barrier for some users.

Bus fares appear to have increased by well above inflation and above the change in operating costs. This coincides with a reduction in bus passenger journeys and a reduction in live mileage on supported services. This might suggest that operators have increased fares to compensate for the reduction in patronage and the reduction in financial support provided by the Council, which itself highlights the role that council funding plays in ensuring the provision of local bus services, but also limiting fare increases.

Increasing bus fares, while impacting on fare payers, also has an impact on council budgets. An increase in fares has a direct impact on ENCTS reimbursement and on home to school travel costs (where eligible scholars travel on the commercial network), thus council's budgets come under increased pressure the more fares increase. This in turn makes operator revenues increasingly reliant on council funds.

The most recent user satisfaction surveys in Lincolnshire suggest that both punctuality and value for money are areas that Lincolnshire operators perform poorly compared to elsewhere. This corresponds with the above inflation increase in fares since 2012 and helps to highlight a way forward for this local Bus Strategy to better meet the needs of users.

Overall, it is evident that the council plays an essential role in ensuring the mobility of residents, but the council also plays a fundamental role in financing the local bus network. This highlights the opportunities and risks for the council. The key risk is that operators become increasingly reliant on funding from the council, although this also represents an opportunity to have a greater control over the local bus network and a greater say in how it is managed. Understanding the challenges faced by operators would help to highlight areas that this Bus Strategy could overcome whilst meeting the longer-term aspirations and objectives of the council. This will be considered in the next section.

Challenges of operating buses in Lincolnshire

There are many challenges that face the bus industry in Lincolnshire. This section identifies some of the key issues that this Bus Strategy should consider carefully in order to make the Lincolnshire bus network more attractive, comprehensive and financially sustainable.

Low population density makes practical and affordable public transport difficult to provide in these areas.

– Campaign for Better Transport, 2018

Population density

With a population of approximately 1,082,000 and a land area of 6,975km², Lincolnshire has a population density of around 155 people per km². This is one of the lowest population densities in England, and more sparsely populated than Norfolk, Cornwall and Devon.

As documented by the Campaign for Better Transport in their 2018 publication 'The future of rural bus services in the UK', the challenge with a sparse population and a large area is that buses must travel longer distances and have fewer passengers to transport compared to more densely populated areas. Relative to more densely populated areas, bus operating costs are greater while passenger revenues are reduced.

This in turn results in higher fares that passengers must pay to travel by bus, and therefore the relative cost of bus travel versus alternative modes will be a significant factor in travel choices.

The nature of rural Lincolnshire is that there are many settlements with small populations, and many that are not on direct links between the larger more urban settlements. This means that fixed route local bus services may miss large swathes of people without diverting off main corridors. This reduces the potential customer base which adds more pressure for operators to cover operating costs from those passengers who live along the route and who choose to use the bus. CallConnect DRT services have helped to solve this particular issue as flexible routings are based on passenger demand, but this does not support the core commercial bus network.

A consequence of a commercially challenging operating area is that bus operators typically have little spare revenue to invest in new vehicles. As discussed earlier, the average age of the Lincolnshire bus fleet is between 13 and 14 years old (based on a sample of three of the larger operators in Lincolnshire) which is greater than the average aged bus fleet in non-metropolitan areas of England (8.8 years in 2019/20). With few new vehicles operating in Lincolnshire, there is little investment in low or zero-emission vehicles, while the only incentive to limit vehicle emissions is the requirement to have a minimum of Euro 3 engines for county council contracts.

There are several areas in which the county council can help overcome – or at least mitigate – some of these challenges, including:

Reduce operating costs – Various aspects go into determining operating costs, though two of the more dominant costs incurred are fuel costs and driver costs. Bus drivers are not typically highly paid across Lincolnshire, thus there is little in the way of cost savings that could be made until driverless vehicles become commonplace. There may be opportunities for reducing fuel costs, however, if there is a shift to cheaper sources of power. Biogas is significantly cheaper than diesel, while the cost of electricity per km travelled is cheaper still. These are areas in which this Bus Strategy could help to support the reduction in operating costs and therefore make services more financially viable.

Increase fare revenues – the previous section highlighted that operators have increased fares by more than the increase in both inflation and operating costs over recent years. Thus, operators appear to have sought to make up any lost revenues by increasing fares for existing users. While increasing fares can increase revenues, it is also likely to result in fewer fare payers travelling.

Another way to increase fare revenues is to encourage more fare payers to use existing services. This is not a straight-forward problem to solve as there may be numerous factors that discourage people from using bus services. A key element of this strategy is to examine the potential for an enhanced partnership scheme, and this should identify what interventions and schemes would encourage fare paying passengers to use bus services more frequently.

Increase non-fare revenues

While fare revenues account for a significant proportion of operator revenues, they still account for a minority of overall revenues. Other revenue sources include:

- ENCTS reimbursement;
- Supported bus service payments;
- Scholar tickets funded by the local authority;
- BSOG and uplifts for providing ITSO smart ticketing and AVL technology; and,
- On-bus advertising.

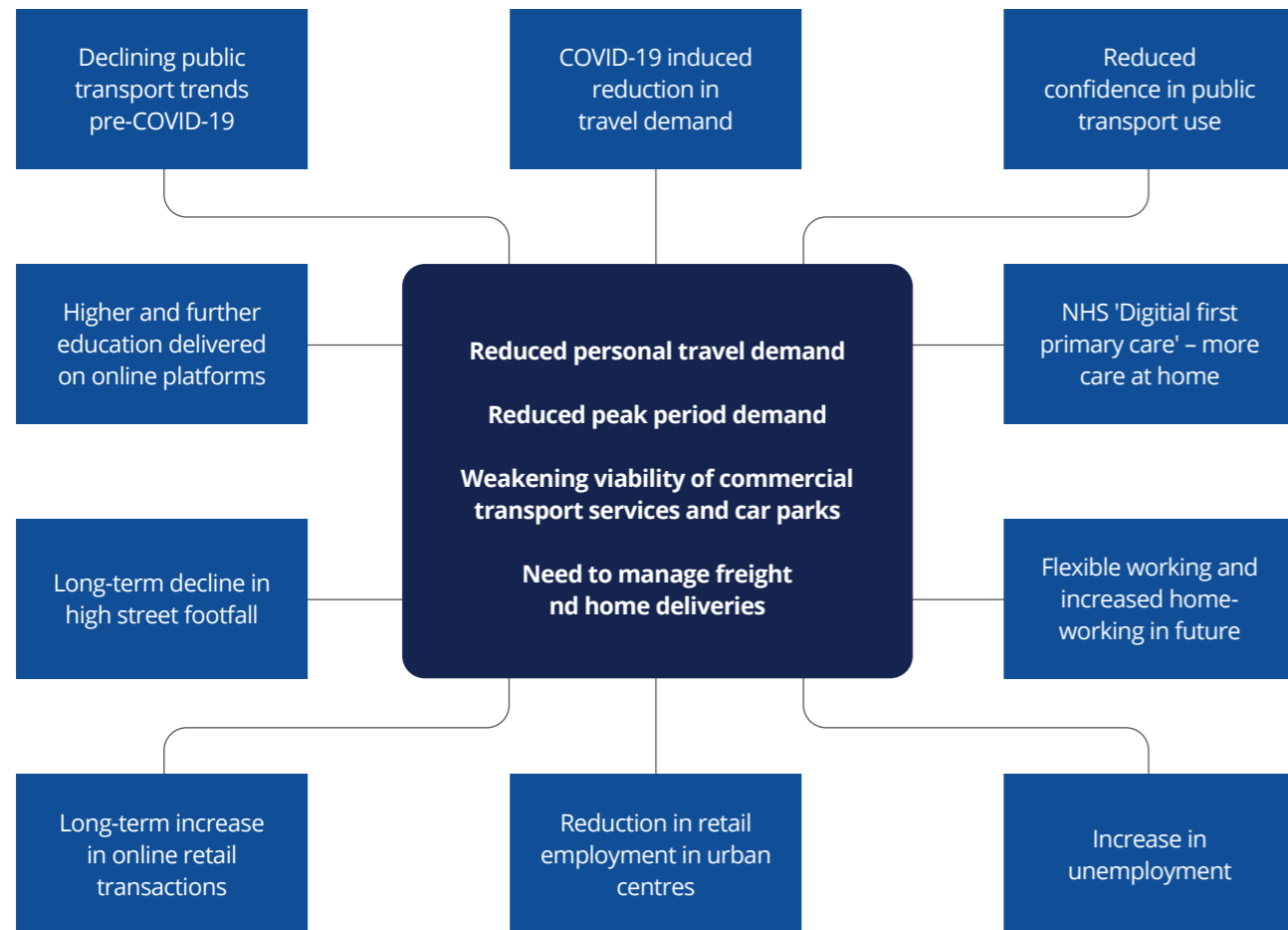
The county council has a direct influence on several of these revenue sources, although simply increasing revenue from the local authority isn't a long-term viable solution. However, there may be the potential for other sources of revenue and these should be explored further. For example, Vehicle-to-Grid services for electric vehicles in one such source of revenue, where electric bus batteries can be used to store excess energy at times of high-supply, or donate energy back to the National Grid at times of high-demand. This is an approach that has been adopted in London across several depots and also at Coventry as part of an Electric Bus Town project. National Grid pays the owners of the battery storage a fee for providing energy or storage, thus potentially generating additional revenues for operators.

