



Department
for Transport

Enhanced Partnerships Manual

**Advice to local transport
authorities on setting up and
running an enhanced partnership
(EP) with bus operators**

June 2026

This Manual is the result of collaboration between many people from Arup, the Department for Transport, several local transport authorities, and the wider bus industry. We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to its development.

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR



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Abbreviations

ANPR	Automatic Number Plate Recognition
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
ATCO	Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers
BCoE	Bus Centre of Excellence
BCP	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole
BID	Business Improvement District
BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Plan
BSOG	Bus Service Operators Grant
BSP	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
CIHT	Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation
CILT	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
CoY	City of York
CPT	Confederation of Passenger Transport
CSR	Corporate and Social Responsibility
DCC	Devon County Council
DfT	Department for Transport
DIRFT	Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal
DRT	Demand Responsive Transport
EEH	England's Economic Heartlands
EMCCA	East Midlands County Combined Authority
ENCTS	English National Concessionary Travel Scheme
EP	Enhanced Partnership
ESCC	East Sussex County Council
GPS	Global Positioning System
GTFS	General Transit Feed Specification
HATOCs	Devon through Highway and Traffic Order Committees
ITT	Independent Travel Training
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LABG	Local Authority Bus Grant
LCC	Leicester City Council
LTA	Local Transport Authorities

Abbreviations

MEPC	Marine Environment Protection Committee
MKC	Milton Keynes Council
NCC	Norfolk County Council
NCC	Nottingham City Council
NDA	Non-Disclosure Agreement
NELC	North East Lincolnshire Council
NHS	National Health Service
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PCC	Portsmouth City Council
PCC	Plymouth City Council
PCN	Penalty Charge Notice
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
PVR	Peak Vehicle Requirement
RTI	Real-time information
SC	Shropshire Council
SCC	Suffolk County Council
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SMART	Stoke Multi operator Area Rover Ticket
SNLS	Socially Necessary Local Services
SOAP	'schemes on a page'
STCC	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
SV	Social Value
TfC	Transport for Cornwall
TSO	Transport Safety Officers
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WNC	West Northamptonshire Council
ZEB	Zero Emission Bus
ZEBRA	Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme

Introduction

This enhanced partnership (EP) manual was commissioned by the Department for Transport (DfT) and prepared by Arup. It builds on the insights from the review of EPs which sought to identify areas where EPs can be improved and strengthened to deliver a high standard of bus services across England.

The EP manual has been developed to support local transport authorities (LTAs), bus operators, and related stakeholders in the effective design, implementation, and delivery of EPs. Its purpose is to provide practical, actionable advice and suggestions that complement the DfT's EP guidance, helping EPs to translate policy requirements into schemes tailored to the needs and priorities of local areas.

This manual sets out:

- **The vision** for what a successful EP should achieve, including minimum standards and best practice approaches.
- **Practical advice**, case studies, and example wording to assist LTAs and operators in meeting statutory requirements and delivering improvements for passengers.
- **Tools and templates** to streamline EP processes, from initial planning and stakeholder engagement through to scheme implementation, monitoring, and review.

By drawing on real-world examples and lessons learned from across the sector, the EP manual aims to become a useable guide for all parties involved in the EP.

Whether you are making an EP, or varying or revoking an existing EP, this resource will help you to:

- Understand the expectations set out in the EP guidance.
- Identify practical steps to meet those expectations.
- Learn from the experiences of other LTAs and operators.
- Apply continuous improvement, transparency and accountability in your partnership working.

The DfT hopes the EP manual will support you to deliver high-quality, inclusive and sustainable bus services that meet the needs of your local communities.

Link: [EP guidance](#)

The importance of EPs:

Transport Focus' 'Your Bus Journey 2024' survey shows that in England, overall satisfaction with the bus journey is up to 83% from 80% in 2023, showing marked improvements over time. This could not be possible without the commitment of EPs to providing improved services for bus passengers.

Through an EP, LTAs and bus operators can jointly develop and implement an EP plan, ensuring services are better aligned with community needs. This EP plan is accompanied by the EP scheme, which sets out the practical measures needed to deliver the EP. The EP plan and scheme may sit alongside the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which sets out the overall vision and objectives for bus services in a local area.

EPs manage the ongoing development, review, and delivery of the facilities and measures outlined within EP schemes needed to deliver the EP plan. This ensures that improvements are not only planned but actively monitored and adapted over time. This includes engaging with the public and stakeholders, building relationships with bus operators, and can directly support challenges faced within LTAs. EPs can support broader policy on social inclusion, environmental sustainability, and economic development by making bus services more reliable, accessible and attractive to the passenger.

EPs are not just administrative frameworks; they are flexible mechanisms for delivering improvements to bus services. Their success depends on proactive leadership, stakeholder engagement, and a clear understanding of local transport challenges. Success can be measured in many ways, but what makes EPs successful can be largely attributed to the following pillars which were developed jointly through consultation with stakeholders throughout the EP review:

- **Passenger-focused:** The best EPs foster inclusivity and focus on the measures that passengers care most about in their area.
- **Collaborative:** These EPs value open communication and strong partnership working, both between LTAs and operators, but also between the EP and their external partners.
- **Accountable:** A good EP has clarity over the responsibilities of each partner and values transparency between EP parties and the public on spending and progress towards targets.
- **Ambitious:** EPs need a clear, strong vision to focus on interventions that will make the most difference to passengers; political support for improved bus services can really drive ambition forwards for EPs.

In this manual

Table 1: Contents

Section		What is covered
Introduction		Context and purpose
Part 1: Content	Getting the basics right	Meeting the minimum standards for EPs
	Socially necessary local services (SNLS)	An example methodology to planning supported services and practical advice on implementing the measure
	Further considerations	Information and advice relevant for going beyond compliance to enhance the delivery of EP outcomes and wider policy goals
Part 2: Process and governance	EP processes	Summary and checklists for the steps of each process including: • Making an EP plan and scheme • Varying an EP • Postponing an element of an EP • Revoking an EP
	Competition considerations	Practical examples for addressing competition considerations
	EP engagement	Best practice case studies of stakeholder engagement and top tips for collaborating with stakeholders
Part 3: Further support	Professional development support	Resources and training available
	Useful contacts	Where to direct queries and access further information
Appendices	Case study library	Further references to best practice (often beyond minimum standards)
	Potential metrics for assessing SNLS	Potential metrics that can be used to assess if a bus service should be classed as an SNLS
	Templates	Useful templates including: • What should be included in an EP plan & how to present an EP scheme • Qualifying agreements – Example wording • Partnering for success – Pledge partnership (West Northamptonshire) – Example wording • Template NDA that can be used between LTAs and operators to share information
	EP processes	Step-by-step practical advice

Part 1: Content

Getting the basics right: meeting the minimum standards for EPs

This section aligns with the minimum standards chapter of the EP guidance. It sets out the expectations for EPs and provides practical tools to help LTAs and operators meet these requirements.

This section features a checklist of each requirement set out in the EP guidance. Each following sub-section provides more detail on implementing each minimum standard and follows a consistent format to make the information easy to navigate:

- **Expectation:** A summary of what the EP guidance required for this standard.
- **Benefits:** Explains the value of meeting this standard.
- **Example wording:** Suggested text that can be adapted to your own EP scheme.
- **Summary and top tips:** Practical advice for implementation.

Additionally, where relevant, a **case study** is included to provide examples showing how other areas have successfully delivered this.



Checklist for minimum standards

The checklist below can be used to verify if the requirements set out in your EP scheme satisfy the minimum standards.

For full detail, please refer to the minimum standards section of the [EP guidance](#).

Does your EP scheme include requirements for...

Maintain baseline LTA bus spending:

- ☐ An overall baseline bus budget (including for supported services, concessionary fares, infrastructure and community transport, but excluding funding provided through dedicated government grants and funding for home-to-school services).

Promoting concessionary travel:

- ☐ LTAs and operators to work together to promote concessionary travel.
- ☐ LTAs to proactively inform residents of their eligibility.

Reinvestment of savings from bus priority measures:

- ☐ Operating expenditure savings resulting from bus priority to be reinvested by the bus operators that benefit from them into other EP commitments.

Multi-operator information provision:

- ☐ All operators to include all services within the operating area on their timetables and websites or a single set of multi-operator information available across all operators.

Bus passenger charter:

- ☐ A bus passenger charter which:
 - Clearly sets out the standards passengers can expect
 - Signposts routes for redress and providing feedback to EPs
 - Considers the needs of all passengers, including disabled people, taking account of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)
- ☐ Promoting the bus passenger charter on LTA and operator websites, on buses and bus stops.

Multi-operator ticketing:

- ☐ Offering a full range of multi-operator ticketing products at little or no extra cost compared to single-operator fares.
- ☐ Promoting the multi-operator ticketing products.
- ☐ Having the right technology over time using the national contactless solution to be introduced through Project Coral.

Outcomes data publication:

- ☐ Publishing outcomes data on patronage, customer satisfaction (as measured via Transport Focus's 'Your Bus Journey' survey), and punctuality.

Common timetable change dates

- ☐ Implementing fixed timetable change dates (recommended no more than twice per year).

Consideration of the needs of disabled people:

- ☐ Having regard to accessibility requirements for local services when specifying requirements in the EP scheme.

Enforcement of bus priority infrastructure:

- ☐ Enforcing new and existing bus lanes and bus gates. At a minimum, this should be monitoring of compliance and their effect on bus journey delays and prioritisation of where enforcement is needed.

Maintenance of bus infrastructure:

- ☐ Continued maintenance of new and existing local authority bus infrastructure, including stops, stations and bus priority infrastructure.



Maintain baseline LTA bus spending

Expectation:

The EP scheme should set out the baseline LTA bus budget, covering supported services, concessionary fares, infrastructure, and community transport (excluding dedicated government grants and home-to-school funding). This total amount must be maintained in flat cash terms, at a minimum, while the EP is in place. Individual budget lines can change as long as the overall total remains at or above the agreed baseline.

Benefits:

- Ensures that **government funding is additional to and not used to replace existing annual budgets.** This protects the integrity of EP delivery by guaranteeing that improvements are funded on top of, rather than instead of, current and necessary commitments.
- Provides **financial certainty for operators** enabling long-term planning for services, infrastructure, and accessibility improvements, helping to avoid disruptive cuts that could destabilise the network. This continuity supports sustained growth in bus investment and service quality over time.
- Supports **transparent monitoring and evaluation** allowing for partners to demonstrate the added value of investment and to assess progress against outcomes.

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Define your baseline budget with a clear categorisation:** Include a short narrative explaining what's covered and what's excluded.
- ✓ **Reference other budgets and coordinate across teams:** When developing your initial baseline, reference existing budget lines to avoid duplication and ensure consistency.
- ✓ **Document adjustments transparently:** If your first budget baseline needs refinement, document the rationale and confirm that the total remains compliant.
- ✓ **Secure internal sign off:** While each LTA will have its own internal approval processes, it is essential for alignment that key departments, such as finance and senior leadership, formally acknowledge and commit to the agreed baseline. This commitment should be sustained throughout the duration of the EP and reflected in internal financial planning cycles.
- ✓ **Monitoring regime:** Set up a clear review schedule to check that total spend remains at or above the baseline. Include clear responsibilities and accountabilities.

Promoting concessionary travel

Expectation:

LTAs and operators must work together to promote concessionary bus travel and proactively inform residents when the LTA becomes aware that they are eligible for such a concession. They may choose to work with charitable organisations that work with older or disabled people or work with the local job centre or local health and care services to promote the scheme (subject to capacity of these organisations).

Benefits:

- **Enables older and disabled people to maintain independence**, access essential services, and participate in community life, helping reduce isolation and loneliness. It also supports health and wellbeing by encouraging active lifestyles and engagement, and encourages wider economic benefits by proxy.
- **Supports reduced public spending in other areas**, such as healthcare and social care, by helping people stay socially and physically active, connected, and well.
- **Mitigates the economic costs of non-participation**, such as missed appointments, delayed interventions, and reduced access to employment, care, or volunteering opportunities among others.
- **Helps fill capacity and improve service viability for bus networks**, benefiting all passengers as well as reducing car dependency, easing congestion and lowering emissions.
- Proactively and consistently informing eligible residents **demonstrates compliance with the PSED under the Equality Act 2010** and ensures that the benefits of concessionary travel reach those who need them most.

Example wording in EP scheme:

“The council will work with operators to promote the [insert name] concessionary fare scheme to newly eligible persons and also to encourage greater use of passes on issue. It will do so by [insert mechanism]”

Case study: Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council - "The best things in life are free!" campaign

Following a 36% decline in concessionary journeys since the COVID-19 pandemic, BCP Council identified a need to re-engage older and disabled residents with local bus services. Many had not returned to bus travel after being advised to avoid public transport during lockdowns, and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis further highlighted the importance of affordable mobility options.

BCP Council, in partnership with local operator Morebus, launched the "It's Free to Go by Bus" campaign in August 2023. This initiative aligned with the UK Government's "Take the Bus" campaign and aimed to:

- **Promote concessionary bus travel** to eligible residents (state pension age or qualifying disability).
- **Highlight benefits** including financial savings, social inclusion, accessibility, and environmental sustainability.
- **Encourage applications** for free bus passes via online and telephone support.



Features:

Emphasising the slogan "The best things in life are free!" in the local press, council website, social media, and throughout the local community. It promoted the following benefits:

- **Financial:** Free travel helps offset rising living costs.
- **Social:** Bus journeys as opportunities to reduce isolation.
- **Accessibility:** Low-floor buses, wheelchair access, audio/visual cues.
- **Environmental:** Promotion of benefits such as reducing congestion and emissions.

There was a dedicated helpline for those unable to apply online.

Reported results:

- Increased awareness of concessionary travel among eligible residents.
- Positive media coverage and strong community engagement.
- According to BCP's BSIP progress report (2024), overall bus patronage in the BCP area is expected to exceed pre-pandemic levels, supported in part by campaigns like "Go by Bus" and fare initiatives.

Case study: North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) × Age UK (Grimsby & Cleethorpes)

NELC formally uses Age UK Grimsby and Age UK Cleethorpes as in-person bus pass issuing and renewal sites for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS). A drop-in service is provided, to apply for, renew or replace bus passes without the need to book an appointment. Residents are given AGE UK leaflets on other services they deliver and those of other older peoples' agencies locally for example details of day trips and lunch clubs. This is a NELC–charity delivery partnership that doubles outreach to older residents.

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Know your eligible population:** Use official census demographic data as a base and complement with other local data (where appropriate) to identify where eligible residents live and tailor outreach accordingly. You may also reference previous assessments where relevant and still applicable.
- ✓ **Explore partnerships:** There may be benefits in collaborating with charities, community groups, schools, and health services that already engage with older and disabled people. These partners can help co-design the scheme, promote it, and assist with applications. Engage as early as possible.
- ✓ **Make it easy to apply:** Offer multiple application routes, for example online, phone, and in-person. Consider collaborating with local organisations to provide accessible support.
- ✓ **Use positive messaging and focus on the benefits:** These include independence, social connection, financial savings, and environmental impact. Campaigns like “The best things in life are free!” show how to frame this effectively.
- ✓ **Targeted communications:** Consider using local media, GP surgeries, libraries, and community centres to reach eligible residents. Consider including concessionary travel information in welcome packs for new pensioners or disability benefit recipients.
- ✓ **Monitor uptake and impact:** Beyond tracking changes in concessionary pass applications and usage in numbers, consider using qualitative data, such as surveys and focus groups, to refine messaging and identify barriers to access. Ensure you include a monitoring regime.
- ✓ **Link to broader outcomes and other policies:** Frame concessionary travel as part of your strategy for healthy ageing, inclusive mobility, and net-zero. Explore how these could be linked to other strategies and workstreams in your local area. This integrated approach helps build cross-sector support and unlock wider funding opportunities.

Reinvestment of savings from bus priority measures

Expectation:

Before delivering a bus priority scheme, EPs should estimate expected operator savings and after implementation, confirm actual savings and agree how these will be reinvested to deliver further EP commitments. It is recommended that a strategy is developed early on to outline the key channels by which savings could be reinvested and what the process could look like, considering key enablers and potential risks, among others.

Benefits:

- **Ensures that public investment delivers maximum value**, potentially resulting in increased frequency, extended operating hours, or fleet upgrades. Efficiency gains lead to better services, which in turn attracts more passengers, strengthening the network's sustainability.
- **Fosters transparency and collaboration between LTAs and operators.** By agreeing on how savings will be used and publishing outcomes, EPs can demonstrate accountability and build public trust, showing that every improvement feeds into a better, more reliable bus network.

Example wording in EP scheme:

"[Insert names] operators commit to reinvest any savings that are obtained from the bus priority measures introduced through the EP scheme. This may be in the form of service improvements (including route extensions or frequency improvements), reduced fares, or vehicle improvements. The methodology for calculating savings will be defined by [insert reference to agreed process or tool]. The reinvestment strategy will be jointly agreed through [insert reference to governance process] and its implementation will be monitored via [insert reference to monitoring mechanism]."

Case study: Norfolk County Council (NCC) – Commitment to savings from bus priority improvements

A list of junction alterations, road layout and traffic light priority measures are specified within NCC's EP scheme and clearly outlines that operators are required to commit to reciprocal investment measures arising from any operational savings. See an example of one of these commitments below:

Measure / facility / intervention

Junction alteration and road layout (BSIP funding).

Specific NCC commitment

Alter the junction and traffic priority at Angel Road / Waterloo Road (Norwich) so that inbound buses can enter Waterloo Road without stopping.

Specific operator commitment

The time savings from the revised road layout have improved the reliability of services and led to a frequency increase supported by kickstart funding. The operator is also committed to operating services along this corridor for at least 10 years.

Timescale

Construction began November 2024.

Completion March 2025.





Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Estimate savings early:** Work with operators to model expected savings before implementation (e.g. reduced Peak Vehicle Requirement (PVR), fuel costs, driver hours.) Use this to inform reinvestment planning.
- ✓ **Develop a reinvestment strategy:** Outline potential reinvestment channels (e.g. increased frequency, extended hours, fleet upgrades) and key enablers (e.g. governance, funding agreements). The strategy should account for both network-wide improvements and operator-specific benefits. This can be achieved by mapping expected savings to specific corridors or service areas and agreeing principles for geographic targeting of reinvestment. You may consider using operator input to identify preferred forms of reinvestment and ensure they align with EP objectives. Overall, the strategy should consider fair distribution, funding mechanisms, and risk mitigation strategies.
- ✓ **Agree a process with operators:** Develop a shared process for confirming actual savings post-implementation and deciding how they will be reinvested. Consider using EP board.
- ✓ **Use data to validate impact:** Use post-implementation data (e.g. journey times, vehicle usage, and operational costs) to confirm savings and to serve as evidence to support reinvestment decisions.
- ✓ **Link reinvestment to EP commitments:** Prioritise reinvestment options that directly support goals set out in the EP plan (e.g. improving reliability, accessibility, or passenger experience).
- ✓ **Communicate transparently:** Publish reinvestment plans and outcomes to demonstrate value for money and build public trust.