Overall, the population density of Lincolnshire and the disparate nature of settlements makes commercially viable bus services very difficult to operate. Such services therefore require additional revenue sources other than on-bus fares in order to make them viable. This strategy focusses on how to reduce operating costs as well as increasing operator revenues to support the long-term self-sustainability of services and meet the council's broader objectives.

COVID-19

The Council has carried out an in-depth review of the short- and medium-term impacts of COVID-19. This identified a variety of unrelated factors that have, or are likely to, impact on bus patronage in the coming years – as presented below. The outcome of the numerous factors on the operating of bus services is that there is likely to be reduced personal travel demand and reduced peak-period demand, thus weakening the commercial viability of bus services.

Illustration of changes to travel demand and likely impacts



The county council has supported local bus operators both financially and operationally throughout the period impacted by COVID-19. Since March 2020, it has amongst other things:

- Maintained ENCTS reimbursement payments at pre-COVID-19 levels;
- Maintained supported bus contract payments;
- Provided CBSSG revenue for lost on-bus revenue on supported bus services; and,
- Supported emergency bus registration changes.

While this council support has overcome some of the short-term challenges, overcoming the longer-term challenges of COVID-19 requires a co-ordinated recovery strategy. An agreed strategy between bus operators, the county council and National Government should convey a co-ordinated message that buses are safe. Without encouraging people back onto buses, the county council might find rather quickly that for those services that are not commercially viable, either they will require additional financial support or operators will choose not to operate those services. As identified in the previous work carried out by the county council, "It is important that the council has a strategy for how it will, or won't, support rural bus services in coming months and years. This will require a plan for what a core network should look like – routings, peak and off-peak frequencies etc – so that decisions can be taken by council officers that provide essential services to meet the needs of residents. It will also need to consider how CallConnect can support the core network and 'fill in any gaps'".

As part of the recovery strategy, the county council should consider what it can do to mitigate any negative effects of changes to bus supply, and careful consideration could be given to the role of Transport Connect – the county council's Teckal company to ensure an essential level of service should market conditions deteriorate. Owning its own transport provider puts the council in a strong position to ensure that competition amongst bus operators is maintained throughout the county and that services can be delivered. At a time when other local authorities are suffering from a reduction in competition amongst operators (notably Cornwall), Lincolnshire can develop a unique solution to maintaining high-levels of mobility and access for its residents.

Beyond the recovery strategy however, there will be a step-change in how bus services are provided in Lincolnshire to ensure their long-term viability and maintain or improve levels of mobility and access to essential goods and services for all residents. This Bus Strategy provides the short-term recovery strategy as well as the medium-term strategy to bring about this step change in local bus provision and patronage.

Congestion in urban areas

While much of Lincolnshire is rural and has no issues with congestion, this is not the case in some of Lincolnshire's more urban areas. In Lincoln, and during the summer in Skegness, traffic congestion becomes a challenge for bus operators to maintain headways, resulting in an increased level of resource i.e. more vehicles and drivers, in order to provide the service in-line with the timetable.

In Lincoln, Stagecoach has previously reported challenges it has with congestion, and these challenges have resulted in additional vehicles being used to maintain a 10-minute headway on services like those serving Birchwood (6, 9 and X6). Post-COVID-19, should there be a shift towards more car travel and away from buses, operators may find congestion is even more of a challenge as it impacts on the punctuality and reliability of bus services, while fare revenues are reduced compared to pre-COVID-19 levels.

There are numerous tools available to the county council to reduce the impact of congestion for bus services, although the main tool is likely to be the provision of effective bus priority measures. In areas where there are known congestion issues, it would be prudent to investigate opportunities to implement bus priority measures to speed up bus journeys and make them more attractive to users. In Lincoln, there is an opportunity to implement bus priority measures at a time when the Eastern by-pass has been completed and the North Hykeham relief road is under construction to provide a complete ring road around the city. As cars and other road users are shifted towards the orbital route, the reallocation of road space or redefinition of priority measures for buses (and other sustainable modes) become a viable consideration to help the long-term functioning and viability of the city's transport network.

The opportunity for solving the congestion issue for bus operators is that it could reduce operating costs, particularly on high frequency routes. If it is possible to save 10 minutes over an entire round trip on a 10-minute headway service, this would reduce the number of vehicles required to operate the service, and thus reduce the need for a vehicle, fuel and the driver. In terms of prioritising bus priority measures, it would be sensible to focus on those areas where operating costs can be reduced to the greatest extent in order to maximise the value of the infrastructure that is introduced.

Bus priority measures therefore form a key part of this Bus Strategy in order to make buses more attractive relative to private cars and vans.

Regulatory changes

While local buses are provided in a deregulated bus market, there are a variety of regulations that operators must adhere to in order to provide local bus services. In addition to holding a PSV (Public Service Vehicle) licence and registering a local bus service with the Traffic Commissioner, there are other regulatory requirements imposed on bus operators, with two recent or imminent regulatory changes impacting on operators in Lincolnshire.

PSVAR – Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations – requires all local bus operators to provide fully accessible vehicles. This includes coach operators who, by 1st January 2020, should have ensured that their vehicles were fully accessible in order to provide local bus and school services. In Lincolnshire, many operators use coaches for school bus contracts and then re-use those vehicles during the day for private hire or perhaps other local bus services.

These PSVAR regulations have caused challenges for Lincolnshire operators and have required them to look to invest in new vehicles. COVID-19 hit at the point in which these decisions needed to be taken which provided some respite, but the need to provide PSVAR compliant vehicles for all local bus services including school bus services where members of the public can travel remains in place. The challenge for the county council is that operators who provide these services are typically small and operate on low profit margins. They often lack the ability to invest in new, PSVAR compliant vehicles. Should PSVAR or other regulations require this investment, some operators

may choose to no longer operate. This could reduce the pool of suppliers in the county – or in certain parts of the county – and could then result in higher tender prices due to reduced competition in future.

A further regulatory change introduced in the Bus Services Act 2017 included 'Bus Open Data'. This requires all local bus operators to provide open, accurate and up-to-date data relating to timetables, fares and vehicle location to populate real-time systems. Operators were required to provide timetable data from the 31st December 2020, while vehicle location and basic fares data was to be provided by 7th January 2021. By 7th January 2023, operators will be required to provide complex fares and ticket data to the Bus Open Data Service so that technology providers can use it to create comprehensive tools to share bus information with members of the public.