Multi-operator information provision

Expectation:

EPs should ensure passengers have access to consistent, integrated and up to date information across all operators. This can be achieved either by requiring each operator to include all local services on their timetables and websites, or by providing a single, shared source of multi-operator information for the whole area.

Benefits:

- **Makes bus travel simpler, more predictable and more reliable for passengers.** Up-to-date and integrated data allows people to plan journeys with confidence, even when switching between services. This reduces confusion, builds trust in the network, and improves overall satisfaction.
- **Supports the PSED by making travel easier for groups who may be less confident navigating complex or fragmented sources.** By removing barriers to understanding, it helps ensure that everyone can benefit from public transport, regardless of age, disability, digital literacy or cultural backgrounds.

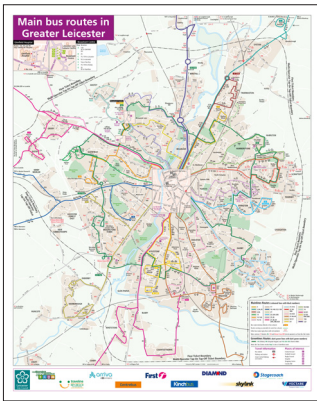
Example wording in EP scheme:

“From [insert start date] to [insert end date], all participating operators shall display only the agreed ‘Local Buses’ branded integrated timetable and fares information at all designated bus stops and bus stations within the EP area.

This shall include [insert requirements, e.g. “a single, consolidated timetable showing services from all operators serving the stop”; “fare information presented in the following format...”; “branding and design elements as specified in...”]. These will ensure accessibility by [insert rationale].

Compliance will be monitored through [insert mechanism, e.g. “quarterly audits by the EP forum” or “spot checks coordinated by the local transport authority”], and maintained via [insert process, e.g. “operator reporting and feedback channels”].”

Case study: Leicester Buses – Integrated passenger information



Leicester City Council (LCC) and local bus operators formed the Leicester Enhanced Bus Partnership in May 2022 to deliver a more integrated, user-friendly bus network. A key challenge identified was the fragmented information provision across multiple operators, which created confusion for passengers and discouraged modal shift from private cars to buses.

As part of their branding strategy, the bus network displays passenger information covering all operators at their bus stops in the area and website. This makes it easier for customers to plan their journeys on the network across different operators.

Features:

- **Integrated timetables:** Timetable displays combine services from multiple operators into a single, easy-to-read format.
- **Fares information:** Clear presentation of multi-operator ticketing options, including the Flexi Scheme.
- **Digital support:** The Leicester Buses website and journey planner provide real-time information and downloadable integrated timetables as a single hub for timetables, disruptions, and journey planning.

Reported results:

Accessibility:

- Installed 1,300 Leicester Buses totems, including 750 real-time information stops with text-to-speech functionality.

Improved passenger awareness and confidence:

- Ease of finding information at bus stops: 85% (up from 81%).
- Overall satisfaction: 87% (up from 80%).

Increased use of multi-operator products:

- Multi-operator ticketing trips rose to 6.1 million in 2023/24, up 11% year-on-year and three times higher than in 2019.

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Harmonise on-street displays:** Consider using consistent formats for bus stop totems, shelters, and printed materials. Include multi-operator timetables and fare charts at key locations.
- 1. **Agree information sharing mechanisms with operators:** Consider how operators should contribute to and use shared information. Define responsibilities for data accuracy and updates. This should also include agreements on the provision of compatible data formats and standards, which could be subject to audit to ensure consistency.
- ✓ **Ensure accessibility compliance:** Provide information in formats that meet accessibility standards (e.g. large print and with appropriate colour contrasts, audio/text-to-speech option, and easy-read versions). It is recommended to test with user groups to ensure adequacy.
- ✓ **Use real-time data where possible:** Integrate live tracking and disruption alerts to improve reliability and passenger confidence. Coordinate with operators to ensure they feed into the same system. Ensure RTI on stops and on apps/webpages are harmonised.
- ✓ **Monitor and maintain quality:** Set up a governance process (e.g. via the EP board) to regularly review the accuracy, consistency, and accessibility of information across the network.
- ✓ **Promote the system actively:** Using mass and targeted outreach channels, especially upon introduction.



Bus passenger charters

Expectation:

EPs must have and promote a bus passenger charter that sets out the service standards passengers can expect and explains how to provide feedback or make a complaint. The charter should reflect the needs of all passengers, including disabled people, in line with the PSED. It must be easily accessible, promoted through all operators' and the LTA's websites, and through physical promotion on buses and at bus stops. For further guidance on drafting a bus passenger charter, refer to the BSIP guidance. Updates to bus passenger charter are also welcomed in alignment with BSIP guidance. Transport Focus has also created the following advice/guidance on passenger charters: [Transport User Voice December 2023 - Bus Passengers Charters - Transport Focus](#)

Benefits:

- Sets **clear standards for reliability, accessibility, and customer service**, so passengers know what to expect and how to give feedback.
- Provides a **transparent way to measure performance and hold operators accountable**. By including commitments on accessibility and safety, charters help ensure services meet the needs of all passengers, including those with disabilities. Strategically promoting the charter can be an opportunity to build confidence and encourage more people to use the bus.

Example wording in EP scheme:

"[Name of the LTA] will work with operators to put the needs of customers at the heart of service delivery and improve information provision with one brand identity, including: maintaining a bus passenger charter clearly setting out what standards of service customers can expect, which will be underpinned by an equality impact assessment. The charter will be monitored by [insert text]. Updates are planned as follows [insert text]"

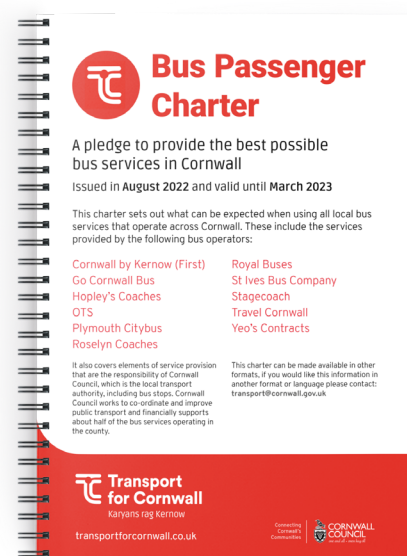
"By [insert date], all qualifying bus operators will sign up to the [name of the local area] bus passenger charter, which will be displayed on the council's plan your bus journey webpage and in [insert text]."

Case study: Transport for Cornwall (TfC) – Bus passenger charters

Cornwall Council was one of the first LTAs to implement a comprehensive bus passenger charter in August 2022, developed in partnership with local bus operators under the Transport for Cornwall partnership.

The charter was designed to:

- **Set clear expectations** for reliability, cleanliness, accessibility, and information provision among others.
- **Provide redress routes** for complaints and feedback.
- **Enable transparency**, by displaying information on performance against targets.
- **Promote inclusivity**, ensuring compliance with the PSED under the Equality Act 2010.



Features:

Included various public commitments applicable to all local bus services in Cornwall. Examples below:

- **Service standards:** Buses to run no more than one minute early or five minutes late, clean buses, smart, friendly and helpful drivers, a smooth ride, etc.
- **Accessibility:** Low-floor buses, one or two wheelchair spaces, priority seating, and assistance for disabled passengers.
- **Information:** Real-time updates at key stops, QR codes for timetables, and a single source of information via Transport for Cornwall website.
- **Safety:** CCTV on most buses and driver training for customer care.
- **Value for money:** Multi-operator ticketing and capped fares.

Promotion:

- Published on the TfC website and operator sites.
- Physical copies available at bus stations and promoted via posters on buses and shelters.
- Accessible formats available on request.

Reported results:

- **Improved passenger confidence:** Providing a transparent benchmark for service quality, helping rebuild trust post-pandemic.
- **Improved accessibility:** Clear commitments on wheelchair access, promoting inclusivity and confidence in using the system.
- **Unified network approach:** The charter covers all local bus services, each operator is named and their contact details provided. However, presentation of the charter is under the TfC brand that represents the whole network.
- **Customer engagement:** Signposting complaints and feedback channels, leading to more structured passenger input into service improvements.
- **Alignment with BSIP goals:** Supported Cornwall's wider objectives to make buses easier, cheaper, and more reliable, contributing to patronage recovery and satisfaction improvements.



Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Ensure the bus passenger charter remains relevant and aligned with EP and local priorities:** Ensure it remains positioned as a delivery tool, not just a communications piece.
- ✓ **Co-develop improvements with passengers and communities:** Engage with a diverse range of passengers or representatives of those groups (including disabled people, older adults, and young people) to shape the charter. Ensure it accurately reflects what matters most to these groups.
- ✓ **Make it measurable and meaningful:** Include clear service standards that can be monitored and reported on. Avoid vague promises. Focus on what passengers can expect and how performance will be tracked. Position the charter as a public commitment to quality and accountability.
- ✓ **Link to feedback and complaints:** Ensure the charter clearly explains how passengers can raise concerns or provide feedback. Make sure redress routes are simple, accessible, and well-publicised.
- ✓ **Ensure accessibility and inclusivity:** Provide the charter in multiple formats e.g. large print and with appropriate colour contrasts, audio/text-to-speech options, easy-read and translated versions). Make it available online, at bus stops, and on vehicles.
- ✓ **Promote it visibly and consistently:** Consider strategies to raise further awareness. For example, signpost the charter in operator communications and at key passenger touchpoints.
- ✓ **Review and refresh regularly:** Update in line with scheduled reviews, or as services evolve or new priorities emerge. Treat it as a living document that reflects ongoing improvements and needs.

(Non-exhaustive list. Please refer to the BSIP guidance for a more comprehensive overview of expectations)



Multi-operator ticketing

Expectation:

EPs must ensure passengers can buy and use tickets that work across all local operators at little or no premium compared to single-operator fares. These tickets should cover a full range of options and be widely promoted. Drivers should be trained to offer them proactively and with sensitivity to different passenger needs and circumstances. Over time, schemes should incorporate contactless fare capping using the national solution under development (Project Coral), so EPs must plan for the necessary technology.

Example structure:

A multi-operator ticketing package could have the following structure if tickets are at no extra cost to single-operator fares. This can be adapted depending on the context e.g. with zones, on/off-peak variants. Note that multi-operator ticketing is typically easier to implement and administer where fare structures have been simplified, for example, through consistent fare zones or clearer travel products.

Table 2: Multi-operator ticketing package - example structure

Areas tickets are valid	On/Off-peak	Period of validity			
		One day	1 week	1 month	12 months
Zone 1	On-peak ticket				
Zone 2	Off-peak ticket				
Zone 3					
Zone 1 & 2					
Zone 1, 2 & 3					

Benefits:

- **Makes bus better value for money** by allowing passengers to use different operators' services without paying extra, improving overall satisfaction and attracting more people to use buses.
- **Simplifies journey planning through reduced fare complexity, boosting confidence in travel.** This is particularly evident among passengers who may find complex ticketing systems difficult to navigate, such as some disabled people, older adults, or others with protected characteristics. An effective multi-operator ticketing scheme is another form of showing compliance with the PSED.
- **Enables better data collection** for planning and performance monitoring across the network supporting the outcomes data publication minimum standard for EPs.

Example wording in EP scheme:

"The council will, working with [name of bus operators], introduce and promote [insert text of the scheme, e.g. a multi-operator day travel ticket at little or no extra cost compared to single operator tickets] from [insert data] to encourage significant growth in bus patronage and modal shift.

This ticketing scheme will focus on [insert text, e.g. reducing the cost of adult, young persons (up to age 18) and group day ticket travel within the wider local area, and will also see the introduction of a daily capped "tap-on, tap-off" multi-operator ticket].

Promotion will be carried out consistently and in an accessible manner via [insert channels, e.g. operator websites, social media, printed materials at bus stops and stations, and local authority communications].

Monitoring will be undertaken by [insert mechanism, e.g. monthly sales data reporting by operators, passenger feedback surveys, and analysis of usage patterns via ticketing system data].

Case study: City of York (CoY) Council – All York Tickets

CoY Council, working with local bus operators under the York EP, manages the All York multi-operator ticketing scheme, which enables passengers to travel seamlessly across different bus operators within the city. The scheme was originally launched in 2012 under the York Quality Bus Partnership, following a data-led study by CoY which identified demand for multi-operator ticketing. Previously, passengers faced complexity when switching between operators, often requiring multiple tickets.

The All York scheme provides one ticket valid on all participating operators' services within the York boundary, making multi-operator travel as affordable and convenient as single-operator journeys. This is at no extra cost to the single-operator products.

The scheme was originally a commercial arrangement, with no requirement for public funding beyond modest council administration. Over time, public funding has been used to support affordability objectives. Governance of the scheme transferred to the York enhanced partnership (EP) in September 2022, following the dissolution of the Quality Bus Partnership, with day-to-day administration continuing to be undertaken by the council. This initiative is now supported by York's £17.36 million BSIP funding and aligns with the EP's objectives to improve affordability, integration, and passenger experience.



Features:

Ticket range: All York Day, All York Week, and All York Month, as well as multi-day bundles (5, 10 and 20-day) via smartcard.

Eligibility: Available to all passengers, with discounted young person and family products supported through BSIP and subsequent Bus Grant funding from 2023.

Coverage: Valid on all major operators: Arriva Yorkshire, First York, East Yorkshire, Transdev (Coastliner/York & Country), ConnexionsBuses, and York Pullman (excluding school buses).

Sales channels:

- On-bus purchase (cash or card).
- Smartcard via kiosks and Visitor & Bus Information Point.
- Mobile apps (First Bus, myTrip for independents).

Promotion:

- Featured on iTravel York and operator websites.
- On-bus posters and social media campaigns.
- Integrated into York's Catch the Bus Month promotions.

EP commits to integrating contactless fare capping via Project Coral, enabling "tap and cap" across operators in future phases.

Reported results:

- All York tickets eliminate the need for multiple tickets, making multi-operator travel seamless.
- Prices are competitive with single-operator fares, ensuring no penalty for switching operators.
- £2.50 day tickets and £12 weekly tickets for under-19s have supported affordability for education and leisure travel.
- Independent operators joined the myTrip app, enabling contactless ticketing and real-time tracking.
- Supports York's goal to increase bus patronage and reduce car dependency, with EP reporting strong uptake of discounted and multi-operator tickets since 2023.

Case study: Transport for Cornwall (TfC) – Any ticket, Any Bus

Cornwall's EP offers interoperable tickets aligning with their objective of simplifying bus use for passengers. Launched in January 2022, an interoperable agreement between bus operators saw ticket variants become valid for travel on any bus, regardless of operator, and at no extra cost to the passenger.

Common principles around the ages and discounts that defined child travel and validity of period passes (e.g. whether a monthly product was 4 weeks or 31 days, and whether a day ticket lasted until midnight or was valid for 24 hours from use) needed to be adopted.

Following the success of this arrangement, a full suite of multi-operator tickets available across all operators was introduced, underpinned by a multi-operator ticketing agreement to ensure fair revenue apportionment between operators, and as a facilitator for contactless Tap & Cap.

The originating interoperable ticketing arrangement was a helpful first step to introducing multi-operator tickets and an alternative way of delivering the multi-operator ticketing minimum standard without creating a new range of products. According to Cornwall Council's local customer research, interoperable tickets were regarded as a 'game-changing development' for passengers, removing the barrier of requiring different tickets for each operator and helping to bring the whole network together.



Features:

- **Alignment with EP commitments:** Providing interoperable tickets is a clear commitment for bus operators with the Council's support.
- **Shared common principles:** To define specific tickets and eligibility (period tickets and age discounts).
- **Promotion of benefits:** On the TfC website, it is made clear that tickets are valid for any bus operator with the benefits of "making journeys cheaper, easier and more convenient".

Reported results:

- **Improved passenger experience:** Simple, easier to understand tickets. All tickets valid across all operators.
- **Improved opportunities for discretionary travel schemes:** The interoperable arrangement can facilitate the delivery of other targeted free or discounted countywide schemes. TfC now offers free bus travel for care leavers across operators.
- **Good foundation to formalise multi-operator ticketing:** and establish a multi-operator ticketing agreement that can settle revenue reappportionment between operators against specific multi-operator ticket products/Tap & Cap.
- **Alignment with BSIP goals:** Supported Cornwall's wider objectives to make buses easier, cheaper, and more reliable, contributing to patronage recovery and satisfaction improvements.
- **Increased patronage:** A suite of interventions, including multi-operator ticketing, led to a 12% increase in patronage in Cornwall between 2019-2023, with a record 12.9m passengers in 2023.



Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Start with a shared commitment:** Secure agreement from all local operators to participate in a unified ticketing scheme. Use the EP scheme as an opportunity to formalise this commitment and define responsibilities. Work collaboratively to ensure multi-operator tickets are priced no higher than equivalent single-operator products.
- ✓ **Offer a range of products:** Including day, return, weekly, monthly and flexible multi-day options, amongst others. This caters to different travel patterns and improves affordability for regular and occasional users. It is recommended to review packages available in neighbouring authorities to explore potential harmonisation. Whilst not required, this eases the navigation of the system and reduce back-office complexity by limiting the number of fare variants that ticketing, validation and revenue-allocation systems need to accommodate.
- ✓ **Ensure alignment behind validity and eligibility:** Rules need to be established and agreed with operators based on validity and eligibility of all ticket types. For example, establishing if a day ticket is only for the calendar day or 24-hours after activation.
- ✓ **Ensure accessibility:** Design ticketing systems and communications to be inclusive and easily understandable (e.g. clear language, large print, support for passengers with disabilities, among others). This helps meet PSED obligations. If changes to existing products are envisaged, ensure impact on equalities are considered (this could be in the form of an equality impact assessment).
- ✓ **Implement training:** Provide clear guidance and work with operators to provide consistent training so drivers can proactively offer multi-operator tickets and explain their benefits to passengers.
- ✓ **Explore multiple sales channels:** Make tickets available on-bus, via mobile apps, travel shops, and smartcards. Ensure options are accessible for passengers who may not use digital services.
- ✓ **Promote widely and clearly:** If changes are envisaged, these should be actively communicated to affected passengers. Consider a transition strategy and running joint campaigns across operator and LTA websites, social media, and physical materials (e.g. bus stop posters). Highlight key benefits such as simplicity, savings, and flexibility.
- ✓ **Plan for contactless fare capping:** Prepare for integration with Project Coral by assessing technology needs (e.g. compatible ticket machines, back-office systems).
- ✓ **Monitor uptake and impact:** Track sales, patronage, and user feedback to assess performance. Use this data to refine products and demonstrate delivery progress.