The challenge for Lincolnshire operators is that many of the smaller operators did not have electronic ticket machines that provide an automatic vehicle location, while many also required support with compiling the data requirements on timetables and fares. The county council has supported operators through this process and will continue to support operators to ensure that they are compliant. It has also introduced the ETM Loan Scheme so that all operators have access to state-of-the-art ETMs to enable this data to be shared with the open data systems. While the council has attempted to mitigate the negative impacts on smaller operators, it is an area of regulation that requires operators to do more at a time when the commercial environment is challenging and patronage in general decline.

There are other challenges that bus operators in Lincolnshire face. One such challenge is the growth in new residential developments and the need to serve those areas sufficiently early in their construction to encourage sustainable travel choices and not simply focus on providing for cars. While the county council is the highways authority and the transport authority, it is not the planning authority, so planning for and implementing mitigating measures in new housing developments requires a co-ordinated approach between the two tiers of local government. This Bus Strategy identifies areas in which Section 106 monies and other developer contributions should be allocated to support bus services in the medium- and long-term.

Overall, there are challenges that bus operators face every day to provide commercially sustainable bus services and mobility for residents. COVID-19 has had a seismic impact on the bus industry and Local and National Government support has maintained a core level of bus provision, but to ensure these services remain, it is essential that this Bus Strategy incorporates a recovery strategy and a long-term plan to ensure the long-term viability of local bus services across the county.

The National Bus Strategy

In March 2021, the Government launched 'Bus Back Better – a National Bus Strategy for England outside of London. It is important that this Lincolnshire Bus Strategy aligns and supports the national strategy as it is likely that future funding streams will be linked to meeting National Government objectives, and failure to work towards these objectives could leave the county council with reduced levels of funding with which to deliver transport services and maintain high-levels of mobility and access across the county. This section provides an overview of the National Bus Strategy and considers how the Lincolnshire Bus Strategy will incorporate the elements contained within the national strategy.

Overview

The National Bus Strategy seeks to arrest the 'cycle of decline' in local bus services. In doing so, it highlights where collaboration between local authorities and bus operators has achieved success and intends for these examples of success to be replicated nationwide. The intention of the strategy is to invest £3 billion in:

- Supporting new and increased services – with at least £300 million of funding to support the sector recover from the pandemic in 2021/22.
- Giving LTAs the skills and people they need to deliver this strategy – with £25 million of the £300 million allocated in 2021/22.
- Bus priority schemes to speed up journeys – with the first schemes delivered in 2021/22.
- Accelerating the delivery of zero-emission buses with £120 million in 2021/22.

The Government's goal is to "get bus use back to what it was before the pandemic. Then we want to increase patronage and raise buses' mode share. We can only do these things by ensuring that buses are an attractive alternative to the car for far more people". To achieve this, the aim is to make services:

- More frequent;
- Faster and more reliable;
- Cheaper;
- More comprehensive;
- Easier to understand;
- Better integrated with other modes and each other;
- Easier to use;
- Better to ride in;
- Greener;
- Accessible and inclusive;
- Innovative; and,
- Be seen as safe.

The Bus Back Better strategy makes it clear that any future funding for local authorities or for operators through the Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) is linked to authorities having implemented either an Enhanced Partnership Scheme or a Franchising Scheme.

"From 1 July 2021, CBSSG and any successor funding to it; funding to transform services as outlined in this Strategy; and potentially, subject to consultation on wider reform, the reformed Bus Service Operators Grant, will only be available to LTAs, outside of London, who have committed to entering into Enhanced Partnerships or started the statutory process of franchising services, and to operators who co-operate with the process. From April 2022, only LTAs with an Enhanced Partnership... will be able to access the new discretionary streams of the Government bus funding".

From April 2022 onwards, any new forms of bus funding from the Government will only be available to services operated, or measures taken, under an Enhanced Partnership or where a franchising scheme has been made. By the end of October 2021, the Government expects all local authorities to publish a Local BSIP. These plans must set out how authorities and operators will use their Enhanced Partnership or Franchising Scheme to deliver an ambitious vision for travelling by bus and driven by what passengers and would-be passengers want in their area.

The reform of BSOG is another strand to the strategy. Part of this strategy, although it is subject to further consultation, is to devolve the administration of BSOG to those Local authorities who want to take on that responsibility. This devolution would be subject to authorities agreeing to:

- Be pursuing franchising or an have an Enhanced Partnership in place.
- Commit to improvements in traffic management and bus priority measures.
- Drive forward air quality improvements and other Government priorities.

From July 2021, any funding available for local authorities or bus operators will only be provided if there is a commitment to establishing an Enhanced Partnership. The first aspect of developing an Enhanced Partnership Scheme is to prepare a BSIP, and this should be published by the end of October 2021. BSIPs must be updated annually and reflected in the authority's LTP as well as in other relevant Local Plans such as Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

A BSIP should consist of:

- Targets for journey times and reliability improvements;
- Identify where bus priority measures are needed;
- Set out pressures on the road network, air quality issues and carbon reduction targets which improved bus services could address, and set out actions working with operators to transform the local bus fleet to zero-emission;

- Drive improvements for passengers by:
 - Setting targets for passenger growth and user satisfaction.
- Setting out plans and costs for fares, ticketing and modal integration;
- Considering the impact of roadside infrastructure on passenger safety, security and accessibility;
- Considering how a coherent and integrated network should serve schools, health, social care, employment;
- Taking into account the views of local people; and,
- Committing to a Bus Passenger Charter (BPC) that sets out what passengers can expect from bus operators.

Bus priority is considered a key element to making bus services more attractive and therefore should be a central element of BSIPs. Priority measures should include:

- Permanent and continuous bus lanes;
- Traffic signal priority;
- Bus gates;
- Clear and consistent signage; and,
- Enforcement of traffic restrictions.

Superbus networks are encouraged in areas such as the East Midlands where high frequency and lower fare services are provided. Partnership arrangements must also deliver more comprehensive services, including those which are socially necessary. This includes services to smaller and more isolated places, and more services in the evenings and at weekends. The DfT will provide updated guidance on the role of socially necessary services to include 'economically necessary' services.

Future Government funding will be linked to LTPs. LTPs should set out 'holistic, place-based strategies' for improving bus networks and proposing projects for investment and how objectives will be met. It is therefore essential that this Bus Strategy sets this out clearly.

The strategy includes a 'Green Bus Revolution' and will be linked to the forthcoming Transport Decarbonisation Plan. Zero-emission buses are at the heart of this revolution to not only reduce emissions and improve air quality, but also to make journeys smoother and quieter and reduce operating costs to enable savings to be reinvested in more frequent services and lower fares. As part of this revolution, the Government proposes to:

- Consider all fuel technologies fairly.
- Provide support and incentives for the market to scale up production of zero-emission vehicles.
- Take a place-based approach to investment.
- Expect operators and local authorities to 'play their part'.

Considerations for Lincolnshire

The National Bus Strategy is very clear when it states that future funding from the Government will be based on the implementation of the strategy and achieving the outcomes that the Government is looking to achieve. To that extent, the Lincolnshire Bus Strategy should align closely with the National Bus Strategy.

COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the bus industry, and this requires a concerted and co-ordinated effort across multiple stakeholders to change once travel restrictions are lifted. Post-COVID-19 funding is linked to the development of a Bus Improvement Plan and the implementation of either a Franchising Scheme or an Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS). As Lincolnshire is unlikely to be able to even apply to be in a position to develop a Franchising Scheme, it would be prudent to look to implement an EPS and adopt the Bus Improvement Plan as the Enhanced Partnership Plan (in accordance with the Bus Services Act 2017).