Going beyond the minimum requirement, multi-operator ticketing packages in addition could offer:

- **Integrated tickets with other modes:** Tickets could be sold that are accepted on other modes of transport such as trams or trains.
- **Discounted tickets:** Available to young people (e.g. divided into under 16 years and 16-18), students, youth tickets (e.g. for 21- 25 year olds) and jobseekers.
- **Cross-boundary tickets:** Coordinating with other neighbouring EPs to deliver cross LTA boundary tickets.

Outcomes data publication

Expectation:

EPs must commit to publishing performance data, at a minimum, including patronage, punctuality, and customer satisfaction (measured through Transport Focus's Your Bus Journey survey). EPs are encouraged to include local Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) where relevant. Operators must share the necessary data with LTAs in a timely manner to enable this reporting, which should be public and accessible. In turn, LTAs will need to be mindful of operators need for commercial confidentiality.

Benefits:

- **Makes the bus system transparent and accountable** encouraging collaboration, shared responsibility, and joint problem-solving across the EP.
- **Improves visibility on service improvement and gives LTAs and operators the evidence to target improvements strategically.** Publicising this helps build trust and demonstrate progress.

Example wording in EP scheme:

"[Name of the LTA] commits to publication of performance outcomes data to drive transparency and accountability. At a minimum, this includes data on patronage, customer satisfaction, journey times and punctuality, as well as the following KPIs: [list]. Operators will be required to provide the supporting data and information. This will be performed via [insert text]."

Case study: East Sussex County Council (ESCC) – Performance outcomes publication

ESCC's EP scheme commits to regular publication of performance outcomes to ensure transparency and accountability.

The council's approach includes:

- Publishing annual BSIP updates and EP performance reports on its website.
- Reporting on core KPIs: patronage, punctuality, journey times, and customer satisfaction (via Transport Focus's Your Bus Journey survey).
- Introducing localised KPIs, such as Flexibus demand-responsive usage and rural connectivity improvements.

Features:

Data categories published:

- **Patronage:** Total bus journeys and trends compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- **Punctuality and journey times:** Monitored through operator data and real-time systems.
- **Customer satisfaction:** Based on Your Bus Journey survey results.
- **Local KPIs:** Flexibus performance, evening service coverage, and fare initiatives.

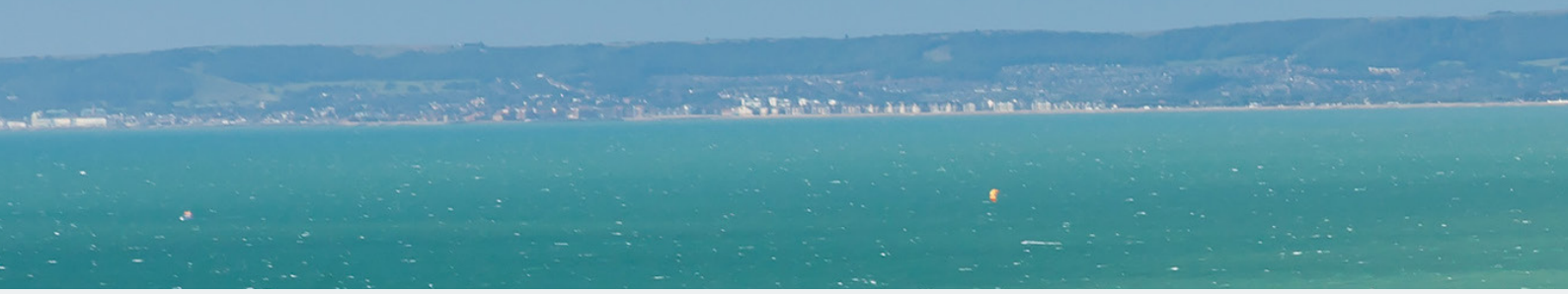
Publication channels:

- ESCC BSIP and EP webpages.
- Annual reports to the EP board and public-facing summaries.

Accessibility: Reports are available in PDF format and promoted via council newsletters and social media.

Reported results:

- **Improved transparency:** Residents can now access clear, consistent performance data, building trust in the council's delivery of BSIP commitments.
- **Customer satisfaction gains:** ESCC recorded an eight-percentage point increase in satisfaction in the Your Bus Journey survey, moving from 26th to 12th nationally (now at 87% satisfaction).
- **Patronage recovery:** BSIP monitoring shows steady growth in bus journeys, supported by fare initiatives and service improvements.
- **Data-driven decisions:** Performance reporting has informed targeted interventions, such as punctuality improvements on congested corridors and expansion of Flexibus services.



Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Agree on core metrics early:** Include patronage, punctuality, and customer satisfaction as a minimum. Use Transport Focus's Your Bus Journey survey for consistency. Consider adding relevant local KPIs (e.g. rural coverage, evening services, usage of specific products) and include them to reflect your areas specific goals. There is an opportunity that if some of your packages target specific groups of protected characteristics, this data can be used to track and demonstrate support towards the PSED.
- ✓ **Set a clear reporting schedule:** Publish data at regular intervals and align with EP board meetings or reporting requirements to ensure consistency.
- ✓ **Focus on system-wide performance:** In addition to disaggregated reporting, ensure data can also be read at a network level and across operators to promote shared accountability.
- ✓ **Ensure accessibility:** Make reports or dashboards available in clear, user-friendly formats. For example, considering good colour contrast and adequately sized fonts. The data should also be easy-to-read and understand by different publics. Promote them via websites, newsletters, social media, or any other relevant channels. Provide alternative formats on request.
- ✓ **Use data to drive action:** Link reporting to decision-making and measure impact of performance against charter commitments. For example, establishing clear mechanisms by which the insights could inform service changes, investment priorities, and targeted interventions. This can include review periods, set agenda item at EP board meetings, etc.



Common timetable change dates

Expectation:

EPs should agree common timetable change dates, recommended no more than twice a year, and in coordination with neighbouring authorities where possible, to provide consistency for passengers and operators. Flexibility should be built in to allow exceptional changes only when they are clearly in passengers' best interests, such as responding to seasonal demand or introducing service improvements.

Benefits:

- **Ensures predictability and consistency for passengers** making it easier to plan journeys, update travel plans, and avoid confusion from frequent ad-hoc alterations. Also reduces the risk of conflicting information across channels, helping improve customer confidence.
- **Lowers cost, error risk and strengthens operational discipline.** Driver duties, school term links and engineering resources can be re-planned efficiently; stop-level publicity, wayfinding and marketing can be produced once per cycle rather than repeatedly.
- **Building in a controlled flexibility mechanism (for seasonal demand, service uplifts or material reliability fixes) balances stability with responsiveness.** This allows the EP to act quickly where a change is clearly in passengers' interests, while preserving the benefits of the main, planned cycles.
- **Demonstrates compliance with the PSED,** when developing robust and inclusive outreach strategies at the back of each window. For example, considering groups of protected characteristics most affected by timetable changes, such as people with neurodivergence, people with visually impairments, the elderly, school-aged children, among others.

Example wording in EP scheme:

“Operators may only change their timetables for services on two set dates per year: [insert dates]. These will be agreed by the EP board and coordinated with [insert relevant stakeholders]. Further changes with the agreement of the EP board can occur where [insert text, e.g.:

- *It is an emergency change to address unforeseen circumstances*
- *It is a temporary change caused by ongoing resourcing issues, short-term highway changes or roadworks*
- *It is in response to permanent highway changes such as road closure or access to a new development*
- *The change is to a service or journey at the request of a third party such as a neighbouring authority, educational establishment or employment facility*
- *The change is to implement a seasonal timetable; or*
- *Other such reasons that the EP board feels appropriate]”.*

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Agree change windows:** Set fixed dates, ideally twice a year. These should be aligned to known annual events such as the return to school. Dates where changes should be avoided may include: October, one month after school's return, or in the run up to the December public holidays.
- ✓ **Coordinate regionally:** Engage neighbouring LTAs to align change windows across boundaries where possible and relevant. This improves the experience for passengers using or cross-boundary services.
- ✓ **Build in controlled flexibility:** Allow for exceptional changes when clearly in passengers' interests (e.g. reliability fixes, seasonal enhancements, or urgent service improvements). Ensure this includes defined strategies for communicating changes which can be easily adapted and rolled out.
- ✓ **Streamline publicity and data updates:** Use the windows to coordinate updates to websites, apps, printed materials, and stop displays. Ensure all parties are clear in roles and responsibilities for this.
- ✓ **Design inclusive outreach and support campaigns:** Develop communications around each change window that specifically target groups most affected by timetable changes. Note that some groups may require additional support to navigate changes, such as targeted 'confident travel' support.
- ✓ **Embed in EP scheme commitments:** Include a clause in the EP scheme that formalises the timetable change process, outlines flexibility criteria, and commits to inclusive communications and support.



Consideration of the needs of disabled people

Expectation:

EPs should demonstrate how they have considered the needs of disabled people when setting requirements in their schemes. This is a new legislative duty under the Bus Services Act and aligns with the PSED in the Equality Act 2010. EPs should show how they have engaged with disabled passenger representatives and included measures to improve accessibility, such as inclusive design, staff training, and clear information, so that disabled people can access local services confidently and independently. More information can be found in the [EP guidance](#) and within the [Bus Services Act 2025](#).

Benefits:

- **Shapes the implementation and monitoring of measures** such as accessible vehicles, good quality audio-visual announcements, accessible stops, periodic driver training, and availability of alternative means for the carriage of a person with a disability where the wheelchair space is occupied, among others. These actions help remove barriers to travel, deliver wider social value and fulfil legal duties.
- Engagement helps to ensure that **systems remain responsive, accessible, and fit for purpose**. It is important to note that whilst shaped by legal duties enshrined in national legislation, our understanding of the needs and expectations of disabled passengers is also both continuously evolving and locally specific. For that, it is important **to work towards continuous engagement and upskilling for both LTAs and operators**.

Example wording in EP Scheme:

“The measures and proposals set in this EP scheme have considered the needs of disabled people as set out in the equality impact assessment included in [insert reference potentially to an appendix]. As noted, these included engagement via [insert summary of engagement mechanisms]. This was used to shape proposals in the following fundamental ways [insert text]. This is in compliance with the requirements included in the Bus Service Act 2025 for considering the needs of disabled people, ensuring safety and accessibility of stopping places, and promoting continuous training of staff. Compliance and reasonable comfort will be measured via [insert summary of monitoring mechanisms].”

Case study: Nottingham City Council (NCC) - Independent Travel Training (ITT) Programme

The Bus Services Act 2025 and the PSED require LTAs and operators to ensure that bus services are inclusive and accessible. NCC has embedded these principles into its EP by introducing Independent Travel Training (ITT) and engaging with disability groups to co-design improvements.

The ITT programme is a free service for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who currently rely on council-provided transport. The aim is to build confidence and skills so they can travel independently by bus or tram, reducing social isolation and improving long-term mobility.

Features:

- **Personalised training:** One-to-one sessions tailored to individual needs, covering route planning, ticket purchase, safe boarding and emergency procedures.
- **Partnership with charities:** Collaboration with Nottingham Mencap to promote the Safe Places Scheme, ensuring trainees know where to seek help if they feel unsafe.
- **Engagement with disabled passenger representatives:** Regular consultation with local disability forums and advocacy groups to shape EP accessibility commitments.
- **Staff training:** Bus drivers receive disability awareness training, including how to assist wheelchair users and those with hidden disabilities.

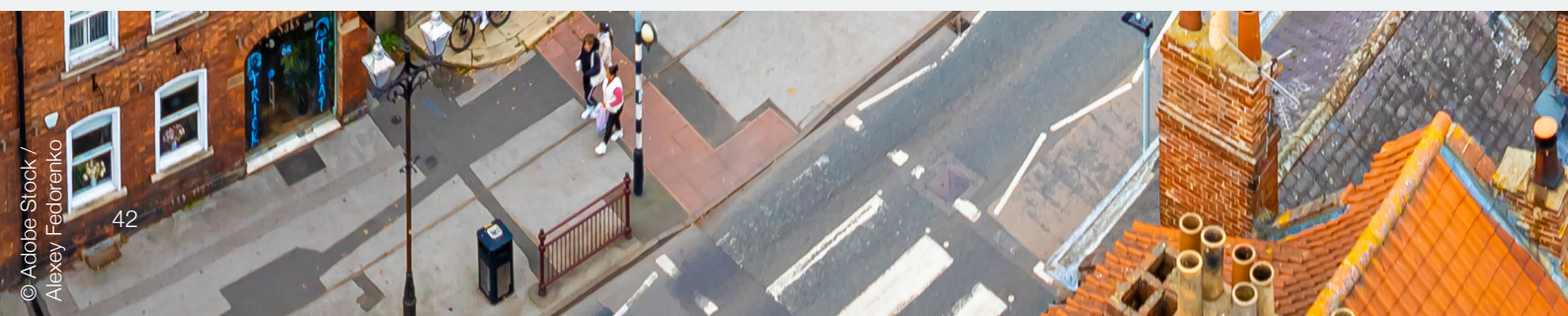
Reported results:

- **Dozens of young people with SEND have transitioned from council-funded transport to independent travel,** reducing reliance on specialist services and increasing social inclusion.
- **Participants report feeling safer and more confident using public transport,** supported by the Safe Places network.
- **Supports equality of opportunity** by enabling access to education, work, and leisure.
- **Reduces long-term transport costs** for councils and families.



Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Engage early, regularly, and systematically:** Involve disabled passenger representatives from the outset. Use forums, surveys and co-designed workshops to understand lived experiences and shape EP requirements.
- ✓ **Plan accessibility audits:** Review current services, infrastructure and information provision to identify barriers. Include physical access, sensory cues, digital tools, and behaviours.
- ✓ **Embed whole-system inclusive design:** Ensure all EP measures, such as stop upgrades, vehicle specs, and ticketing systems, follow inclusive design principles. As a minimum, you should note the requirements included in the Bus Services Act. Additionally, you may want to review resources such as the [Social Value Toolkit for Buses](#), principles included in the DfT's '[REAL training: bus and coach modules](#)', and others produced by advocacy groups and representatives of disabled groups.
- ✓ **Invest in regular staff training:** LTAs are encouraged to agree a training regime with operators. As required in the Bus Services Act 2025, training must, as a minimum, cover crime and antisocial behaviour as well as supporting disabled people. Disability awareness training should cover both visible and hidden disabilities and include practical guidance on communication and assistance. To the extent possible, standardise key aspects of these training among operators.
- ✓ **Support independent travel:** Promote schemes that support independent and safe travel to build confidence among disabled passengers. Consider partnering with local charities and schools to reach those who may benefit most.
- ✓ **Provide clear, accessible information:** Ensure timetables, maps and service updates are available in multiple formats (e.g. large print and with appropriate colour contrasts, audio/text-to-speech options, and easy-read versions). Use consistent language and layout across channels. Test this with various groups.
- ✓ **Monitor and report progress:** Include accessibility KPIs in EP performance reporting, covering both measurable outcomes and user-perceived experiences. Track improvements over time and share results publicly to demonstrate compliance, foster transparency and build trust with disabled passengers.
- ✓ **Align with wider strategies:** Link EP actions to the PSED, Inclusive Transport Strategy and local strategies. This strengthens the case for funding and shows alignment with national and local priorities.



Enforcement of bus priority infrastructure

Expectation:

EPs must commit to enforcing new and existing bus lanes and bus gates to ensure the benefits of bus priority measures are fully realised. A proportionate approach should be taken, with compliance levels monitored and enforcement targeted where it will have the greatest impact on reducing delays and improving reliability.

Benefits:

- **Protects the benefits of priority infrastructure and ensures buses can operate reliably.** Without enforcement, unauthorised vehicles can obstruct these routes, leading to delays and undermining passenger confidence. This is particularly relevant for those who rely on punctual services for commuting or time-critical travel, but also for users who are more sensitive to time uncertainty such as people with certain forms of neurodivergence.
- Effective enforcement **improves journey times and service consistency**, making buses a more viable and attractive option. This reduces congestion and associated emissions. By keeping priority routes functioning as intended, EPs can deliver on targets of reliability and support modal shift.
- A proportionate approach, monitoring compliance and targeting enforcement where it has the greatest impact **ensures fairness and efficient use of resources.** It is also important to assess how priority measures affect the wider network and manage any unintended consequences through adaptive planning.

Example wording in EP scheme:

"[Insert name of the LTA] will continue to enforce bus priority measures in line with the procedures set out in [insert reference]."

Case study: East Sussex County Council (ESCC) - Eastbourne Bus Lane Enforcement

ESCC introduced two bus lanes in Eastbourne town centre with enforcement beginning in September 2022. On 6 May 2025, ESCC began enforcement of the existing bus lanes in St Leonards-on-Sea and Telscombe Cliffs.

The enforcement and funding of current and future bus lanes was approved by Lead Members as part of their BSIP1 in 2022 and allocation of funding in 2023.

Features:

- ESCC committed to monitoring compliance and using enforcement cameras at key locations to prevent misuse by private vehicles and issuing a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) where these occur.
- Consultation highlighted strong support for enforcement to ensure the benefits of bus priority measures are realised.
- Enforcement uses ANPR, PCNs are £70 reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days, or increase to £105 after 28 days if unpaid.
- Income from the scheme pays for installation and upkeep, and surplus income is reinvested into local transport schemes.

Reported results:

- **Improved reliability:** Reduced delays on corridors with enforced bus lanes, improving punctuality for key routes.
- **Public confidence:** Feedback from consultation and local media coverage indicates passengers expect enforcement to maintain reliability and value for money.

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Use data to target enforcement:**
If resources are limited, focus enforcement efforts where non-compliance is highest or where delays have the greatest impact on reliability. Consider using GPS, traffic flow data, and passenger feedback to identify hotspots.
- ✓ **Coordinate with highways teams:** Work closely with local traffic enforcement and highways authorities to ensure enforcement is consistent, legally sound, and integrated with wider traffic management strategies.
- ✓ **Communicate clearly with the public:** Run awareness campaigns to explain the purpose of bus lanes and gates, and the consequences of misuse. This helps build public understanding and support.
- ✓ **Monitor and adapt:** Regularly review compliance levels and enforcement outcomes. Be ready to adjust enforcement strategies if issues shift or if unintended impacts emerge elsewhere in the network.
- ✓ **Include enforcement in EP reporting:** Make enforcement performance visible by including it in EP monitoring frameworks. This helps demonstrate progress and builds trust with stakeholders.
- ✓ **Consider equity impacts:** Ensure enforcement does not disproportionately affect certain groups. Use inclusive engagement to understand how it is operating in practice and impacting different groups.



Maintenance of LTA bus infrastructure

Expectation:

EPs must include a commitment to maintain all new and existing local authority bus infrastructure, such as stops, shelters, stations, and bus priority measures. Where infrastructure is owned by other bodies, such as the Local Highways Authority, their agreement to maintain these assets must also be secured.

Benefits:

- **Keeps services safe, reliable, and attractive to passengers.** Well-maintained infrastructure improves the overall travel experience and ensures accessibility features such as raised kerbs, tactile paving, and RTI displays remain functional for passengers with disabilities, supporting compliance with the PSED.
- **Neglecting maintenance can lead to deterioration and higher long-term costs for repairs or replacements.** Coordinating responsibilities across different highway authorities avoids gaps in upkeep and ensures consistent standards across the network. By committing to ongoing maintenance, EPs protect the value of public investment, sustain passenger confidence, and help deliver their long-term objectives.

Example wording in EP scheme:

“Existing facilities maintained by [name of the LTA] are shown at [insert reference, e.g. table or appendix]. These consist of bus priority schemes; bus stations and interchanges; and bus stops. The maintenance regime includes [insert]. It is monitored by [insert reference, e.g. regular reporting, audits, feedback].”

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Clearly map ownership and responsibilities early:** Identify which authority owns each asset (e.g. stops, shelters, priority lanes) and secure clear agreements for maintenance responsibilities, especially where assets are shared or cross-boundary.
- ✓ **Include provisions for maintenance in funding plans:** Ensure long-term maintenance is factored into relevant budgets and delivery plans. Include provisions around uncertainty.
- ✓ **Set service-level standards:** Define minimum maintenance standards for cleanliness, repairs, lighting, and accessibility features. This helps ensure consistency across the network and supports equality duties.
- ✓ **Monitor condition regularly:** Consider setting a clear schedule for inspections, reviews on passenger feedback, and digital tools (e.g. asset management systems) to track infrastructure condition and respond proactively to issues before they escalate.
- ✓ **Coordinate with highways, contractors, and operators:** To align schedules and avoid duplication or gaps in service.
- ✓ **Communicate with the public:** Let passengers know when maintenance is planned or completed. Visible upkeep builds trust and shows commitment to quality.



Socially Necessary Local Services (SNLS)

The purpose of the SNLS measure is to provide greater transparency to changes in bus service provision through identifying a list of bus services considered to be socially necessary and including this list within the EP plan. If a bus service on this list is subsequently considered for any permanent substantial variation or cancellation, the LTA and bus operator must work together to look at the alternative solutions/mitigations. Full details of the how the SNLS measure should be considered in EPs are outlined in the [EP guidance](#).

A **substantial variation** could be defined as any permanent change that would increase the journey time of the passenger by more than one hour, and may include:

- Reduction in frequency – For example, from every 1h to 2h.
- Change in timing of service – For example, time at which the service starts/ends by more than 1h.

Ultimately, LTAs should decide on what change is a substantial variation based on knowledge of local needs. As a general principle, decisions should be transparent and guided by minimising impacts on the wider bus network and the communities it serves.

This section offers:

- A sample methodology for identifying SNLS.
- A worked example aligning to the methodology described above.
- Potential metrics that could be used to assess each service, data that could support this and where this can be sourced (see A.2).
- Practical advice when implementing the SNLS measure with example scenarios.
- Signposts to tips and useful resources.

Methodology for identifying SNLS

This section presents a sample methodology for identifying SNLS using a weighted scorecard approach. Each service can potentially be assessed against metrics defined by an LTA, reflecting local priorities for what constitutes a SNLS. This methodology is intended to be an illustrative way to evaluate and implement the SNLS measure. LTAs can adapt these approaches to their specific needs, as many LTAs will already have processes in place for service planning. Alternative methodologies may be appropriate depending on the context of the EP.

The EP guidance gives LTAs considerable discretion to design and implement a methodology that best reflects the ‘socially necessary’ element of their services, which in turn should guide their approach and development of the SNLS list. This can consider a range of factors, including local priorities and compliance with the PSED in relation to local characteristics. In this way, LTAs will have the final say on which of their services they believe to be socially necessary and for what reasons.

Equalities:

By factoring in the value that certain routes bring to vulnerable individuals and groups of protected characteristics, LTAs can use the SNLS measure as a practical way to demonstrate compliance with the PSED. This can be pursued by bringing transparency to how decisions are fair, avoid discrimination, and actively promote equality and inclusion.

Key questions to consider may include:

- How does the methodology for determining and managing the SNLS list align with local equality objectives and accessibility needs?
- Which groups or communities would be disproportionately affected if a service were withdrawn?
- How can the proposed mitigations evidence active steps to reduce the impact on these groups and those that rely on public transport? What evidence (quantitative and qualitative) can be used to show that decisions support inclusion and reduce barriers for protected groups?

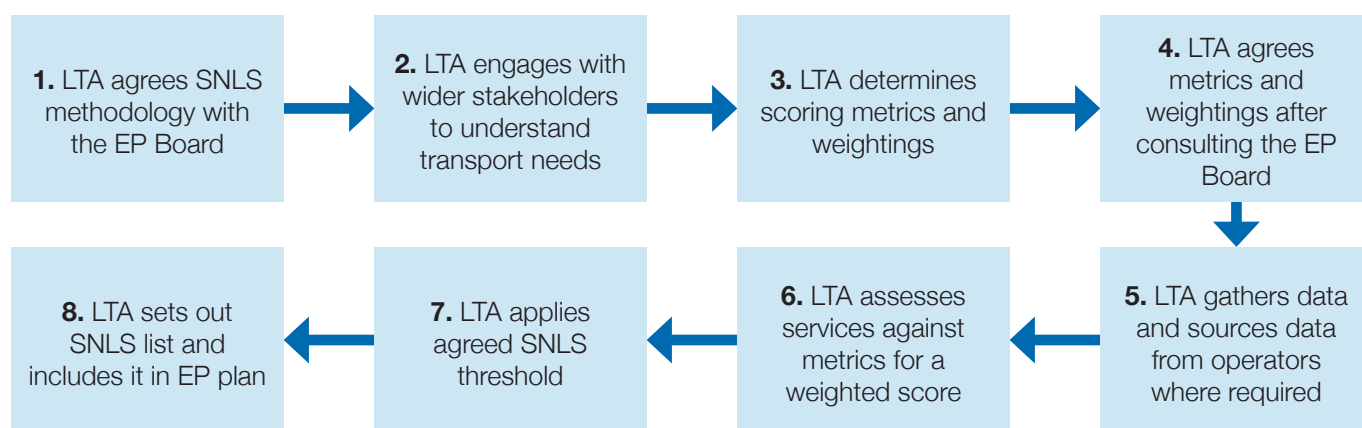


Figure 1: Eight steps that an LTA can follow to identify SNLS

Worked example

The following worked example demonstrates how the process set out above could be applied in practice. The example is intended to provide practical advice on implementation, highlighting how the process can be done in a transparent and repeatable way. It does not represent a prescribed approach. LTAs should adapt the steps, metrics and weightings to consider data availability and reflect local priorities.

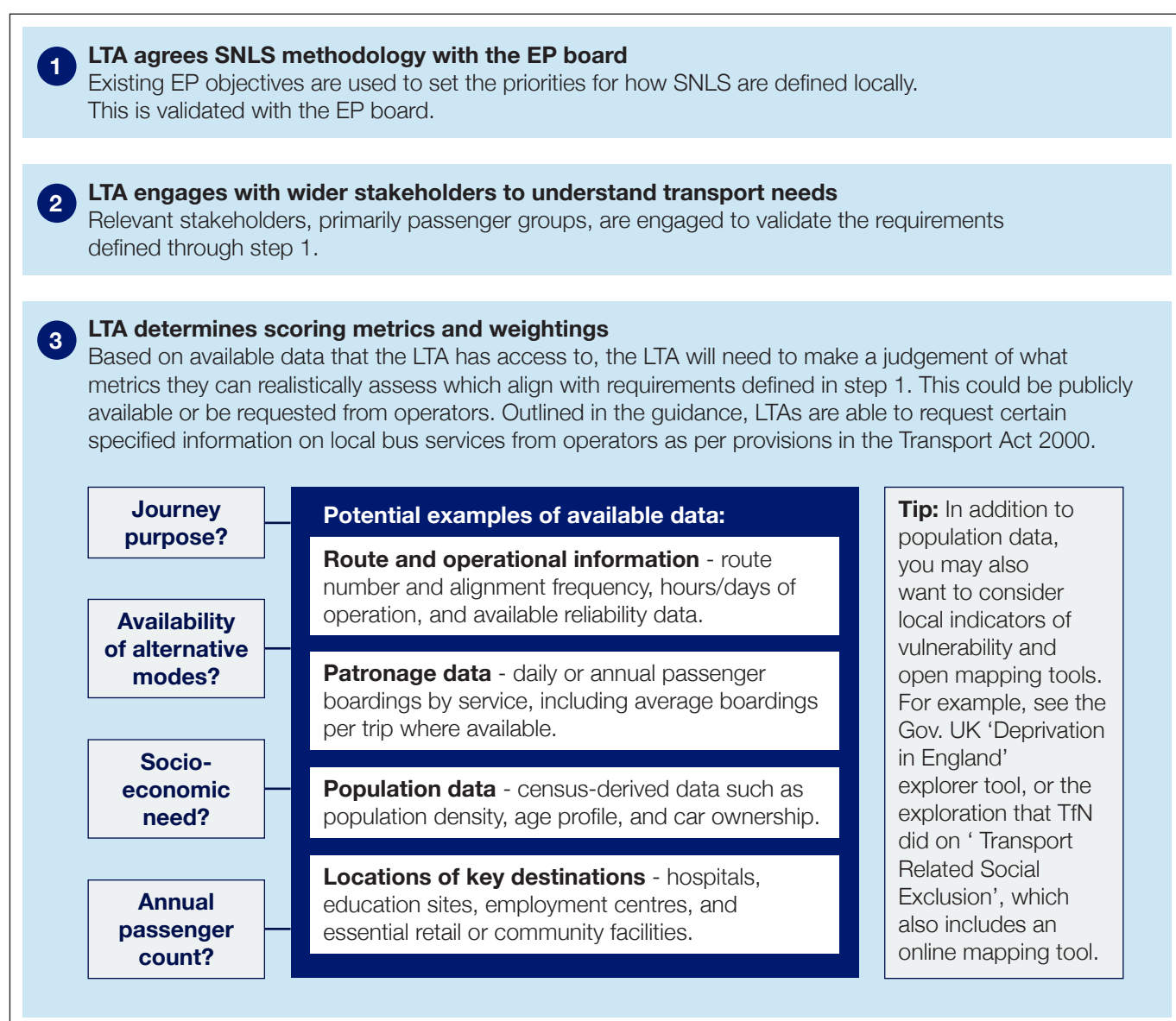


Figure 2: Worked example - identifying SNLS

- 3** The LTA can then define bandings for scoring and weight metrics that align with their local priorities of how an SNLS is defined.

Primary journey purpose

Primary journey purpose	Score (1-5)	Interpretation
Access to hospital / essential healthcare	5	Highest social necessity; alternative options typically limited.
Access to school / compulsory education	5	Statutory duty, high community impact if withdrawn.
Rural work (peak)	4	Supports economic participation where alternatives are limited.
Urban work (peak)	3	Important, but alternatives may exist (denser networks, active travel).
Rural shopping / essential errands (off-peak)	2	Important to rural accessibility, but less critical than employment / healthcare.
Urban shopping / discretionary trips (off-peak)	1	Lowest essentiality; more alternatives typically available.

Score weighting: 30%

Socio-economic need

Characteristics of catchment area	Score (1-5)	Interpretation
Very high deprivation and very low car ownership	5	Highest social necessity
High deprivation or low car ownership	4	Strong dependency
Above average low-income households	3	Higher dependency
Mixed deprivation levels	2	Moderate dependency
Low deprivation, high car ownership	1	Low dependency

Score weighting: 25%

Figure 2 (continued): Worked example - identifying SNLS

3 Availability of alternatives

Alternative travel options	Score (1-5)	Interpretation
No alternative at all	5	Highest social necessity
No direct alternative	4	High dependency
Alternative with interchange	3	Increase journey burden
Infrequent alternative	2	Moderate coverage
Frequent direct alternative	1	Social need low

Score weighting: 25%

Patronage

Annual passengers	Score (1-5)	Interpretation
> 20,000	5	High usage - major impact if withdrawn
10,001 - 20,000	4	Significant impact
5,001 - 10,000	3	Moderate impact
1,001 - 5,000	2	Lower impact
< 1,000	1	Very low demonstrated demand

Score weighting: 20%

Whilst patronage data is not typically publicly available, LTAs can request it for use to develop SNLS.

Figure 2 (continued): Worked example - identifying SNLS

A detailed description of each metric and additional metrics that could be assessed is outlined in A.2.

Tips for defining your bandings and weightings against each metric:

- **Define consistent bandings across all metrics** (e.g. use a 1-5 scoring scale for all metrics): This keEPs all metrics easy to interpret and comparable.
- **Define bandings based on the range of all possible values for the metrics:** For example, if the maximum catchment population of a service is 5,000, this should define the upper limit within your bandings.
- **Document your rationale:** It is important to document how your weightings and bandings align with your local priorities including EP objectives, equality duties and policy goals. This transparency will be helpful when justifying decisions to members, auditors or the public.
- **Keep the number of metrics manageable:** Three to six core metrics usually provide enough resolution without over-weighting small differences.
- **Review and update periodically based on changes in data:** For example, align to new census figures or an update against new annual patronage figures.

Tip: Where possible, align with existing data and monitoring processes and address data gaps proportionately.

4 LTA agrees metrics and weightings after consulting the EP board

The metrics and weighting defined in step 3 are agreed by the LTA after consulting the EP board.

5 LTA engages with wider stakeholders to understand transport needs

Data is gathered and formatted to be able to assess each service against each metric defined in step 3.

E.g. Starting from daily patronage by route to average per year:

Patronage by day data is requested from operators.

Route	Patronage (daily)	Date
A	132	5/10/2025
A	201	6/10/2025
A	156	7/10/2025

Route	Patronage (daily)	Date
A	59,332	2025
A	51,002	2024
A	54,321	2023

Route	Patronage (daily)	Date
A	54,885	
B	7,789	
C	10,873	

Figure 2 (continued): Worked example - identifying SNLS

6 LTA assesses services against metrics for a weighted score

With the formatted data, each service is assessed against metric to determine the score for each metric.

Tip: Test the scorecard on a small number of services to validate outcomes and refine the approach where necessary.

7 LTA applies agreed SNLS threshold

Combined score threshold would be defined for the cut-off for being SNLS. In the example below, this is a 15 or above. This is also a chance for operators to check for any anomalies.

Route No.	A	B	C	D	E	F
Operator	X	X	Y	Y	Y	Z
Primary journey purpose	Urban work (peak)	Rural work (peak)	Rural shopping (off-peak)	Access to school	Access to hospital	Urban work (peak)
Score	3	4	2	5	5	3
Characteristics of catchment area	Above-average low-income households	High deprivation or low car ownership	Mixed deprivation levels	Very high deprivation and very low car ownership	Low deprivation, high car ownership	Very high deprivation and very low car ownership
Score	3	4	2	5	1	5
Availability of alternative modes	No direct alternative	No alternative at all	Alternative with interchange	Infrequent alternative	Frequent direct alternative	Infrequent alternative
Score	4	5	3	2	1	2
Number of passengers per year	Over 20,001	10,001-20,000	< 1,000	1,001-5,000	5,001-10,000	Over 20,001
Score	5	4	1	2	3	5
Combined score	15	17	8	14	10	15

Tip: Sensitivity test the threshold. See what happens if you move it up or down by 15%. This helps confirm that your chosen cut-off is fair and not driven by outliers.

Tip: Transport Planning tools such as Podaris have an inbuilt route impact assessment tool and social value score that measures the impact of removing a service. These could be used to automate the process of scoring your SNLS services providing you are able to document the datasets that have gone into the tool.

Figure 2 (continued): Worked example - identifying SNLS

8 LTA sets out SNLS list and includes it in EP plan

Applying the agreed threshold will define list of SNLS services and this is documented within the EP plan along with the methodology used.

Tip: Test the scorecard on a small number of services to validate outcomes and refine the approach where necessary.

Route no.	Operator
A	X
B	X
F	Y
...	

Tip: There may be services that are not on the SNLS list based on the assessment due to factors not assessed from the metrics. You could add services not on the list of SNLS providing you can give reasoning for this decision.

Figure 2 (continued): Worked example - identifying SNLS



Implementing the SNLS measure

When a SNLS is considered for cancellation or substantial variation, the EP is required to explore possible alternative arrangements. A possible process for doing this is outlined in the flowchart below.

Note: As a principle, decisions on what constitutes a suitable alternative arrangement, which ones to pursue, or whether to pursue a service cancellation, should be ultimately guided by minimising impacts on the wider bus network and the communities it serves.