Lincolnshire's Bus Improvement Plan should be ambitious to reflect not only the Government's Bus Strategy, but also Lincolnshire's own aspirations. It should include a comprehensive plan, considering the needs of users, and seek to overcome the challenges faced by buses in different areas across the county. Work on this Bus Improvement Plan should commence immediately and efforts to collaborate with bus operators and other stakeholders should also start immediately.

This plan requires, amongst other things:

- High quality bus priority in those areas that need it most, notably Lincoln, Skegness, Boston and other urban areas.
- Plans for improved services, particularly morning, evening and services to make buses a viable alternative to the private car.
- Plans for how fares can be reduced over time.
- Plans for how ticketing can make bus services more attractive.
- Plans for how emissions will be reduced and air quality improved.

Further detail is required from the Government around how funding will be linked to the development of an EPS, and how recovery funding will be provided to local authorities in coming months. This may influence some short-term actions and the county council must be reactive to the Government policies during that time.

Finally, the DfT is planning to consult on how Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) will be reformed. One of the options is to devolve BSOG to be administered by local authorities, and this may provide an opportunity for the county council to have greater control over the funding of local bus services in future. How this could work and what benefits it could bring to Lincolnshire should be examined and a plan developed to firstly contribute to the DfT's consultation process, but secondly have in place an agreed policy and plan to maximise the benefits of possible BSOG devolution.

Overall, the newly published National Bus Strategy aligns with the council's objectives and confirms the local Bus Strategy set out in this document. That future funding is linked to the delivery of this strategy should ensure that there are sufficient funds to arrest the decline in local bus services and bring about a shift in public perception and bus patronage.

Strategic objectives

Following on from the review of the National Bus Strategy, the development of a Lincolnshire Bus Strategy requires identifying the council's aims and aspirations for public transport and, more specifically, bus travel in Lincolnshire.

Mobility aspirations in Lincolnshire

At the time of writing, Lincolnshire's LTP 5 is being drafted to provide a framework that all future transport policy and investment accords with. The draft themes of LTP 5 and the vision that underpins it are:

- Reducing carbon emissions from within the transport system.
- Economic growth, with transport facilitating that growth.
- Promote thriving environments.
- Supporting safety and security, and a healthy lifestyle.
- Promoting high aspirations.
- Improving the quality of life.

This largely builds on what was contained within the fourth LTP and other transport strategies developed since then. It also highlights the priorities of both Local and National Governments. To add to this, the Lincoln transport strategy provided more detail around some of these aspects. The Lincoln transport strategy aims to provide:

- 'Future-ready travel options that improve access and supports people, businesses and organisations to meet their daily needs'.
- 'An inclusive and collective approach to accessibility and movement across all communities enabling businesses to succeed, carbon emissions to be reduced, new advances in technology to be embraced and will provide an improved quality of life for all'.

- 'A change of focus in movement across the strategy area, with walking and cycling at the heart of the city's movement network – supported by a network of green corridors, multi-occupancy and shared passenger transport options and reductions in traffic. Transport connections to satellite conurbations will be enhanced and the strategic network will be efficient in driving the city's economic growth and prosperity'

These aspirations and visions provide a guide to the development of a new Bus Strategy as part of LTP 5. Based on the above, the aims of a Bus Strategy could be categorised as follows:

Reducing carbon emissions

- Encourage modal shift to public transport and away from the private car.
- Encourage bus operators to reduce CO₂ emissions .
- Embrace new and emerging vehicle, fuel and mobility technologies to encourage more efficient journeys made using low- or zero-emission vehicles.

Economic growth

- Improve bus connectivity throughout Lincolnshire, the East Midlands and beyond.
- Ensure a resilient and reliable bus system for people .
- Support the vitality and integrity of our town centres and rural communities.
- Improve connectivity to jobs, training and employment opportunities.

Thriving environments

- Provide sustainable access to Lincolnshire's environment and heritage.

Supporting safety, security and a healthy lifestyle

- Increase confidence in a safer and more secure bus network.
- Reduce the impacts of air quality and noise.
- Improve the health of our communities through provision for active travel.

Promoting high aspirations

- Improve connectivity and access to employment, education, healthcare and leisure.
- Improve access onto public transport.
- Encourage community participation in shaping and delivering transport services.

Improving quality of life

- Reduce the negative impacts of transport on people's lives.

This categorisation provides some broad and general aims of a Lincolnshire Bus Strategy, and these align with both the draft LTP 5 aims as well as other published strategies in the county. However, these aims are high-level and require further detail before they provide a meaningful framework around which future policy and schemes can be developed. Following the same pattern as above, it is possible to use previous strategies – most notably the Lincoln Transport Strategy as it is the most recent one produced in the county – and the LGA report on the 'Future of Public Transport' to help refine the broad aims above into a series of sub-aims and possible outputs. These are presented in the table below.

Bus implementation plan – Reducing carbon emissions		
Aims	Sub-aims	Outputs
		Fast, frequent services with priority over cars.
		Integration of the network between modes to enable seamless interchange.
		Integration of ticketing and payment between operators and modes – MaaS.
		Consistent branding and marketing and easy access to information.
Encourage modal shift to public transport and away from the private car.	Make bus services more attractive to car users.	Roll out of ultra-low emission vehicles, including charging and refuelling infrastructure.
Encourage bus operators to reduce CO ₂ emissions.	Encourage bus operators to use zero- or ultra-low emission vehicles.	Roll out of ultra-low emission vehicles across the county taking account of costs (and earning potential), performance and emission reductions.
Embrace new and emerging vehicle, fuel and mobility technologies to encourage more efficient journeys made using low- or zero-emission vehicles.	Use the most efficient fuel technology available to fuel the services required in Lincolnshire to minimise CO ₂ emissions.	Develop charging infrastructure and include bus batteries as part of an energy storage facility for the national grid.
	Maximise opportunities for electric vehicles to generate additional revenues through vehicle to grid or data services.	

Bus implementation plan – Economic growth

Policies		Working with
Improve bus connectivity throughout Lincolnshire, the East Midlands and beyond.	Improve connections between bus and rail stations.	Bus routes serving rail stations, providing effective interchange. Bus timetables co-ordinated with rail timetables. Integrated ticketing between modes.
Ensure a resilient and reliable bus system for people.	Ensuring financially sustainable bus services by making them more attractive.	Fast and frequent services with priority over private cars.
Support the vitality and integrity of our town centres and rural communities.	Access to all town centres with direct inter urban, urban and rural bus services.	Effective bus priority in urban areas.

Bus implementation plan – Thriving environments

Policies		Working with
Provide sustainable access to Lincolnshire’s environment and heritage.	Strengthen core bus network, making services more financially sustainable.	Reduce operating costs by minimising journey times in towns, and reducing fuel costs in all areas. Increasing patronage and fare revenues by encouraging greater use of the bus network.

Bus implementation plan – Supporting safety, security and a healthy lifestyle

Policies		Working with
Increase confidence in a safer and more secure bus network.		Newer buses with improved safety features.
Reduce the impacts of air quality and noise.	Encourage bus operators to use zero- or ultra-low emission vehicles.	Roll out of ultra-low emission vehicles, including charging and refuelling infrastructure.
	Modal shift to reduce volume of vehicles.	Fast, frequent and prioritised bus services.
Improve the health of our communities through provision for active travel.	Ensure bus stops are accessible from all local areas.	Raised kerbs, improved bus shelters and waiting environments.

Bus implementation plan – Promoting high aspirations

Policies		Working with
Improve connectivity and access to employment, education, healthcare and leisure.	Make bus services more attractive.	Fast and frequent services with priority over private cars. More efficient routes serving key trip attractors with services at times people need to use them.
	Ensure bus stops are accessible for all.	Raised kerbs, improved bus shelters and waiting environments.
Improve access onto public transport.	Improve awareness of available bus services.	Improved information at bus stops including RTI. Improved information through online services including mobile apps.
	Encourage community participation in shaping and delivering transport services	Development of a partnership model – possible an Enhanced Partnership – to better understand the needs of the community and deliver key mobility improvements

Bus implementation plan – Improving quality of life

Policies		Working with
Reduce the negative impacts of transport on people’s lives.	Reduce congestion.	Improved bus services in urban areas with effective bus priority.
	Improve air quality, reduce CO ₂ emissions.	Roll out of ultra-low emission vehicles, including charging and refuelling infrastructure. Encourage modal shift – improve bus services.
	Reduce social inequality.	Ensuring equal access to employment opportunities, education and essential goods and services through a comprehensive and reliable public transport network.

The tables provide an overview of the aims, sub-aims and the possible outputs from a Bus Strategy. From this, it is possible to see some consistent outputs around which a Bus Strategy can be structured with realistic deliverables identified. These consistent outputs include:

- Ensuring there are fast and frequent bus services across the county.
- Effective priority for buses over cars and other vehicles.
- Integrated services to enable interchange between modes.
- New low-emission vehicles and associated charging and fuelling infrastructure.
- Improved connectivity to key trip attractors.
- Improved bus stop infrastructure and real-time information.
- Integrated ticketing and branding.

All of these outputs are consistent with the National Bus Strategy, and all should be incorporated within the Lincolnshire Bus Strategy. In doing so, delivering these outputs within an Enhanced Partnership which brings together operators, the county council, other local authorities, the LEP and other stakeholders would be the most effective way of attracting Government funding and having the best chance of delivering the strategy. An Enhanced Partnership Scheme could provide the robust framework around which all partners can contribute with the consistent target of achieving these aims, objectives and outputs. In doing so, residents would benefit from improved services, operators would benefit financially through increased farebox revenues and potentially reduced operating costs while the authority could benefit through reduced supported bus costs, reduced congestion, CO₂ emissions and improved air quality. It is the detail around what measures and schemes could achieve these outputs that should be contained within the Enhanced Partnership and documented within the new Lincolnshire Bus Strategy.

Lincolnshire Bus Strategy

This strategy has, so far, presented an overview of local bus supply and demand and documented many of the challenges faced by bus operators and the county council in operating bus services and managing the network. It has also reviewed the National Bus Strategy published in March 2021 and provided an assessment of the various aims and aspirations of the county council as published in other strategies. These sections provide a clear steer to what this Bus Strategy should look to achieve and how to achieve it.

The structure of this strategy is to firstly identify the key objectives that the strategy seeks to achieve, followed by how these will be achieved.

Overarching objectives

This document, and supporting documents, have highlighted many areas where Lincolnshire has performed well in terms of local bus provision. These areas include:

- Having in place a coherent and structured classification of local bus services, including urban, interurban and rural services to ensure a minimal level of mobility for all residents.
- Having a large pool of bus operators, geographically dispersed across the county, providing competition for local authority tenders, amongst other things.
- Supporting local bus operators when it is necessary to do so. Examples include the ETM loan scheme, support to meet Open Bus Data requirements, continuation of ENCTS reimbursement payments, CBSSG on supported services and supported bus payments.

It is imperative that these areas of good practice are maintained and even strengthened so that any new policies and interventions can build on this strong foundation. The two preliminary objectives are to:

- Maintain and strengthen the coherent hierarchical structure of the bus network to provide an improved minimum level of mobility for everyone in Lincolnshire.
- Maintain the broad supply of bus operators to maintain competition.

In addition to these, it is evident from the discussion in this document that in order to ensure the long-term viability of local bus services in Lincolnshire, there needs to be a fundamental shift in how bus services are operated and how they are used by the public. As highlighted in Chapter 5 (Strategic Objectives), there are numerous aims and objectives that this strategy should target. These are:

- Encourage modal shift from car to bus.
- Reduce the impact of bus operations on the environment - reducing CO₂ emissions and reducing the impact of bus services on poor air quality.
- Embrace new and emerging vehicle, fuel and mobility technologies to encourage more efficient journeys made using low- or zero-emission vehicles.
- Improve bus connectivity throughout Lincolnshire, the East Midlands and beyond.
- Ensure a resilient and reliable bus system for people.
- Support the vitality and integrity of our town centres and rural communities.
- Improve connectivity to jobs and employment opportunities.
- Provide sustainable access to Lincolnshire's environment and heritage.
- Increase confidence in a safer and more secure bus network.
- Reduce the impacts of air quality and noise.
- Improve the health of our communities through provision for active travel.
- Encourage community participation in shaping and delivering transport services.
- Reduce the negative impacts of transport on people's lives.

The National Bus Strategy aligns with almost all of the objectives, thus, by achieving these local objectives, the National Strategy will also be implemented. The next step is to identify how these objectives will be met and what interventions will be targeted.

Our connected county – vision and case study

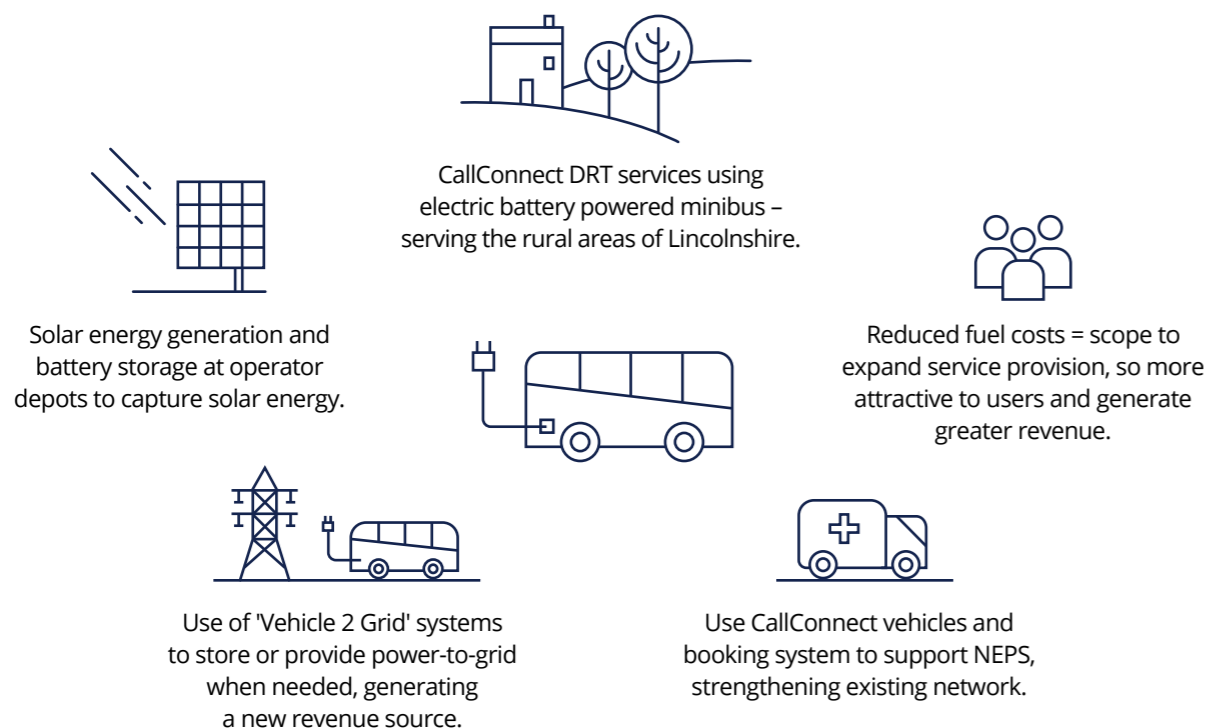
Lincolnshire will be a well-connected county, providing efficient and effective mobility services for all. Getting around rural parts of the county and accessing essential goods and services on offer in both rural and urban areas will not only be possible, but an attractive option for those without access to a car. Incorporating our CallConnect services with a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) offer will ease access to our mobility network. We will level-up our rural communities so that they are fully connected and integrated into the Lincolnshire economy and to those of neighbouring areas.