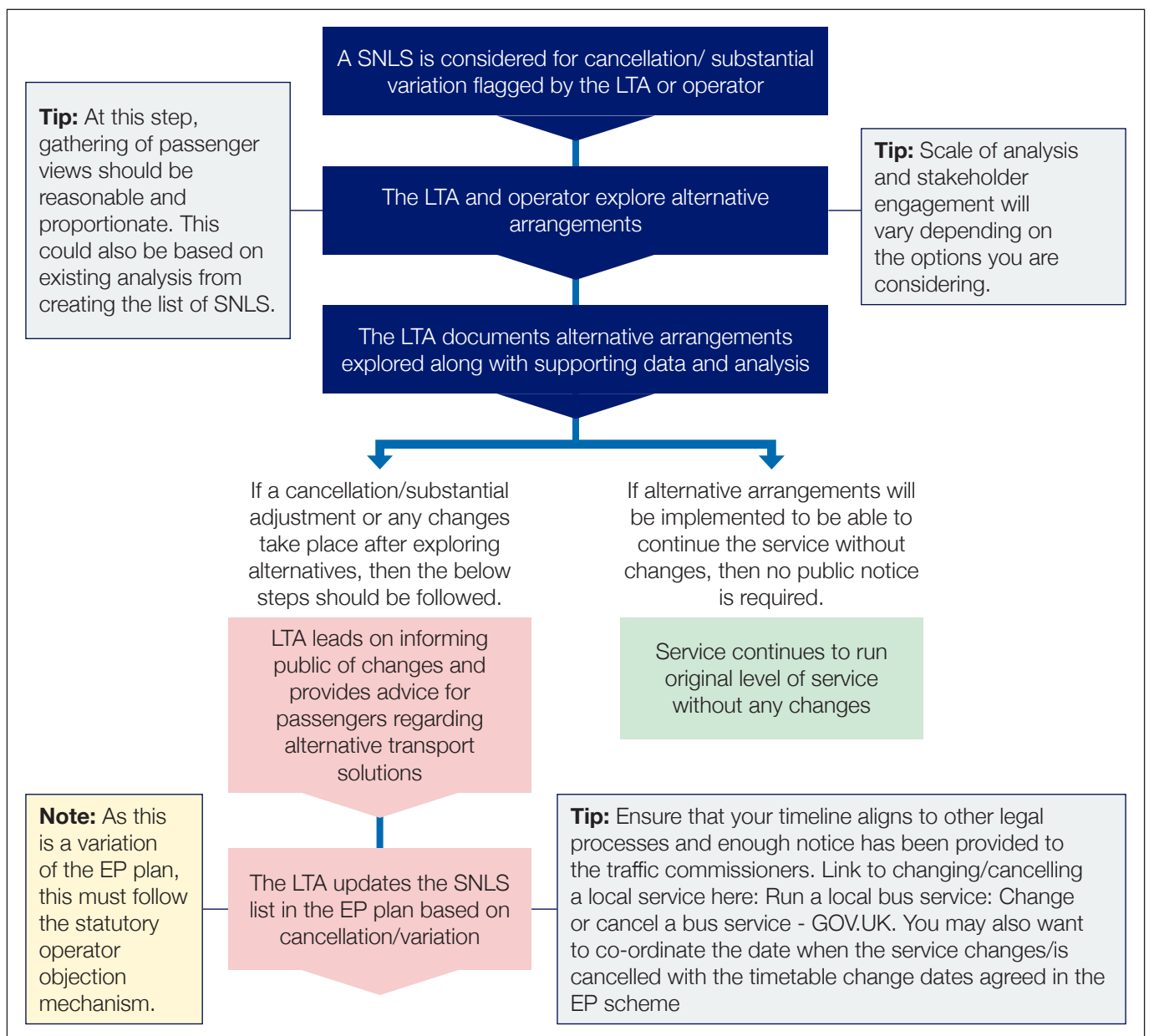


Figure 3: Process for implementing the SNLS measure

Alternative arrangements

An alternative arrangement is an action to avoid cancelling the SNLS or to reduce its effects. In doing so, it seeks to minimise the impact on passengers and preserve essential connectivity where possible. A list of some of these alternative arrangements or mitigations is found in the EP guidance. These are explored in more detail below.

Table 3: Possible alternative arrangements

Alternative arrangement	Description	Examples
Minor or non-permanent change in hours/days of operation	Changing the days of operation could reduce operational costs at periods where a service has significantly less demand whilst maintaining the current route. This could be targeted at specific periods of the year.	- Remove Sunday services, for a limited period of time - Suspend services on public holidays if alternative routes are available
Minor reduction in frequency of services	A frequency reduction will reduce operational costs whilst maintaining the current route. This could be targeted on specific corridors of the route, days, hours or at off-peak hours.	- Reduce peak frequency from every 15 minutes to every 30 minutes - Introduce seasonal timetables with reduced frequency during winter months
Changes to routes	Diverting a route to more strategic areas or merging two (or more) similar routes. This can be an effective way to ensure a route maintains its overall coverage whilst saving on operational costs.	- Divert route to serve a new housing development, removing a low-use loop - Merge two overlapping routes into a single service - Shorten route to terminate at a key interchange instead of continuing to a low-demand area
Provision of funding to support continuation of the service or an alternative service	Subsidised funding will allow for routes to maintain the current levels of service and to continue serving its overall purpose. Providing alternative types of services e.g. DRT or CT will ensure that passengers will still be able to access key destinations that were provided through the service.	- Subsidise a route for 12 months whilst monitoring demand - Extend DRT to areas where fixed-route services are unsustainable - Provide funding for CT schemes to replace withdrawn services

Scenarios when implementing the SNLS measure

The following three fictional scenarios illustrate how the process discussed above could be implemented in practice.

Scenario 1 – A commercial SNLS is considered for cancellation

This scenario illustrates how the process could be applied where a service identified as a SNLS is proposed for cancellation, and how alternative arrangements are explored to reduce the impact on passengers.

1. A SNLS is considered for cancellation by the LTA or operator

Service A that is a SNLS is flagged by the operator for possible cancellation due to commercial pressures. Shown on the right, this service connects Village 1 and 2 to the Town Centre. Service B's route covers Village 2, Village 3, Village 4, the Town Centre and Village 5.

2. The LTA and operator explore alternative arrangements

Alternative arrangements are explored by the LTA and operator to preserve Service A's connectivity and minimise the impact on passengers.

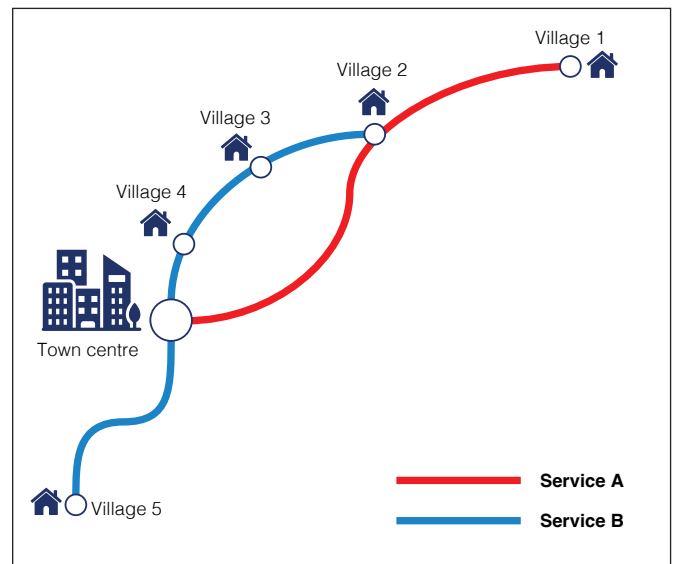


Table 4: Alternative arrangements under scenario 1

Alternative arrangements	Analysis	Outcome	Action
1. LTA provides a subsidy to fund the service	LTA reviews budget availability and assesses value for money based on patronage and social value. The LTA explores reducing subsidy of provision of other funded services to provide funding for Service A.	No funding is available. Intervention not affordable and not considered value for money compared to other schemes in place.	Not taken forward.
2. Reduction in hours or days of operation	Operator analyses patronage and cost data and identifies that Sunday services are low-use and high-cost. Removing Sunday operation makes the route commercially viable. This would be classed as a substantial variation by definition. These are preferred alternatives to cancelling the service and would contribute to a more positive impact for the wider network. Customers are consulted on a reduction in hours of operation. Passengers are not in agreement with this change.	Route is commercially viable with Sunday services removed from the timetable. Potential accessibility impacts with Sunday service removed.	Further alternative arrangement explored.
3. Alternative route coverage on affected days	LTA and operator assess whether another route (Service B) could be diverted or extended to provide coverage on Sundays. Service B already provides coverage for Village 2 to the town centre but does not cover Village 1. Accessibility analysis indicates that Service B can provide comparable coverage if extended. Customers are consulted on the potential for an alternative route to cover certain days. Passengers are mostly in agreement with this change.	Viable alternative arrangement identified.	Taken forward. Initiates process for a managed transition – It is noted that Service B will be required to operate at a reduced frequency to be able to use the same number of vehicles allocated to the route on Sunday.

As part of their decision making, the LTA leads in consulting passengers to understand impacts and preferences:

- **Consultation on reduced days of operation (Service A):**

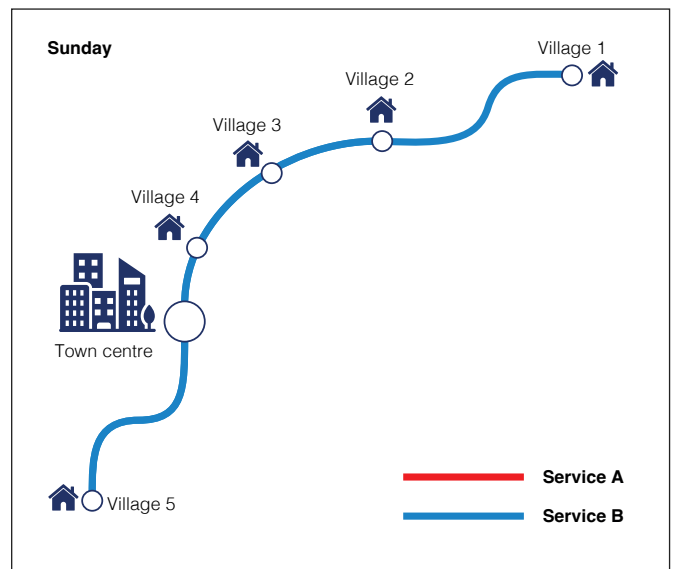
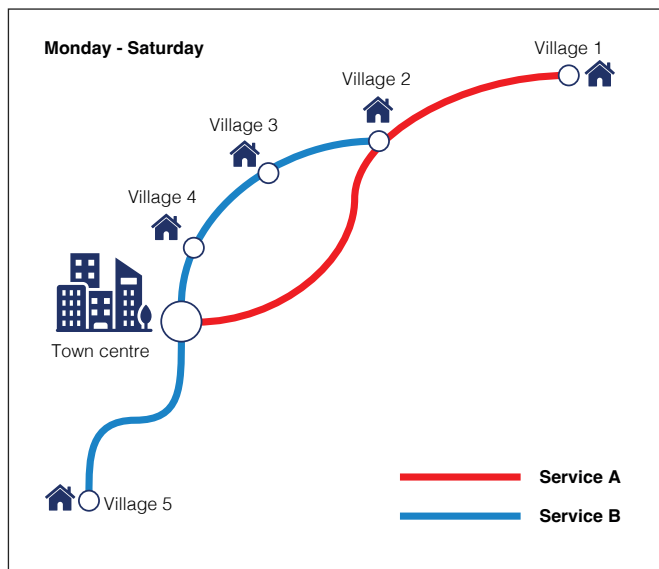
Passengers express strong concern about the loss of Sunday services and do not support this option in isolation.

- **Consultation on alternative route coverage (Service B):**

Passengers are broadly supportive of the proposal for Service B to provide Sunday coverage, recognising that this preserves essential connectivity.

Consultation outcomes are documented and used to inform the final decision.

Final decision: Adjust Service A's days of operation and amend Service B's route on Sundays to provide additional coverage. It is noted that for this change to take effect, Service B will be required to operate at a reduced frequency, which is acceptable taking account of the retained coverage.



3. The LTA documents alternative arrangements explored along with supporting data and analysis

The options are summarised as above with supporting data and analysis documented.

4. EP informs public of changes and provides advice for passengers regarding existing alternative transport solutions

The operator issues a formal notification of a change to the SNLS, setting out:

- The reasons for the change
- The alternative arrangements explored
- The arrangement to be implemented

The LTA coordinates public communications to ensure passengers are clearly informed of the changes. This includes:

- Publication of notices (e.g. on the council website, social media, and at all bus stops along the route of Service A and Service B)
- Signposting to the operator's formal service change notice
- Provision of clear advice on alternative travel options, including use of Service B

The operator notifies the traffic commissioner that the service levels for Service A and Service B will change. At the time the decision is made, two months remain until the agreed timetable change date outlined in the EP scheme. In coordination with this date, it is agreed that Service A will continue to operate on Sundays until the timetable change takes effect.

5. The LTA updates the SNLS list in the EP plan based on cancellation/variation

Changes to Service A are reflected in the list of SNLS within the EP plan.

Scenario 2 – A commercial SNLS is considered for substantial variation

This scenario illustrates how the process could be applied where a service identified as a SNLS is considered for substantial variation and how alternative arrangements are explored to reduce the impact on passengers.

1. A SNLS is considered for substantial variation is flagged by the LTA or operator

Service A is a SNLS and is considered by the LTA or operator for a change of days of operation, removing the Sunday service due to operator commercial pressures.

The LTA recognised that this would constitute a substantial variation and therefore trigger the need to explore alternative arrangements.

2. The LTA and operator explore alternative arrangements

Alternative arrangements are explored between the LTA and operator to preserve Service A's connectivity and minimise the impact on passengers. The possible options are summarised in table 5 with supporting data and analysis documented.

Table 5: Alternative arrangements under scenario 2

Alternative arrangements	Analysis	Outcome	Action
1. Reallocate funding from other supported routes to retain current levels of service for Service A	Review of existing supported services identified that other routes deliver higher patronage and wider benefits (e.g. social value per £ spent).	Reducing these services would result in greater overall detriment.	Not taken forward.
2. Reduced Sunday frequency	Analysis indicates that a reduced Sunday service (from every 30 minutes to every 1 hour) would retain essential connectivity while lowering subsidy requirement.	Impact on users considered limited and non-material. Considered but not required.	Not taken forward.
3. LTA provides subsidy to fund Sunday services	LTA checks budget for availability of funds. Patronage data shows Sunday usage is lower than weekday but serves essential trips. Cost per passenger is assessed as proportionate and within acceptable value-for-money thresholds for supported services.	LTA could fund through a De Minimis arrangement.	Taken forward

3. The LTA documents alternative arrangements explored along with supporting data and analysis

The options are summarised as above with supporting data and analysis documented.

4. Service continues to run original level of service without any changes

The proposed change does not result in a substantial variation to the SNLS as Service A still provides the same level of service to passengers. Further steps are therefore not required. The decision, supporting analysis, and agreed action are documented by the LTA to ensure transparency.

Scenario 3 – A SNLS that is funded by the LTA is considered for cancellation

This scenario illustrates how the process could be applied where a service identified as a SNLS that is funded by an LTA is considered for cancellation and how alternative arrangements are explored to reduce the impact on passengers.

1. SNLS is considered for cancellation as flagged by the LTA or operator

Service A is a SNLS and is considered for cancellation. It is funded by the LTA but due to resource availability, the LTA is unable to continue to operate the service. Shown on the right, this service connects four rural villages to a neighbouring town's centre and provides an hourly service.

2. LTA and operator explore alternative arrangements

Alternative arrangements are explored between the LTA and operator to preserve Service A's connectivity and minimise the impact on passengers.

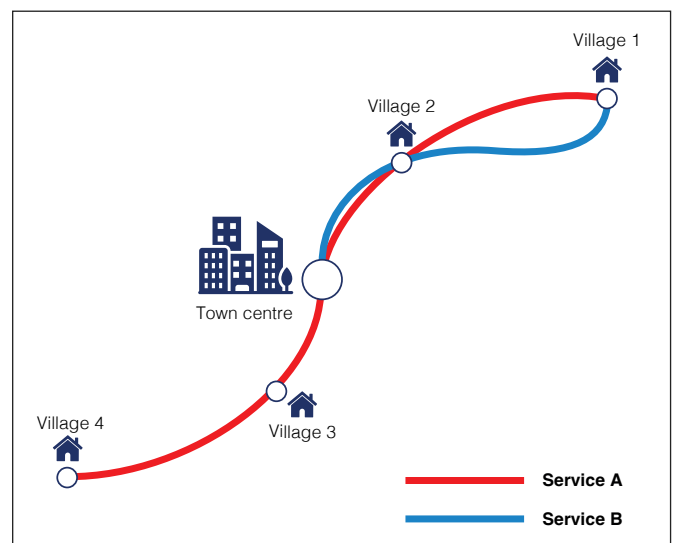
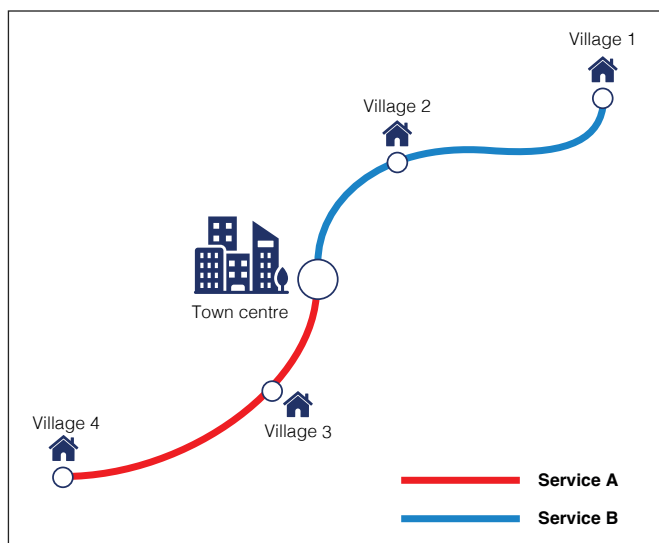


Table 6: Alternative arrangements under scenario 3

Alternative arrangements	Analysis	Outcome	Action
1. LTA to find alternative funding arrangements to retain current levels of service for Service A	LTA reviews current funded routes to assess if Service A can be supported by reducing service levels elsewhere.	Other funded routes provide better value for money and will result in more detrimental impacts to the overall network. Not feasible to reduce funding on other routes.	Not taken forward.
2. Merge Service A and B as a single route	Service B is a commercial route and provides coverage for Villages 1 and 2 to the town centre whilst not covering Village 3 and 4. Service B runs a bus every 30 minutes. Operator reviews Service A's patronage data between Village 3 and the town centre to assess the feasibility of extending Service B whilst retaining the current frequency of services.	Extended Service B route is not commercially viable to cover Villages 3 and 4. Patronage data suggests low usage if route is extended with Service B's current frequency.	Not taken forward.
3. Reduce the frequency of Service A to every 1 hour as opposed to every 30 minutes	Analysis is undertaken to explore viability of an hourly service for Service A.	An hourly service is viable, and passenger consultation is undertaken on the change. Passengers express strong discontent to the reduction in frequency.	Not taken forward.
4. Service A is shortened to only cover from the town centre to Village 3 and 4 whilst Service B provides an interchange if passengers require a bus to Villages 1 and 2	Analysis is undertaken to explore viability of a shortening the route of Service A whilst maintaining current frequency.	Mileage saved shows that the option is viable. Passenger consultation is undertaken on the change.	Passengers in broad agreement that this change will be satisfactory. Agreed and take forward.

Final decision: Service A is shortened to cover from the town centre to Village 3 and 4 whilst Service B provides an interchange if passengers require a bus to Villages 1 and 2. Service A will continue to run at a 30-minute frequency. As a result of the shortened route, operational costs for Service A will reduce.



3. LTA documents alternative arrangements explored along with supporting data and analysis

The options are summarised as above with supporting data and analysis documented.

4. EP informs the public of changes and provides advice for passengers regarding existing alternative transport solutions

The LTA issues a formal notification of a change to the SNLS, setting out:

- The reasons for the change
- The alternative arrangements explored
- The mitigation measures being implemented

The LTA coordinates public communications to ensure passengers are clearly informed of the changes. This includes:

- Publication of notices (e.g. on the council website, social media, and at stops)
- Provision of clear advice on alternative travel options, including use of Service B to interchange to access Villages 1 and 2 from Village 3

The operator informs the traffic commissioner of a change to Service A. Although three months remain until the agreed timetable change dates as per the EP scheme, the LTA is unable to subsidise the service until then. The change will therefore be made within 42 days, in accordance with traffic commissioner timescales.

5. LTA updates the SNLS list in the EP plan based on variation

Changes to Service A are reflected in the list of SNLS within the EP plan.

Scenario 4 – A commercial SNLS is considered for cancellation, alternative arrangements are considered with due regard

This scenario illustrates how the process could be applied where a commercial service identified as a SNLS is considered for cancellation and how alternative arrangements have been explored with due regard.

1. SNLS is considered for cancellation as flagged by the operator

Service A is a SNLS and is considered for cancellation due to operator cost pressures and declining demand. The service currently runs on a 45-minute frequency from Mondays to Fridays.

2. LTA and operator explore alternative arrangements

Alternative arrangements are explored between the LTA and operator to preserve Service A's connectivity and minimise the impact on passengers.

Table 7: Alternative arrangements under scenario 4

Alternative arrangements	Analysis	Outcome	Action
1. Reduction in frequency explored from every 45 minutes to hourly	Operator assesses viability of reducing the service's frequency from 45 minutes to hourly. Option is not commercially viable.	Not commercially viable.	Not taken forward.
2. LTA provides subsidy to fund service	LTA checks budget for availability of funds however there is no remaining budget allocated to providing subsidy to Service A.	No funding available.	Not taken forward.
3. Reallocate funding from other supported routes to retain current levels of service for Service A	Review of existing supported services identified that other routes have higher patronage and wider benefits (e.g. social value per £ spent).	Reducing these services would result in greater overall detriment.	Not taken forward.
4. Diversion of other routes to cover Service A's route	Alternative services are considered to provide coverage to Service A's routes. Even when prioritising areas of higher relative demand, all proposed diversions result in disproportionately high operational costs from the additional travel time.	Not commercially viable to all proposed diversions of other services.	Not taken forward.
5. Reduction in hours of operation	Operator assesses viability of reducing the service's hours of operation in the evenings where demand is relatively lower compared to during the day. Option is not commercially viable.	Not commercially viable.	Not taken forward.
6. Reduction in days of operation	Operator assesses viability of reducing the service's days of operation on Monday and Fridays where demand is relatively lower compared to during the rest of the week. Option is not commercially viable.	Not commercially viable.	Not taken forward.

Note that (5) and (6) would be classed as substantial variations by definition. These are preferred alternatives to cancelling the service and would contribute to a more positive impact for the wider network.

Final decision: LTA exhausts possible options to avoiding cancelling Service A and Service A is cancelled. It is recognised that cancelling this service is the approach that best preserves the wider network by minimising impact on communities with the resource the LTA has available.

3. LTA documents alternative arrangements explored along with supporting data and analysis

The options are summarised as above with supporting data and analysis documented.

4. EP informs public of changes and provides advice for passengers regarding existing alternative transport solutions

The operator issues a formal notification of cancellation to the SNLS, setting out:

- The reasons for the cancellation
- The alternative arrangements explored

The LTA coordinates public communications to ensure passengers are clearly informed of the changes. This includes:

- Publication of notices (e.g. on the council website, social media, and at stops)
- Provision of clear advice on alternative travel options

The operator informs the traffic commissioner that Service A will be cancelled. Five months remain until the agreed timetable change dates as per the EP scheme, the LTA is unable to subsidise the service until then. The change will therefore be made within 42 days, in accordance with traffic commissioner timescales.

5. LTA updates the SNLS list in the EP plan based on cancellation

Service A is removed from the list of SNLS within the EP plan.

Further considerations

This section includes key information and advice relevant for going beyond compliance to enhance EP delivery as well as achieving EP outcomes and wider policy goals.

Modern buses and decarbonisation

EPs can be used as a tool to support the strategic delivery of modern buses and decarbonisation. In addition, the Bus Services Act 2025 introduces a clause that allows the Secretary of State to set a date for banning the use of non-ZEBs (by no earlier than 1st January 2030). Below are some considerations to operationalise the content included in the EP guidance:

1. **Define scope and applicability clearly:** Decide whether requirements apply to all vehicles operating within the EP scheme area, or only vehicles on specific routes, corridors, or service types (e.g. excluding long-distance coach services registered as local buses).
2. **Use phased implementation timelines:** Introduce requirements gradually to allow operators time to plan fleet upgrades or conversions.
3. **Strategically plan the funding:** Aligning with funding opportunities where possible. For example, coordinating with national or funding schemes to support fleet investment. Include references to available grants or match-funding options in EP documentation.
4. **Coordinate with operators on depot readiness and energy supply:** Engage operators early to assess depot capacity, grid connection, and energy infrastructure needs. Where possible, align EP requirements with operators' investment cycles and local energy strategies to avoid delivery delays.
5. **Specify technical standards and design features:** Including clear, measurable criteria for emissions (e.g. zero-emission or repowered to ZEB standards), accessibility (e.g. ramps and lifts, minimum two wheelchair spaces, provision of quality audio visual information, accessible colour schemes, etc.), passenger experience (e.g. Wi-Fi, USB charging, seat quality), vehicle appearance (e.g. livery, branding, real-time information displays).
6. **Monitor compliance and performance:** Set up a monitoring framework using operator self-reporting (e.g. fleet registers), spot checks or audits by the authority, passenger feedback on vehicle quality and accessibility.
7. **Consider including exemptions and grace periods:** Allow exemptions for certain service types or temporary grace periods for operators facing supply chain delays or financial constraints.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): personal safety, reporting mechanisms and communications

EPs must proactively safeguard the personal safety of passengers and staff, particularly for protected groups from VAWG and ASB. According to the Office of National Statistics, 36% of people have experiences/witnessed some type of antisocial behaviour in the past year (Crime Survey, 2024) and 58% of women aged 16-34 reported feeling very or fairly unsafe using public transport alone after dark (Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, 2022).

The Bus Services Act 2025 introduces a new requirement for staff training on identifying and safely responding to VAWG and ASB incidents. Currently, there is incomplete evidence of personal safety and prevalence of offences and behaviours that undermine personal safety, across all modes of transport across the country. Improving incident reporting by staff and passengers will help LTAs to gather better data, identify problem areas, and target interventions more effectively.

Potential measures that can be incorporated into the EP could include:

- **Physical design interventions:** Enhancing CCTV coverage deterring potential perpetrators from committing offences.
- **Police/uniformed presence:** Co-ordinating with local police/transport safety officers to increase presence on bus routes, stops and stations
- **Staff/bystander training:** Training for bus drivers, front-line customer facing staff and passengers to inform them on how to identify and respond to incidents.
- **Marketing and communications:** Promoting better behaviour campaigns highlighting how inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable or active bystander campaigns informing passengers on how to respond to such incidents.
- **Reporting mechanisms (e.g. helplines or text services):** Providing information on helplines or text services available publicly and easy to access on how to report incidents of VAWG and ASB.
- **Partnering with volunteer organisations/charities:** Co-ordinating provision of support to those that need it e.g. whilst getting home.

Presenting the bus network as a single system, with clear passenger information

The following example requirements can be outlined within the EP scheme in addition to the minimum standards on ‘multi-operator information provision’ and ‘common timetable change dates’:



Figure 4: Further recommendations for presenting the bus network as a single system, with clear passenger information

Part 2: Process and governance

EP processes

The EP guidance outlines the requirements for each step in the EP processes including making a plan and scheme, and varying, postponing and cancelling and EP.

Please note that the advice provided in the EP manual is intended to complement the statutory requirements outlined in the EP guidance and should not be used independently of the EP guidance.

This section of the EP manual aims to break down each step of each process including:

- Flowcharts summarising the step, who is involved, the level of effort and key skills required
- Checklists used to check off the requirements for each step

Annex 4 provides more practical material including templates for issuing notices/objections, top tips supplementing the EP guidance and practical examples.



Making an EP plan and scheme

The EP guidance sets out the process for making an EP plan and scheme.

The flowchart below summarises the key steps, who is involved and the level of effort required. **Please refer to the EP guidance for full information of the statutory requirements.**

		Relative level of effort	Who is involved?
Step 1	LTA publishes a notice of intention to make an EP	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA
Step 2	LTA requests specified information about local bus services that operate either within or into the EP area from operators	Low – May require some co-ordination and data processing	LTA Operators
Step 3	LTA prepares the EP plan and scheme, in collaboration with operators and other stakeholders	High – Requires significant data, analysis, and engagement	LTA Operators Relevant stakeholders
Step 4	LTA publishes a notice that a draft EP plan and scheme has been prepared	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA
Step 5	Operators formally review the EP plan and scheme and raise any objections	Low – Minimal objections if collaborated with operators to draft	Operators
Step 6	Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA carries out formal consultation	High – Requires significant engagement	LTA Operators Relevant stakeholders
Step 7	LTA modifies the EP plan and/or scheme, as required, after consultation	Low – Minimal modifications if collaborated with stakeholders to draft	LTA
Step 8	LTA completes the schedule 10 Test to ensure that making an EP does not restrict competition	Medium	LTA
Step 9	If any changes are made to the EP plan and/or scheme, operators formally review the EP plan and scheme and raise any objections	Low – Minimal objections if collaborated with operators to draft	Operators
Step 10	Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA to 'make' the EP plan and scheme and publishes notice to all operators and relevant stakeholders	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA

Figure 5: Steps for making an EP plan or scheme

Checklist

The checklist below summarises the list of actions needed to complete each step.

Step 1 - LTA publishes a notice of intention to make an EP

- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of intention to make an EP to all local bus operators operating wholly or partly within the proposed EP area?
- ☐ Has the LTA invited all local bus operators to participate in the development of the EP?

Step 2 - LTA requests specified information about local bus services that operate either within or into the EP area from operators

- ☐ Has the LTA requested specified information from local bus operators?
- ☐ Has the LTA put in place measures to ensure commercially sensitive information is not disclosed and confidentiality/non-disclosure agreements are in place where appropriate?
- ☐ Has the LTA considered how information may be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000?

Step 3 - LTA prepares the EP plan and scheme, in collaboration with operators and other stakeholders

Has the **EP plan** been prepared by the LTA with consultation and collaboration with operators and other stakeholders offering the following content:

- ☐ A map of the geographical area it covers
- ☐ How it is to be reviewed and the dates by which reviews are to be completed
- ☐ All the relevant factors that the parties consider will affect, or have the potential to affect, the local bus market over the life of the plan
- ☐ A summary of any available information on passengers' experiences of using bus services
- ☐ A summary of any available data on trends in bus journey speeds and the impact of congestion on local bus services
- ☐ A list of bus services that have been considered to be SNLS
- ☐ Alignment with the bus network accessibility plan and how the authority seeks to take steps to enable persons with disabilities to travel independently, safely, and in reasonable comfort
- ☐ What outcomes need to be delivered to improve local bus services in the EP plan area

- ☐ What overall interventions the partnership believes need to be taken to deliver those outcomes.

Has the **EP scheme** been prepared by the LTA with consultation and collaboration with operators and other stakeholders offering the following content:

- ☐ The area to which it relates
- ☐ The requirements imposed on local bus services under it. Including any requirements to enable travel by persons with disabilities in compliance with the Bus Services Act 2025, section 18.
- ☐ Whether the operation of the EP scheme is to be reviewed and, if so, how and by which dates
- ☐ The date on which it is to come into operation
- ☐ The period for which it is to remain in operation
- ☐ The ‘facilities’ (if any) that are to be provided by the LTA (and the date from which they are to be provided if it is not the date when the EP scheme comes into operation)
- ☐ The ‘measures’ (if any) that are to be taken by the LTA (and the date from which they are to be provided if it is not the date when the EP scheme comes into operation)
- ☐ Include provision (if any) about its variation or revocation (including any dates on which they come into force or cease to apply)

- ☐ The process that applies if an SNLS is proposed for cancellation or substantial alteration.

Step 4 - LTA publishes a notice that a draft EP plan and scheme has been prepared

- ☐ Has the LTA sent a notice that the draft EP plan has been prepared to all operators of qualifying local service? Does the notice:
 - Contain full details of the EP plan and scheme and how this will deliver the BSIP
 - Explain that operators of qualifying local services have a right to object to the EP plan (including what constitutes a qualifying local service)
 - Set out what level of objections is required for the EP plan and scheme not to proceed to consultation.
 - State the maximum period of 28 calendar days within which objections may be made.
 - Contain details of how an operator should make an objection, including a mail and email address to which objections should be sent.
- ☐ Has the LTA requested from all operators the registered distance of their qualifying local services to determine the thresholds for objection?

Step 5 - Operators formally review the EP plan and scheme and raise any objections

- ☐ Have objections been raised by operators to the LTA? If so, does the number of objections satisfy the criteria for the EP plan and scheme to be formally consulted?

Step 6 - Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA carries out formal consultation

Have the LTA formally consulted the following groups:

- ☐ All operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals
- ☐ Organisations that represent local passengers
- ☐ Other LTAs that would be directly affected by the proposals
- ☐ The traffic commissioners
- ☐ The chief officer of police for each area to which the EP plan relates
- ☐ Transport Focus
- ☐ The CMA
- ☐ Trade Unions
- ☐ Persons with disabilities or such organisations representative of such persons

Step 7 - LTA modifies the EP plan and/or scheme, as required, after consultation

- ☐ Has the EP plan and/or scheme been appropriately modified based on the feedback received from consultation?

Step 8 - LTA completes the Schedule 10 Test to ensure that making an EP does not restrict competition

- ☐ Has the LTA completed the schedule 10 test to ensure that making the EP does not restrict competition?
- ☐ Has the LTA set up quality agreements with bus operators where appropriate?

Step 9 - If any changes are made to the EP plan and/or scheme, operators formally review the EP plan and scheme and raise any objections

- ☐ Have objections been raised by operators to the LTA? If so, does the number of objections satisfy the criteria for the EP plan and scheme to be 'made'?

Step 10 - Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA to 'make' the EP plan and scheme and publishes notice to all operators and relevant stakeholders

- ☐ Has the LTA published the notice to all operators and relevant stakeholders within 14 days of the EP Plan and Scheme being 'made'? Does the notice contain:
 - Full details of the EP plan and Scheme or where this can be found
 - Whether it has been modified after public consultation

Varying an EP

The EP guidance sets out the process for varying an EP. The flowchart below summarises the key steps, who is involved and the level of effort required. **Please refer to the EP guidance for full information of the statutory requirements.**

		Relative level of effort	Who is involved?
Step 1	LTA issues a notice of intention to prepare a variation to the EP plan or scheme to operators and other relevant stakeholders affected by potential variation	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA
Step 2	LTA prepares draft variation to the EP plan or scheme	Low – Some engagement may be required	LTA Operators Relevant stakeholders
Step 3	LTA publishes a notice that a draft variation has been prepared to operators affected by potential variation	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA
Step 4	Operators formally review the draft variation and raise any objections	Low – Minimal objections if engaged with operators to draft the variation	LTA
Step 5	Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA publishes notice of the intention to vary the EP plan or scheme to operators and other stakeholders	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA
Step 6	LTA completes the schedule 10 Test to ensure that the variation does not restrict competition	Low	LTA
Step 7	LTA publishes notice of intention to make the variation to operators	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA
Step 8	LTA provides notice of making the variation to operators, traffic commissioners and relevant stakeholders	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA

Figure 6: Steps for varying an EP

Checklist

The checklist below summarises the list of actions needed to complete each step of varying an EP.

Step 1 - LTA issues a notice of intention to prepare a variation to the EP plan or scheme to operators and other relevant stakeholders affected by potential variation

- ☐ Has the LTA made sure the variation will:
 - Contribute to the policies set out in the EP plan or the revised EP plan if it is being varied at the same time as the EP scheme and the LTA's local transport policies.
 - Benefit passengers by improving the quality or attractiveness of bus services in the EP scheme area; or reduce or limit traffic congestion, noise or air pollution.
 - Enable persons with disabilities to travel independently, and in safety and reasonable comfort.
- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of intention to prepare a variation to all affected operators and stakeholders?

Step 2 - LTA prepares draft variation to the EP plan or scheme

- ☐ Has the LTA prepared the draft variation ensuring that impacted stakeholders have been consulted and that impacts and dependencies have been identified?

Step 3 - LTA publishes a notice that a draft variation has been prepared to operators affected by potential variation

- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of intention that a draft variation has been prepared to all affected operators? Does the notice contain:
 - Full details of the proposed variation
 - Details of the operator objection mechanism that applies

Step 4 - Operators formally review the draft variation and raise any objections

- ☐ Have objections been raised by operators to the LTA? If so, does the number of objections satisfy the criteria for the variation to be 'made' based on either the statutory or bespoke mechanism?

Step 5 - Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA publishes notice of the intention to vary the EP plan or scheme to operators and other stakeholders

- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of intention to vary the EP plan or scheme to all operators and other stakeholders?

Step 6 - LTA completes the schedule 10 test to ensure that the variation does not restrict competition (if required)

- ☐ Has the LTA completed the schedule 10 test to ensure that making the EP does not restrict competition?
- ☐ Has the LTA set up qualify agreements with bus operators where appropriate?

Step 7 - LTA publishes notice of intention to make the variation to operators

- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of intention to 'make' the variation to the EP plan or scheme to operators? Does the notice contain:
 - Full details of the variation or where this can be found
 - Whether or not it is a modified version of the original proposals
 - Details of the operator objection mechanism that applies

Step 8 - LTA provides notice of making the variation to operators, traffic commissioners and relevant stakeholders

- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice that the variation 'made' to the EP plan or scheme to operators, traffic commissioners and relevant stakeholders? Does the notice contain:
 - Full details of the variation or where this can be found
 - Whether or not it is a modified version of the original proposals



Postponing an element of an EP

The EP guidance sets out the process for postponing an element of the EP plan/scheme. The flowchart below summarises the key steps, who is involved and the level of effort required. **Please refer to the EP guidance for full information of the statutory requirements.**

		Relative level of effort	Who is involved?
Step 1	LTA selects a date to postpone any of the implementation dates for any elements specified in the EP scheme	Very low	LTA
Step 2	LTA carries out formal consultation with operators affected by postponement	Low – Some engagement may be required	LTA Operators Relevant stakeholders
Step 3	LTA publishes a notice, including reasons for postponement to operators, relevant stakeholders and traffic commissioner	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA

Figure 7: Process for postponing an element of an EP plan/scheme

Checklist

The checklist below summarises the list of actions needed to complete each step for postponing an element of an EP.

Step 1 – LTA selects a date to postpone any of the implementation dates for any elements specified in the EP scheme

- ☐ Has the LTA selected the date at which implementation of an element of a scheme is to be completed?
- ☐ Has the LTA ensured that the date at which the implementation is postponed does not impact other elements of the EP scheme? If so, has the LTA considered postponing these other elements in addition?