Our transport network will be provided with a minimal impact on the environment. With zero tailpipe emissions, adopting new and emerging technologies to meet our needs, services will also be operated at a reduced cost due to cheaper fuels, enabling an enhancement in the customer offer and generating additional revenues to make services self-sustaining.

We want CallConnect operators to provide frequent rural services covering the rural areas of the county, using electric battery powered vehicles, powered by energy captured and stored from solar panels on the roof of depot buildings – benefitting from Lincolnshire being one of the sunniest and driest counties in the UK. Using electric battery powered vehicles alongside generating much of the vehicle's energy needs will help to reduce operating costs, enabling services to operate longer hours with little increase in costs, making services more attractive for greater numbers of people and generating greater revenues.

The CallConnect vehicle batteries (with additional battery storage within the depot) will support the national grid during the evenings when the vehicles are not in service – providing vehicle-to-grid energy supply and storage. This will generate additional revenues to supplement fare revenues and off-set any charging maintenance costs to minimise the subsidy required to operate the services and ensure their long-term viability.

These services will not only provide demand responsive and special educational needs transport, but they can also provide non-emergency patient transportation on behalf of the NHS where the trips can be provided on the main transport network. This would support the long-term viability of services, providing an additional revenue source and ensure a more efficient use of public sector resources.



Alongside CallConnect services, we want to encourage all transport users to travel more sustainably whilst minimising their impact the environment. We will develop travel hubs to enable interchange between cars and passenger transport, cycles, scooters and other modes. These hubs will also provide access to charging infrastructure for buses, cars, electric bicycles and scooters whilst providing fast and efficient services to enable integrated mobility services.

To support our local operators to embrace emerging vehicle technologies, we will look to build on our ETM Loan Scheme to consider how we could extend the principle to include electric battery of hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles. This would help reduce operating costs to allow for the enhancement of services, but importantly reduce the impact on air quality and CO₂ emissions so our air is cleaner for our people.

Beyond this strategy, we envisage the role of electric and hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles as being the mainstay of the Lincolnshire passenger transport network, with our vehicles playing a long-term role to store and regulate energy needs across the UK. We envisage autonomous vehicles to become a mainstream transport option across the county from the 2030's onwards. This will revolutionise mobility services while reducing travel costs as both fuel and driver costs will be significantly reduced compared to costs today. The council will monitor and embrace these changes to enhance mobility amongst residents as these emerging technologies come to market.

Post-COVID-19 short-term recovery strategy

There is a short-term need to implement a post-COVID-19 recovery strategy to encourage people back to using buses in Lincolnshire. After more than a year of Government messages that buses are not COVID-19 safe and the encouragement to walk, cycle or use private cars, the moment that travel restrictions are lifted and social distancing is no longer required, the message that buses are safe and an efficient means of travel needs to be made clearly.

A post-COVID-19 recovery strategy must be agreed between all stakeholders, but this strategy suggests that it should be made up of three key components:

1. A co-ordinated awareness raising campaign.
2. Ensure services are operational, clean and that first impressions of using buses again are positive.
3. Measures to incentivise and promote bus us.

A co-ordinated awareness raising campaign between the county council and bus operators is essential to build on the messages that will be made nationally. A 'Back to the Bus' campaign using social media, the traditional media (radio, TV and newspaper interviews with members and officers) and other council-oriented media would help to spread the positive message that buses are a safe and efficient means of travel around Lincolnshire.

To complement the 'Back to the Bus' campaign, operators must play an important role in ensuring services are a) operational, but b) attractive for people to use. In addition, engaging with operators to temporarily enhance services at weekends and during evenings in order to tempt people back to using the bus at times that suit them would help to make buses more attractive. The council also plays a role in its provision of supported services, thus there may be opportunities to incorporate CallConnect and other supported services within the campaign.

Finally, an event or series of events across the county could allow operators to provide special offers for using buses for a short-period of time (up to one week). Promoting access to Lincolnshire's heritage to provide a boost to the local economy and encouraging people to do so by bus would be an ideal opportunity to get people on to the bus in their leisure time to raise confidence in their use.

Alongside this, operators could provide promotional fares and ticket products to make using the bus more attractive financially.

This strategy needs to be discussed and the detail agreed with operators, as well as council members and officers. It would also need to include council departments other than the transport services team (particularly the tourism team) so that any of their post-COVID-19 strategies are aligned. Bus operators and the council have a difficult task to make bus services commercially viable in the longer-term, but by using the positive removal of travel restrictions and social distancing detailed in the Governments COVID-19 roadmap, there is an opportunity to attract people back to using buses by raising awareness and making them attractive to use.

Enhanced Partnership and Bus Improvement Plan

Government funding is directly linked to the preparation and implementation of an Enhanced Partnership or Franchising Scheme. As Lincolnshire is unable to apply to consider implementing a Franchising Scheme – it is not a combined authority, does not have a mayor and it does not control planning and transport policy – the only viable option is to introduce an Enhanced Partnership. This EP must include a Bus Improvement Plan that is developed in conjunction with operators, bus users, businesses and other stakeholders.

To set up an Enhanced Partnership, the council will do the following:

- Engage in 'initial discussions' with all local operators to carry out a realistic assessment of how bus services can be improved .
- Seek to find an agreed way forward to investigate the EP formally.
- Identify all operators willing to participate within the EP.
- Identify a suitable mechanism for discussions to take place as part of the EP.

Assuming that there will be informal agreement to pursue the EP process amongst the majority of operators, the next step is to provide a formal notice of intention and invite operators and other stakeholders to participate within the EP. This should be completed by 30th June 2021 to meet the Government's planned timescales and to ensure that operators and local authorities continue to receive CBSSG funding from the 1st July onwards.

Running concurrently to this formal process, work must run concurrently to develop the Bus Improvement Plan, which will set out the approach taken by the EP to bring about a local bus revolution. The Bus Improvement Plan must be published by 31st October 2021 and should start to be delivered by April 2022.

To prepare the Bus Improvement Plan, the county council will work with operators to:

- Collate evidence on the performance of bus services in Lincolnshire.
- Identify where the plan could target interventions to maximise benefits by driving up patronage and reducing operating and subsidy costs.
- Investigate vehicle fuelling options on behalf of all operators to identify options for the greening of the bus fleet across Lincolnshire.
- Explore competition rules to ensure that any subsidy provided by the county council meets all necessary competition laws.

The Bus Improvement Plan will be born out of discussions between the council, local operators and other stakeholders and will be based on a robust analysis of evidence to substantiate the intervention and investment. It will seek to build on existing strengths such as the strategic framework of urban, interurban and rural services and identify ways in which this network of services could be strengthened.

In urban areas, there will be a focus on reducing the factors that impact on bus journey time and journey time reliability. This will lead to a need for greater levels of bus priority which could include:

- Dedicated, continuous bus running lanes.
- Junction priority for buses.
- Bus gates and bus only routes.

The BIP will review and examine all urban areas of Lincolnshire to identify areas where delays occur and what priority measures could be introduced to best overcome the issues faced. This will be on a case-by-case basis, although consideration will be given to where interventions could benefit multiple services and operators in order to obtain best value for money.

Where operating cost reductions can be found and where bus patronage (and revenues) are increased, the BIP will require those revenues to be reinvested into improved service levels. This will also be on a case-by-case basis, but examples of service enhancement would include increased operating hours in the mornings, evenings and at weekends and/or increased frequencies. As identified earlier, there are many bus services in Lincolnshire (particularly outside of Lincoln) that do not operate in the early mornings and evenings, and rarely on Sundays. By working with operators to reduce costs and increase revenues, it is imperative that these gains are re-invested to make getting around the county by bus a viable alternative to the car – which at present it isn't for many.