Step 2 – LTA carries out formal consultation with operators affected by postponement

- ☐ Has the LTA carried out formal consultation with the operators affected by postponement?

Step 3 – LTA publishes a notice, including reasons for postponement to operators, relevant stakeholders and traffic commissioner

- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of postponement to operators, traffic commissioners and relevant stakeholders? Does this notice contain the reasons for postponement?



Revoking an EP

The EP guidance sets out the process for revoking the EP plan/scheme. The flowchart below summarises the key steps, who is involved and the level of effort required. **Please refer to the EP guidance for full information of the statutory requirements.**

		Relative level of effort	Who is involved?
Step 1	LTA gives notice of proposal to revoke the EP plan and/or Scheme to all stakeholders and the Secretary of State for Transport	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA
Step 2	LTA consults operators, the CMA and other relevant stakeholders	Medium – Significant engagement required	LTA Operators Relevant stakeholders
Step 3	LTA gives notice of intention to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme to operators	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA
Step 4	Operators formally review the notice to revoke and raise any objections	Low – Minimal objections if engaged with operators	LTA
Step 5	Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA can decide to revoke the EP Plan and/or Scheme and issue a notice of revocation to operators, relevant stakeholders and traffic commissioner	Very low – An issue of notice required	LTA

Figure 8: Process for revoking an EP plan/scheme

Checklist

The checklist below summarises the list of actions needed to complete each step of revoking an EP.

Step 1 - LTA gives notice of proposal to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme to all stakeholders and the Secretary of State for Transport

- ☐ Have alternative arrangements been considered for the delivery of the BSIP?
- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of proposal to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme to all relevant stakeholders and the Secretary of State for Transport?
- ☐ Has the LTA considered how the proposed revocation will impact disabled people's ability to travel independently, safely, and in reasonable comfort?

Step 2 - LTA consults operators, the CMA and other relevant stakeholders

Has the LTA consulted the following stakeholders:

- ☐ Operators of local services that provide local bus services in the EP plan or scheme area that would be subject to revocation.
- ☐ The CMA
- ☐ The Secretary of State for Transport (recommended)

Step 3 - LTA gives notice of intention to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme to operators

- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of intention to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme to operators?

Step 4 - Operators formally review the notice to revoke and raise any objections

- ☐ Have objections been raised by operators to the LTA? If so, does the number of objections satisfy the criteria for revocation based on either the statutory or bespoke mechanism?

Step 5 - Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA can decide to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme and issue a notice of revocation to operators, relevant stakeholders and traffic commissioner

- ☐ Has the LTA published a notice of revocation of the EP plan and/or scheme to operators, relevant stakeholders and the traffic commissioner? Is this sent no later than 14 days after the revocation date?

Competition considerations

This section provides practical/theoretical examples for addressing competition considerations, in alignment with the EP guidance.

Dealing with the overprovision of services

Below are specific examples of how to address overprovision that consider competition issues. In both examples, the operators are working together but the fact that this is being done to meet an EP requirement should reduce the risk of breaching competition law.

Example 1

- A route has two operators running buses on it. Both operator A and B run two buses an hour.
- An EP requirement is introduced requiring only two buses an hour on that route.
- The existing operators can comply with this requirement by each voluntarily agreeing to cut one bus from their schedule.

Example 2

- A route has two operators running buses on it. Operator A runs three buses an hour and operator B runs one.
- An EP requirement is introduced requiring only three buses an hour on that route (a 25% reduction).

The existing operators can comply with this requirement in a number of ways:

- Operator A can agree to cut a bus from their schedule.
- Operator B can agree to stop running services on that route.
- Operator A and B can agree each to apply a 25% reduction to their respective schedules.

Dealing with under provision of services

Below are some examples of dealing with cross-boundary services whilst considering competition issues:

Example 1

- On an individual corridor, the BSIP suggests that four buses an hour are required in either direction during the day. However, the commercial operator(s) running commercial services on that corridor say that current patronage only supports a maximum of two buses an hour on a commercial basis.
- In this case, the LTA can tender (or use 'de minimis') for the provision of the extra buses and slot them into the existing timetable (e.g. in compliance with a scheme headway requirement). Of course, if patronage improves to support more commercial services, the LTA can consider framing the tender with the flexibility to reduce the level of supported services or stop running them altogether.



Example 2

- The commercial services on a particular corridor stop running at 18:00 because patronage does not support later evening or night services. However, the BSIP suggests that services should run until midnight. In this case, the LTA can subsidise those evening and weekend services.

Cross-boundary services

Below is an example of dealing with cross-boundary services whilst considering competition issues:

- LTA 1 – The EP plan and EP scheme cover their entire geographical area including a fare subsidy to the geographical boundary.
- LTA 2 and 3 – They each have a specific EP scheme that mirrors LTA 1 fare provisions covering only those routes on which cross-boundary services with LTA 1 operate.

This may mean that LTA 2 and 3 need to fund the LTA 1 fares subsidy on their part of those cross-boundary services – but passengers travelling in either direction buy a single ticket for the whole of their cross-boundary journey. It also does not prevent LTA 2 and 3 from having their own specific EP schemes that cover subsidised fares on the rest of their own geography.

Using qualifying agreements for routes and frequency requirements

Case study: Leicester City Council (LCC) – Qualifying agreements

LCC has demonstrated use of two qualifying agreements under their wider Network Integration and Optimisation plan. Before this, LCC faced challenges optimising the network to avoid overcapacity and inefficiency, particularly post-Covid, when passenger numbers were around 85% of pre-pandemic levels.

Features

LCC agreed the formation of the agreements for an initial trial period in support of the overall objectives of the EP, and these were taken under consideration alongside other options such as franchising, other formal commercial approaches and independent operator actions without coordination.

The following interventions were introduced on:

1. **Humberstone Road Corridor:** A draft qualifying agreement between First Bus and Arriva established a joint timetable.

The agreement:

- Places no commercial restrictions on other operators joining the corridor
- Is open to amendment and can be terminated with 84 days' notice

2. **Evington Road, Beaumont Leys Lane, and East Park Road Corridors:** A combined qualifying agreement between First Bus and Centrebus introduced coordinated route rationalisation for a trial period until March 2025.

The agreement:

- Rationalises services to reduce overcapacity and improve reliability
- Exceeds the partnership's frequency aspirations (every 15 minutes or better daytime, every 30 minutes or better evenings/weekends)
- Maintains geographical competition, as alternative routes remain within walking distance for most users
- Supports investment in electric buses, with First Bus and Arriva committing to significant fleet upgrades

Outcomes

- **Customer benefits:** Improved reliability, journey times, and simplified network information
- **Sustainable investment:** Supported the transition to electric buses, and reduced bus congestion and air pollution, especially in the city centre
- **Legal compliance:** Agreements structured to be flexible, open, and compliant with competition law

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Identify the challenges:** Clearly demonstrate the purpose of the agreements and what you are trying to achieve
- ✓ **Trial periods:** Establish agreements on a trial basis and allows all parties a voice in their regular review.
- ✓ **Monitor performance:** Tracking outcomes from the beginning (e.g. in reliability, journey times and customer feedback) and sharing success helps to maintain political and operator support.
- ✓ **Keep agreements flexible:** By having agreements that are flexible and open, you can amend them if situations change, have no restrictions on other operators joining the agreement, or you can terminate them with reasonable notice.

EP engagement

Collaborative partnership working between LTAs and bus operators are key to the success of EPs. In addition to this, engaging with wider stakeholders such as local communities, councillors, other LTAs, etc. are vital to establishing a basis of support for EPs ensuring the long-term delivery of EP outcomes.

This section provides the following content:

- Best practice case studies of stakeholder engagement
- Top tips for collaborating with stakeholders

Please note that special consideration is needed during the formal consultation steps in the EP processes which requires engagement with statutory consultees of an EP. Full guidance on this is outlined in the EP guidance with practical advice in [EP processes of the EP manual](#).



Building relationships with operators

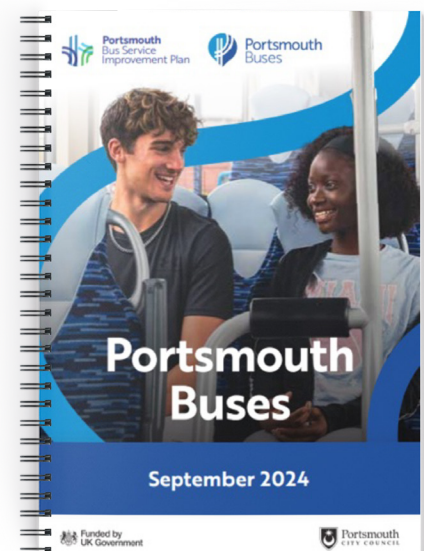
The basis of all EPs is collaborative working relationships between LTAs and bus operators. This should be established early on and maintained throughout the process of ‘making’ the EP plan and scheme as well as throughout delivery e.g. regular contact through EP boards and forums. The EP plan and scheme should also provide clarity on roles and responsibilities ensuring accountability between LTAs and bus operators.

Case study: Portsmouth City Council (PCC) – Building relationships with operators

Along with First Bus and Stagecoach, Portsmouth City Council (PCC) have championed a “one team” partnership forming the “Portsmouth Bus Partnership”. A blend of PCC’s political will and the bus operators’ expertise has enabled the partnership to deliver a wide-ranging programme around capital investment, service improvements, improved information and interchange, service enhancements, better ticketing, and complementary parking-based initiatives. PCC’s partnership with First Bus and Stagecoach has been recognised at the UK Bus Awards 2024 and 2025 as the Gold winners of the Partnership in Excellence Award.

Key to this success has been an emphasis of collaborative working:

- Work in a one-team relationship with operators and key stakeholders
- Regular meetings are held between PCC and bus operators with an emphasis on achieving the principle aims of passenger growth, faster and more reliable journeys and excellent customer satisfaction
- Dedicated programme of marketing and communications across the Portsmouth Buses and Portsmouth Park and Ride services
- The EP plan documents bus operators’ role within the EP board as well as the programme board





Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Collaborate with bus operators early on whilst drafting the EP plan and scheme:** This helps build relationships and trust between LTAs and bus operators ensuring operator buy-in and long-term commitment to EPs. This also ensures that issues are addressed early on whilst drafting the EP plan and scheme and that the process is not delayed by potential objections.
- ✓ **Clearly define the role of bus operators within the EP plan and scheme:** The EP plan and scheme should set out how bus operators are expected to participate in the EP board and forum, reinforcing transparency and accountability.
- ✓ **Seek political support from local councillors/politicians:** Securing the support of local councillors and politicians can open valuable channels for promoting schemes delivered through an EP. Their backing also helps to foster collaborative relationships between LTAs and bus operators. See the section on collaborating with politicians/councillors on page 97 of this manual for more detail.
- ✓ **Hold regular EP board/forum meetings:** EP boards and forums should include all bus operators operating within the EP area. Frequent engagement throughout delivery of the EP helps to maintain strong working relationships between LTAs and operators, ensuring effective monitoring of the EP's overall performance, timely identification of issues or blockers, and smooth management of any variations.
- ✓ **Emphasise the importance of transparency:** Open and honest communication between LTAs and bus operators is essential to effectively identify and resolve issues as they arise.



EP forums

An EP forum acts as a consultative body to discuss priorities and progress of the EP. In addition to LTAs and bus operators, the EP forum includes wider stakeholders including community representatives, passenger groups, trade unions and accessibility groups ensuring that feedback from these groups is incorporated into decision making.

Case study: Devon County Council (DCC) – EP forums

DCC holds a quarterly EP forum meeting with the following stakeholders:

- All operators
- Elected county councillors from each district in Devon through Highway and Traffic Order Committees (HATOCs)
- Educational institutions including colleges, universities
- NHS
- Bus user groups
- Community transport organisations
- Disability groups

This meeting, held online, is used to provide updates on EP delivery and feedback on items such as the bus passenger charter and equality impact assessments. By involving a broad range of stakeholders, DCC has been able to facilitate communication and drive change. For instance, engaging passenger and disability groups has supported HATOC in building a case for change for bus priority schemes.

With both the EP board and forum chaired by a councillor, the EP benefited from political backing and stakeholders appreciated the high level of engagement across these governance structures.

Case study: Nottingham City Council (NCC) – EP forums

NCC holds EP forum meetings with the following stakeholders:

- All operators
- Disability groups
- Educational institutions e.g. universities
- Tram and train operators
- Hospitals
- Community transport
- Business improvement district

These meetings are chaired by an independent chair and feature strong involvement from councillors.

The meetings update EP delivery and facilitate discussion based on the following agenda:

- Welcome and introduction
- Previous minutes – Recap of actions and items from last meetings.
- BSIP scheme updates – Update of ongoing delivery of capital and revenue schemes.
- Operator and stakeholder issues – Discussion of issues faced by operators and wider stakeholder groups.
- Any other business/Next meeting – Opportunities for any group to raise items and discussion of items for the next meeting.

Where required, additional agenda items are included for discussion. For example, NCC had agenda items on emissions and air quality as well as updates from East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) which NCC is a part of.



Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Include a wide range of stakeholders as attendees:** This enables groups such as passenger and accessibility groups to contribute their perspectives. This provides comprehensive feedback of EPs and issues, especially those affecting particular groups. In addition, ensure that there is a regional balance among attendees.
- ✓ **Invite local councillors as regular attendees:** Securing local political support will increase stakeholder confidence and encourage greater engagement at EP forums.
- ✓ **Hold regular meetings:** Frequent touchpoints (e.g. every quarter) allow for issues to be raised promptly and for actions to be taken. Establishing a rhythm of meetings helps maintain momentum and responsiveness from attendees.
- ✓ **Include a regular, focussed agenda:** A consistent agenda structure enables attendees to prepare effectively and engage meaningfully. It should allocate time for discussion and incorporate flexible slots for timely or emerging topics relevant to the meeting. The agenda should also focus on the strategic aspects of the EP, not operational. Sub-groups can be used to tackle specific problems.
- ✓ **Monitor attendance:** This helps to identify perspectives frequently missing from meetings for more targeted follow-up and encouragement of participation.



Collaborating with local/public stakeholders

Bus passengers' needs are central to the delivery of schemes and to the success of the EP. Engaging with local communities, hospitals, cultural venues, and educational institutions etc. offers valuable information to passengers' requirements to access key locations from both bus and non-bus users and all passenger groups. This will help facilitate better quality and provision of services, thereby boosting public support and patronage of buses.

Case study: West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) - 'Partnering for Success' forums

'Partnering for Success' programme - wider stakeholder engagement forums

WNC hosts a twice-yearly stakeholder forum, as part of their 'Partnering for Success' programme to build trust, share knowledge and information. They involve working with a broad range of external partners to strengthen collaboration and partnership work to promote local bus use. Go Travel Solutions are the lead delivery partner for the Partnering for Success programme.

The forum provides an opportunity for wider stakeholders within the area to:

- Learn about bus service improvements and marketing initiatives to help grow local bus take up
- Input into future bus development plans
- Contribute to ongoing projects
- Become a 'Pledge Partner'



The forum has worked well for WNC to build stronger connections with other partners, including:

- Transport operators including community transport: Stagecoach Midlands, Arriva and London Northwestern Railway
- Public health: Northampton General Hospital, Northamptonshire Healthcare, St. Andrew's Healthcare
- Local councils and regional bodies: Milton Keynes City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, England's Economic Heartlands (EEH)

- Education, sports clubs, tourism and voluntary groups: University of Northampton, u3a, Delapré Abbey, Northampton BID, “Saints and Cobblers”
- Developers: Prologis UK, SEGRO, IM Properties
- Transport stakeholders and consultants: Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), Transport Focus, Go Travel Solutions, Atkins Realis, Systra, ITP

The forums follow an engaging and interactive structure, with planned discussions to involve all attendees. They also include invited speakers to provide updates on various projects or work:

- Northampton “Saints” partnership: Transport planning for rugby matches with a key focus on the Women’s Rugby World Cup. This included the ‘Give it a Try’ marketing campaign, bus wraps and travel promotion.
- Northampton General Hospital: Updates on actions to boost bus use amongst hospital staff (e.g. bus service enhancements, improved customer information, staff bus travel discounts).
- Prologis: Improved bus services and bus infrastructure to DIRFT logistics park delivering patronage growth.

Partnering for Success Pledge Partnership Programme

WNC offers stakeholders the opportunity to become a Pledge Partner - working collaboratively with WNC and other organisations for one year to grow bus patronage in a sustainable way.

Partners commit to promoting bus travel, sharing useful information to support network planning, taking part in joint campaigns and initiatives, and meeting regularly to review progress and impact.

In return, WNC provides promotional resources, supports improvements to local bus infrastructure, shares service updates, and coordinates partnership activity - ensuring that all partners can contribute effectively to improving connectivity, reducing congestion and boosting air quality across West Northamptonshire.

The programme was shortlisted as a finalist for the Partnership for Excellence Award (UK Bus Awards). Examples of pledge partners include:

- Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Stagecoach Midlands
- Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust
- Northampton “Saints” RFC
- Northampton Town FC
- University of Northampton
- Northampton BID
- Arriva
- SEGRO Northampton Gateway
- St Andrew's Healthcare
- Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust
- Prologis UK
- Silverstone Park MEPC
- u3a

Contact BusandRail@westnorthants.gov.uk for further information on the Partnering for Success programme.

An example pledge partnership agreement can be found within the templates A.3.



Case study: Suffolk County Council (SCC) – Engaging the community to plan schemes

SCC uses thematic mapping to visualise access to key opportunities such as healthcare, wellbeing, retail, and employment. By identifying “transport deserts” - areas lacking access to services within a defined distance (e.g. one, three, or five miles) – the council is able to analyse gaps in provision and address them effectively.

This approach has worked well to identify where small changes to the transport network (e.g. new hubs, back up by taxi, shared cars, DRT) could be made to improve transport provision in these areas.

Based on this thematic mapping, SCC engaged with local communities within the ‘transport deserts’ through a ‘schemes on a page’ (SOAP) initiative. These SOAPS captured requirements of what would work best for local communities and how they would like a scheme to be managed. This has helped to foster local support and encourage local ‘ownership’ of schemes particularly for more rural communities. A similar exercise was completed with bus operators. Where SCC saw potential in a SOAP proposal, further engagement was undertaken as well as cost analysis.

From this initiative, SCC had received a total of 180+ SOAPS and introduced around 40 new services using BSIP+ and LABG funding since 2022/23. Using this approach, SCC demonstrated how thematic mapping can be used to tailor engagement to their more rural communities.