In 2020, the county council considered bidding for 'Superbus' funding to implement a bus rapid transit style corridor, or series of corridors, in Lincoln. Superbus corridors could consist of very high-levels of bus priority, as well as consistent branding, high-quality vehicles, integrated ticketing and attractive fares to encourage an increase in bus patronage. The county council will examine Superbus corridors in greater detail and consider where they could be implemented should funding become available.

The BIP will also consider whether fares and ticketing require an overhaul to enable people to make journeys on more than one operator. As identified previously, while demand for integrated fares and tickets may be low, it could be a barrier to some people. The BIP will therefore examine what evidence there may be for integrated fares and put in place proposals for a multi-operator ticketing scheme should there be sufficient demand.

Finally, the council recognises the importance of bus stop infrastructure to enable people to access bus services from where they live. It has invested heavily over the past decade or more to enhance bus stop facilities in terms of shelters, raised kerbs, lighting and bus stop information. The council will continue its roll out of improved bus stop infrastructure across the urban areas of Lincolnshire, as well as in rural areas to remove as many barriers as possible to using the bus.

For interurban services, the council will review the frequencies and existing demand for travelling between towns and consider how this could be enhanced. This will require working closely with operators of Interconnect services to understand the changes to patronage in the past when services were enhanced or reduced. At the urban ends of the route, there may be scope to speed up journey times and journey time reliability through bus priority measures. Along the interurban route however, the council will work with operators to understand whether there are any improvements that could be made. Where improvements are identified, these will be assessed on a value for money basis with investment in those that generate the greatest cost savings or increased revenues.

Where savings can be made, the BIP will ensure operators re-invest into service levels in the mornings, evenings and weekends, as well as possibly increasing frequencies and/or investing in new vehicles.

In rural areas, the greatest challenge is serving a large number of settlements with relatively few residents. CallConnect plays this role very well in Lincolnshire and is a national leader in the provision of demand responsive services. The county council will invest in new booking software to enable more online bookings and more bookings at shorter notice. This should make CallConnect services more attractive and thus increase revenues.

Alongside the updated booking system, the council will look to explore ways in which operating costs can be reduced to enable those savings to be reallocated to providing a higher level of service. One way in which operating costs could be reduced would be to examine the role that cheaper fuel could play. Discussed later in this section, electric or hydrogen fuel cell powered CallConnect vehicles could help to reduce operating costs. Should cost savings be generated, operating hours could be reviewed and increased from their existing 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday structure while the number of vehicles, and therefore frequency, could be reviewed should passenger demand require it.

The BIP is central to the implementation of an Enhanced Partnership Scheme. It will be based on a robust analysis of available data to highlight where issues arise on the network and what the optimal solution to those problems are in order to reduce costs and increase revenues. The council will look to invest in the infrastructure required to overcome the challenges, and in return, operators will re-invest in their services to make them more attractive to users and potential users.

One way in which services can be significantly improved is in the renewal of the bus fleet and the introduction of vehicles that have fewer emissions and do not contribute to poor air quality. Bus Back Better focusses on the roll out of zero-emission vehicles and these are a key part of this Bus Strategy, as discussed below.

Greening of the bus fleet

"Zero-emission bus services, that meet the needs of passengers and communities, and attract passengers from other forms of transport, are at the heart of our plans"

Both Lincolnshire's LTP 5 and the National Bus Strategy focus on the reduction of CO₂ emissions from transport and the improvement in air quality. The introduction, and roll out, of zero-emission vehicles is therefore a central part of the Lincolnshire Bus Strategy.

To start the process, the council will engage with operators as part of the Enhanced Partnership to discuss how investment in new vehicle could be made and how these vehicles could start to be rolled out across the county. As part of this process, the council will investigate the optimal fuel solutions for operators and the services that they operate. This will take into

account depot location, location of route termini, the nature of their services and daily mileage per vehicle. This work will provide all operators with an understanding of the optimal fuel source for their services and a plan can be developed to start to encourage a shift towards these vehicles over the lifetime of this strategy.

Hydrogen fuel cell and electric battery power are the two zero-emission fuel sources available at the present time, although hydrogen is still a bus fuel technology in its infancy. Despite this, in March 2021, the Government provided £11.2 million of funding to Wrightbus to develop single and double decker hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles, while Aberdeen is currently trialling the world's first hydrogen powered double decker bus. Battery electric buses have been operating in the UK for the past 10 years, with Nottingham currently having a fleet of 58 vehicles made up of BYD saloon single decker buses, Optare Solos and Versa minibuses.

The benefits and disbenefits of hydrogen fuel cell and electric battery powered vehicles will be examined in detail before investment decisions are taken. However, the opportunities to reduce operating costs and even to potentially introduce a new revenue source are apparent.

Lincolnshire has an opportunity to demonstrate how electric vehicles could be introduced in rural areas providing rural bus services and interurban services. Firstly, there is political demand in parts of the county to introduce an electric bus demonstration project to provide that electric buses can work in Lincolnshire. Electric battery powered buses could work very well in towns like Boston, although it is on longer-distance journeys where vehicle have a higher mileage that there is greatest scope to reduce operating costs and therefore enhance services. This will be examined as part of a feasibility study.

Transport Connect – a council owned bus operator could also be used to trial electric buses on CallConnect services. Demand responsive services are a key focus of the National Bus Strategy, while the zero-emission vehicles are also central to it. By carrying out a demonstration project that combines both policy areas, this could provide DfT with a valuable evidence base on how to roll out electric buses in rural areas.

The council has shown that new technologies can be rolled out in the county through the success of its ETM Lease Scheme. The same principles could be expanded to include zero-emission vehicles, offering the lease of vehicles to operators who otherwise could not invest in such technologies. The council will explore these options, using levelling up or local transport funding options to invest in the capital costs to facilitate the greening of the bus fleet in Lincolnshire.

In summary, the county council will carry out a feasibility study for introducing electric buses in Lincolnshire. This will examine the type of routes on which electric buses are best suited, the charging infrastructure required at the depot and at termini, the funding options available and the competition challenges. The resilience of the transport infrastructure is a key aim of LTP 5, and this will need to be a focus of any feasibility study. This study will use examples of the electric bus roll-out in other parts of the UK to identify the optimal demonstration project and engage with DfT to seek match-funding to help deliver it.

Total transport

The county council has investigated Total Transport principles for many years and considers it very important to operate all public sector transport services in as efficient manner as possible. With a vast network of CallConnect services operating across rural Lincolnshire, there are synergies between CallConnect and non-emergency patient services operated on behalf of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) that could lead to a more efficient use of vehicles.

The council will work with CCGs and NHS transport providers to encourage a greater use of CallConnect services for non-emergency trips, as well as use of the CallConnect booking system. This will strongly support the CallConnect network and possibly allow it to expand to provide an even higher level of services than at present.

New residential development plan

The Bus Back Better strategy identifies the need for a plan to manage new residential developments and ensure that they are integrated into the bus network at the earliest opportunity. As part of the Enhanced Partnership and development of the Bus Improvement Plan, the council will also prepare a separate strategy for how new developments will be integrated and how Section 106 moneys and developer contributions towards transport provision will be allocated. In Lincolnshire, this strategy will include, amongst other things:

- Engagement with the planning authority at an early stage in the planning process to ensure that best practice for new housing developments is taken into account in development plans and that buses are given priority.
- A county-wide policy that requires an agreed minimum level of bus provision from a given occupation level i.e. at least an hourly bus service, Monday – Saturday, to the nearest urban centre (or dominant trip attractor) from a 25% occupation level, raising to half hourly when occupation levels reach 75%.
- Where new bus services are not required or where developments are relatively small in scale, the strategy will include schemes that the developer could contribute to financially to enhance bus services across the county and help mitigate the negative impacts that the development could contribute to.

It is imperative that the council develops a strategy for new residential developments and that this is part of the Enhanced Partnership to ensure that there is a joined-up plan for the delivery of public transport across the county. Only once there is a joined-up policy will there be scope to encourage everyone to use public transport or other sustainable modes for the journeys that they make, rather than automatically use the car for all journeys.

Funding

This strategy supports a wholesale shift in the role and use of buses in Lincolnshire in order to arrest their long-term decline and make them financially viable in the medium- to long-term. To do so requires significant investment from the county council, operators and large amounts of funding DfT and other Government funds.

External and internal funding sources are only a small part of the financing approach to this strategy. By using funding to help reduce operating costs and making bus services more attractive, the Enhanced Partnership approach detailed earlier will ensure that revenue generated by operators is reinvested in enhanced services to generate even greater revenues that make bus operations self-sustaining. If this strategy is successful, local authority supported bus budgets should also be able to be redirected to other areas, with further investment in bus networks being one of those areas.

To get to the point that increased revenues can be reinvested, it is evident that significant up-front funding is required from DfT and other Government funds. The nature of funding from the Government is not yet clear, thus this strategy cannot identify precisely what sums and for what interventions funding will be provided, but by aligning this bus strategy directly with the DfT's national strategy, there will be significant opportunities for funding. The Levelling Up Fund and the Community Renewal Fund are two opportunities to support the capital and revenue investment identified in this strategy. The Levelling Up fund in particular may provide opportunity to invest in new greener vehicles to ensure the most rural parts of the county where mobility is most compromised are connected to employment and education opportunities.

To support the longer-term funding of the local bus network and to ensure operators continue to meet the aims and objectives of this strategy (and future strategies), DfT has announced that it may devolve BSOG to local authorities, subject to consultation. The council will undertake a study to understand what benefits the devolution of BSOG could bring to Lincolnshire and how it could be delivered locally. Should the consultation then allow for the county council to assume control over the distribution of BSOG in future, it will be in a position to take this responsibility.

Finally, a key element of this strategy is to ensure that any new residential developments are served by bus services at an early stage and that the planning process ensures that buses have high-levels of priority. There are various areas in which developers should contribute financially through S106 payments, and the amount and reason for these payments will vary by each development. These will be set out in a separate county-wide strategy to be prepared in 2021.

Overall, this strategy is reliant on seed funding from the DfT to implement large-scale bus priority measures across the county, greener vehicles, improved services and many of the other measures detailed in this strategy. However, once that seed funding has been invested, it is intended that services become self-sustaining and further investment comes from the private sector to enhance services further to generate additional revenues.

Measurable outcomes

To assess the performance of this strategy over its lifetime, a number of metrics will be measured. These will provide a robust evidence base to evaluate the impact of each intervention which will help to provide further justification for future investment in the Lincolnshire bus network. The following sets out the key metrics that will be measured and how they will be measured.

X% growth in commercial bus patronage compared to 2019 levels – across all operators the number of fare paying trips originating in Lincolnshire will be calculated and contrasted to the pre-COVID-19 level.

Maintain the number of local bus operators compared to 2019 levels – the total number of operators providing local bus services in Lincolnshire between 2019 and throughout the LTP period.

X% increase in commercial mileage across all bus services in Lincolnshire – comparison between 2019 commercial mileage and each year throughout the LTP period.

X% reduction in CO₂ emissions from all Lincolnshire bus services on a per mile basis and in aggregate across the county. CO₂ emissions will be estimated for 2019 (total Lincolnshire live and dead bus mileage* typical CO₂ emissions per mile of the buses in operation), and the same methodology will be adopted each year during the LTP period to derive a comparison.

Bus user satisfaction surveys will be carried out by Passenger Focus. All metrics will be measured, but particular focus will be on an increase in value for money and improved punctuality. Both of these metrics are targeted at being above the national average by the end of the LTP period.

Summary

This strategy is bold and highly ambitious and seeks to bring about a complete shift in local bus provision and patronage. By implementing a short-term post-COVID-19 recovery plan, whilst concurrently negotiating an EP and BIP with operators and stakeholders, it is envisaged that the awareness of bus services and the use of them in the short-term will be greater than it would otherwise be in a post-COVID-19 situation. However, the EP and BIP provides the framework and identifies the key interventions to make substantial improvements to the bus network.

The BIP will examine the needs of bus users and services in different parts of the county and identify the optimal solutions to the issues they face. Solutions in Boston will differ to those in Skegness, which in turn will differ from those in Grantham or Lincoln, so it is imperative that the plan targets the interventions exactly where they are needed. The plan will detail all the bus priority measures, bus stop infrastructure, bus information, bus service enhancements, as well as fares and ticketing measures that are required to not only arrest the decline in bus use but bring about a complete revolution in bus services in Lincolnshire.

The BIP will be implemented within the regulatory structure of an EP. Failure to agree to an EP would lead to a significant reduction in funding from the Government for the county council and for operators, thus it is in every stakeholder's interest to form an agreement to benefit the bus user. The process for implementing the EP should start Spring 2021 and it should be in place by Autumn 2021 in order to be eligible for Government funding.

Finally, this strategy will be measured by monitoring a series of metrics that would help to show how successful the interventions have performed. Evaluating the impacts of interventions is very important for future policy making, thus it is a key element of this strategy. This evidence will be used for future transport policy making to ensure Lincolnshire is at the forefront of rural mobility provision.

References

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Glossary

CRP	Community Rail Partnership. A group of local people, mostly volunteers, who promote and undertake small scale works at local stations of lines.	LTB	Local Transport Boards.
DfT	Department for Transport – the Government body who buy most train services and fund Network Rail.	RAP	Route Action Plan.
ECML	East Coast Mainline, line accommodating fast services between the north and London passing through Doncaster and terminating at London Kings Cross.	HIAMP	Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan.
EMR	East Midlands Railways – local and regional services across the East Midlands and Long-distance high speed services to London along the Midland Mainline.	SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment.
GBR	Great British Railway – the proposed future organisation to run England Railway, taking over from Network Rail, DfT and TOCs. See Rail White Paper.	SA	Sustainability Appraisal .
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council.	GVA	Gross Value Added.
LNER	London North Eastern Railway. Operate Long-distance high-speed services to London along the East Coast Mainline.	TfL	Transport for London.
LTP 5	The Lincolnshire County Council's 5th Local Transport Plans (lasting 5 years to 2028/29).	LENNON	Latest Earnings Networked Nationally Overnight.
MML	Midland Mainline, line accommodating fast services between Yorkshire and London, starting at Sheffield and Nottingham/Lincoln and travelling to London St. Pancras via Leicester.	ATC	Automatic Traffic Count.
Northern	Northern Trains – local and regional train company operating services across the north of England.	EV	Electric Vehicle.
ORR	Office of Rail Regulation who oversee Network Rail's performance and report back to DfT.	DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change.
RTB's	Regional Transport Bodies, including Transport for East Midlands/East Midlands Councils (TfEM/EMC), Midlands Connect, Transport for the North (TfN).	SUEs	Sustainable Urban Extensions.
TOC	Train Operating Company.	UKCRF	UK Community Renewal Fund.
TPD	Trains per day.	UKSPF	UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
TPX	Transpennine Express – inter-regional train company operating services across the north of England and into Scotland.	LUF	Levelling Up Fund.
XC	Cross Country – a train operator serving long-distance routes excluding London.	LATS	Local Area Transport Strategies.
COVID-19	Coronavirus pandemic of 2019/20.	LCWIP	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
		ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
		PRoW	Public Rights of Way.
		CPO	Chargepoint Operator.
		EVCP	Electric Vehicle Chargepoint.
		BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups.
		NTS	National Travel Survey.
		CBSSG	COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant.
		JSNA	The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
		DLUHC	The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
		SIDP 21	Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2021.