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Utilise partnerships to support bus strategy:** As seen in WNC, collaborations with hospitals, rail operators, and sports organisations deliver tangible benefits for connectivity and modal shift.
- ✓ **Use major events as catalysts:** High-profile events (e.g. major sports/ cultural events) can boost public transport awareness and uptake such as the “Give it a Try” campaign at WNC
- ✓ **Maintain a clear, consistent agenda to sustain interest:** Combine progress updates with interactive workshops and networking opportunities to keep forums engaging, collaborative and outcome focused.
- ✓ **Shared delivery with stakeholders and the local community:** By introducing a formalised recognition of partnership, WNC gains support from stakeholders who each contribute in a small but consistent way towards wider WNC bus strategies. SCC uses direct input from local communities to plan for new services.

Collaborating with politicians/councillors

Political backing from politicians and local councillors is a key enabler to a successful EP. This increases stakeholder confidence and encourages greater engagement. Councillors can also support in promoting new services such as distributing leaflets or announcing new services through newspaper, radio or websites thereby boosting public support for buses and increasing patronage.

Case study: Plymouth City Council (PCC) – Collaborating with politicians/councillors



PCC EP benefits from strong political leadership and support. Plymouth's Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport actively engages fellow councillors through case work and an annual ward member bus service survey, allowing the views of councillors and their constituents, on a wide range of topics pertinent to Plymouth's BSIP, to directly inform BSIP programmes. They also chair the EP board, allowing direct collaboration with Plymouth's operators as well as attending all EP forum sessions, to hear first-hand the needs and experiences of the stakeholder group, meeting with the city's larger operators on a regular basis and championing excellence in passenger information and publicity including the production of promotional leaflets for new services - to boost patronage and strengthen stakeholder involvement.

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Invite local councillors as regular attendees for EP boards/forums:** Securing local political support will increase stakeholder confidence and encourage greater engagement at EP forums. They could even chair and lead EP board/forum meetings.
- ✓ **Secure high-level political backing:** Gaining support from senior leaders strengthens public influence and helps cascade that influence to local-level politicians.
- ✓ **If the EP has political or councillor support, actions should focus on harnessing this will promote bus services:** Advocacy, communications, and stakeholder engagement helps to maximise visibility and encourage greater use.

Collaborating with community transport

Case study: Shropshire Council (SC) - Shropshire Community Transport Consortium

Identifying gaps in public transport coverage, particularly across rural areas, SC formed successful and collaborative relationships with community transport groups, fully integrating representatives of the Shropshire Community Transport Consortium into their EP board meetings. SC acknowledge the unique value of community transport in filling transport gaps where public services are unavailable, as well as their role in reducing social isolation and supporting vulnerable passengers.

Key engagement activities included:

- SC invited community transport groups to become part of their quarterly EP meetings, fully recognising them as valued partners with a different but vital perspective. In return, the council attend Shropshire Community Transport Consortium meetings at least twice per year, reinforcing the two-way partnership.
- The council's liaison role ensures consistent communication and relationship management.
- Development of the relationship between bus operators and community transport groups through communication; acknowledging their separate roles within the provision of services and recognising the value of the bespoke, volunteer-led services that differ from fixed bus operations.
- Community transport groups are represented in strategic discussions. They have inputted into EP conversations on use of funding and have the opportunity to influence future planning. They also had the opportunity to feed into the Bus Connectivity Assessment 2024, demonstrating transparency and trust in their perspective. The Shropshire Community Transport Consortium are also a key member of the Bus Performance Forum which helps to address local operational issues such as road closures, new developments, and challenges faced by operators across the county.
- Promotion of community transport services through SC's social media, with consideration given to avoiding overwhelm of volunteers' capacity.
- Allocation of a portion of BSIP2 funding directly to community transport groups, inviting them to propose projects and report on outcomes.

These activities facilitated the following outcomes:

- Improved local transport coverage, especially in rural areas with mobility challenges.
- Inclusive governance creates trust and shared goals among diverse stakeholders. Regular meetings and joined-up working enables cooperative problem-solving.
- Community transport groups reported a 10–12% increase in passenger numbers after receiving dedicated funding, and investment in newer vehicles led to greater reliability. The funding mechanism created accountability through required reporting and alignment with wider transport strategy.

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Involve community transport groups at EP meetings and have EP presence at community transport meetings:** Establishing a two-way relationship ensures collaboration, representation and increased understanding of shared goals.
- ✓ **Invite input from community transport groups:** Embedding representation will help to ensure vulnerable users' perspectives are heard and influence decision-making.
- ✓ **Facilitate open dialogue between community transport groups and bus operators:** Clarify their complementary functions whilst recognising their distinct roles to avoid competition and encourage cooperation.



Innovative thinking

Ambition is important for the success of an EP, but that ambition is not possible without high engagement and collaborative working to deliver innovative, strategic thinking.

Included below are just two examples of where this has been achieved. Whilst these ideas are not formalised, they demonstrate the type of innovation that can be explored through a strong partnership that focuses foremost on how it can deliver better outcomes for passengers. DfT is keen to support EPs in their innovation and welcome learning more about your ideas.

Case study: Leicester City Council (LCC – EP ‘Max’)

Under ‘EP Max’, LCC and local bus operators commit to a single, coordinated approach across five key areas: planned and integrated routes and timetables, fares and ticketing, brand and information, an electric bus fleet and supporting infrastructure.

Key initiatives include:

- **Integrated routes:** 24 commercial and six subsidised “mainlines” operate to common frequency standards, with cross-operator coordination and standardised service numbering.
- **Fares and ticketing:** All operators use a unified Flexi ticketing structure, eliminating interchange premiums and expanding mobile ticketing/contactless options.
- **Brand and information:** A single Leicester Buses brand is used across vehicles, infrastructure, and communications, supported by a joint marketing plan and unified information platforms.

- **Electric fleet:** Over half the network is electric, with further investment planned to achieve a fully electric mainline fleet by 2030.
- **Supporting infrastructure:** Delivery of a new bus station, 500 new bus shelters and eight bus priority schemes.

Next steps:

- ‘EP Max’ will build on these successes, with further investment in bus priority, infrastructure, and discounted ticketing, alongside deeper coordination measures.
- Operator commitments will increasingly focus on integration, shared standards, and public engagement, ensuring Leicester’s bus network continues to evolve towards a more efficient, accessible, and sustainable future.

Case study: Portsmouth City Council (PCC) – Network and investment guarantees

PCC is engaging with bus operators to develop a mechanism that balances innovation with protection of investments made by both parties. The goal is a fair and symmetrical agreement that reflects capital contributions - such as investment in zero-emission fleets and PCC funded traffic management measures aimed at reducing operator costs and increasing fare revenues.

A “Regulated Asset Base” model is being considered to link capital investments to operator obligations, such as increased service levels. Initial discussions, complying with competition law, will explore revenue and risk sharing, network commitments, and open-book financial transparency. A control period of five to seven years is proposed, with annual reviews assessing costs, fares, passenger volumes, financial impacts, and network development aspirations. Financial modelling is underway to integrate all effects and assess trade-offs.

The focus is on growing fare revenue and reducing bus unit costs, which influence the net support required for the network. This figure includes tendered services, concessions, BSIP, Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas scheme (ZEBRA) grants, Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), fare caps, advertising income, and the council’s administration costs.

The mechanism aims to formalise agreements on service levels, tariff structure, ticket pricing, performance standards, and data sharing obligations. Legal advice will be sought to ensure compliance with transport and competition legislation.

Part 3: Further support

Professional development & support

Whether you are new to EPs or a more experienced practitioner, there are resources and training available to you to support you in your journey.

Department for Transport

You can access guidance directly on a variety of topics on the Gov.uk website: [Buses - GOV.UK](#)

Bus Centre of Excellence (BCoE)

The Bus Centre of Excellence (BCoE) was established in 2023 by the DfT, enabling the delivery of a long-term programme of activities and support to the bus sector. In partnership with the DfT, the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) delivers BCoE, working closely with sector stakeholders to build long-term capability and strengthen collaboration across the bus sector.

DfT encourages anyone working within the bus sector to join BCoE. It is free of charge to become a member and attend its events, as well as access webinars, training, blog posts and panel discussions, and benefit from the advice and expertise shared on a growing number of key issues within the industry.

You can also access its weekly newsletter to keep you updated on new website resources, upcoming events and industry news.

BCoE's Bus Strategy Forums are an excellent way to stay connected with like-minded bus professionals and learn more about the developments in bus delivery in other parts of the country.

The Forums are often attended by DfT, who will provide any key DfT updates, before moving on to presentations from LTAs, operators and other stakeholders on areas of research, examples of good practice or successful scheme delivery. The Forums have previously heard from speakers on a range of topics, from partnership working, to funding, to fares. The Forums receive consistently strong feedback from attendees and provide a good opportunity to hear directly from like-minded bus industry professionals. BCoE welcomes your suggestions of helpful topics to cover in the future.

In addition to the Forum, BCoE manage a number of networks which are also free of charge, providing an opportunity to build your network, meet other EP colleagues from across the country, discuss your experiences and develop your awareness of how different EPs approach issues and opportunities.

You can find further information about joining BCoE on their website: [Bus Centre of Excellence](#)

Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transportation

The Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transportation (CILT), in collaboration with BCoE, ATCO and CPT and with input from DfT, produced a bus practitioner's course and qualification. The qualification is accredited by CILT(UK) and includes a formal assessment to confirm that the learning outcomes and assessment criteria have been achieved at the required standard.

The course will be available at three levels: Practitioner, Advanced Practitioner and Professional.

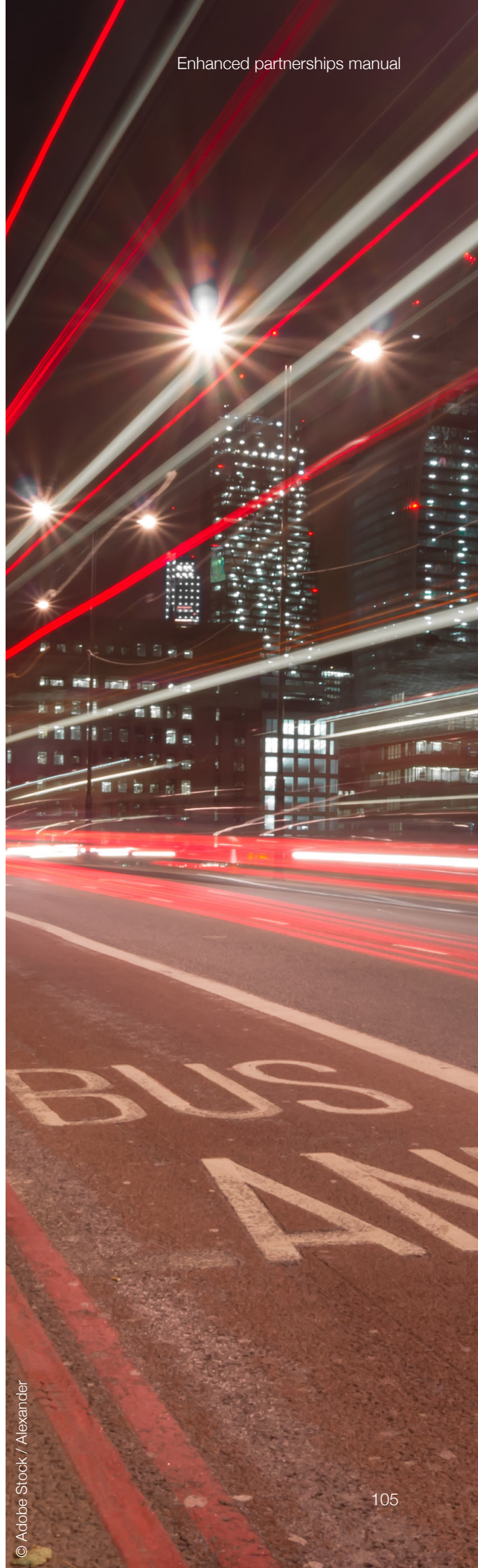
For further information on the course and to find out more about how you can sign-up to a future intake, visit the BCoE website: [BSCO Training — Bus Centre of Excellence](#)

Other toolkits

The following resources could supplement the content outlined within the EP manual.

Making the Case for Bus Toolkit: Intended to help LTA officers, and other bus practitioners, to make the case for bus schemes. Relevant for bus improvement schemes that do not require a formal business case.

Social Value Toolkit: Builds on the extensive work conducted by various organisations as well as on evolving policy and research, to outline the approach to Social Value for the programme as well as mechanisms for BSIP delivery.



Annex 1: Case study library

Multi-operator information provision and using real time information

Case study: East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) – Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire - Real-time information (RTI) provision

EMCCA collectively achieved 91% overall journey satisfaction in 2024, building on already strong 2023 performance. These include Derby City (top ranked area overall in 2024), Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire (top semi rural performers), and Greater Nottingham.

Features:

The region strengthened passenger information at stops; more RTI displays were installed in Nottinghamshire, and bus stations were rebuilt in Derbyshire. Nottinghamshire now has the largest number of RTI displays of all similar authorities in England and is currently the highest-rated area for bus stops. They also implemented bus priority at traffic lights, inter-city priority (Derby–Nottingham), and targeted almost 50 “pinch points” to cut delays. In addition, contactless/capping and targeted fare offers (e.g., for young people, commuters, groups) were introduced part of a set of BSIP measures complementing RTI.

Reported results:

- Punctuality perception improved across the area; Derbyshire stands out with punctuality up nine percentage points to 86% (2024).
- Bus stop experience strengthened alongside the infrastructure and RTI upgrades; Nottinghamshire is top-rated for stops nationally among similar authorities.
- Value for money rose sharply where pricing and quality improved together; Nottinghamshire saw an increase of 19 percentage points, making it top for value across England (2024).

Multi-operator ticketing

Case study: Stoke-on-Trent City Council (STCC) – Stoke Multi operator Area Rover Ticket (SMART)

STCC, in partnership with the local bus operators, including First Potteries, D&G Bus, Stantons of Stoke, Blue Buses (Scraggs) and Arriva Midlands, relaunched the Stoke Multi operator Area Rover Ticket (SMART) under the banner of Affordable Fares in July 2023 as part of its EP and BSIP delivery.

The scheme aimed to:

- **Simplify ticketing** by the relaunch of a single multi-operator ticket replacing most of the operator-specific products.
- **Reduce costs** for passengers through heavily discounted fares.
- **Encourage modal shift** from private cars to buses by making travel more affordable and convenient.

This initiative was supported as part of the £31.6 million BSIP funding and forms part of a wider three-year programme to improve bus services in the city. The project budget was £7.4m, with an additional £1.469m from BSIP 3 Network North funding.

Features:

- Ticket range: Smart Day Ticket, Smart Weekly Ticket, and Smart Monthly Ticket, as well as 3-month and annual options.
- Coverage: Valid on all participating operators' services across Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, and North Staffordshire.
- Sales channels:
 - On-bus purchase from any driver.
 - Mobile apps (First Bus App, D&G MyTrip).
 - First Travel Shop at Hanley Bus Station for longer-term passes.
- Promotion:
 - Council and operator websites.
 - On-bus posters and social media campaigns.
 - Local press coverage highlighting affordability and convenience.

The scheme was designed to integrate with Project Coral for national contactless fare capping, enabling “tap and cap” functionality in future phases.

Reported results:

- Over 2.5 million tickets sold in the first two years, demonstrating strong demand for affordable, integrated travel, with over 12 million individual trips on the network.
- Early monitoring indicates a significant increase in bus patronage, reversing previous declines and supporting BSIP targets.
- Adult day ticket currently costs £4.80 and the weekly ticket £14, representing up to 30% savings compared to pre-scheme fares.
- Passengers can travel across multiple operators using one ticket, choosing from a simplified ticket structure, reducing complexity and improving journey flexibility.

The scheme puts Stoke-on-Trent in a position to adopt national multi-operator contactless solutions under Project Coral, ensuring future compliance with EP requirements.



Ticketing schemes for commuters

Case study: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council - Commuter Club

Bournemouth was ranked third of the most congested cities in the UK. BCP Council has therefore been encouraging more people to choose sustainable modes of transport (including buses) at peak times. Using their BSIP funding, the council's Commuter Club initiative with Morebus allows businesses to sign up for their employees to have access to discounted tickets encouraging staff to travel to work by bus.

Features:

- Businesses sign up and pay an annual fee based on the number of employees within their organisation through an online application form.
- Employees are then verified and can then access discounted tickets through the Morebus ticketing app.
- Employees benefit from £1 bus tickets available in bundles of 20 and can make up to 5 purchases at the discounted rate. This enables staff to "try the bus" at a relatively low cost.
- After their first 100 trips, employees can purchase "Commuter Club bundles" of 10 trips at £1.60 per journey.



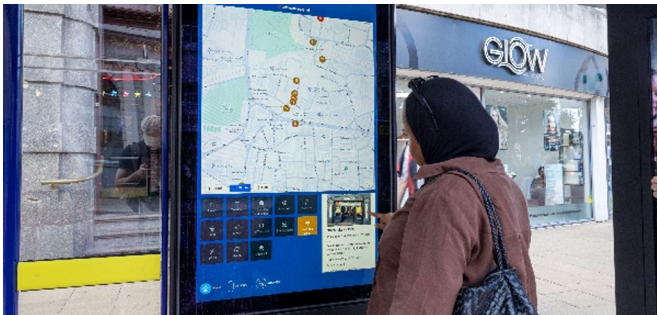
Reported results:

- Multi-trip tickets support hybrid working for employees who may no longer be required to come to the office five days a week. Tickets are used as required so are a cost-effective solution for staff.
- Permits flexible travel e.g. walk or use bike share to work and then catch the bus back.
- Encourages new users so results in reduced congestion and emissions from cars.
- Reduced boarding time for buses as Morebus App generate a QR code which is easily scanned on the ticket machine.
- Supports recruitment and retention and Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) for participating businesses.
- Has enabled positive engagement with local businesses and the Council. Over 50 businesses have signed up to the scheme with an excess of 55,000 ticket redemptions in the first year.

Renewals programme for bus stop infrastructure

Case study: Portsmouth City Council (PCC) - 'Revive' programme

PCC delivered a major upgrade to bus stop infrastructure as part of BSIP in partnership with Baur Media Outdoor. The project focused on improving passenger experience, accessibility, and sustainability through the refreshing of existing shelters with a 94% carbon saving. In addition, a programme of installation of new "Super Stops" which includes improved seating, electronic travel information, better lighting and real time information.



Features:

- Installation of 27 new Super Stops and refurbishment of 572 existing shelters to extend lifespan and reduce carbon emissions.
- The range of features can include: smart lighting, real-time travel information, docking points for rental e-scooters, free Wi-Fi, seating improvements, and defibrillators.
- It also includes raised kerbs, tactile paving, and improved wayfinding for passengers with mobility challenges.
- Living roofs were installed on shelters to absorb rainwater, improve air quality, and support biodiversity.
- The revive programme ensures long-term upkeep, reducing future costs and environmental impact.

Reported results:

- Safer, more comfortable waiting environments with better information and connectivity.
- Living roofs support biodiversity.
- Long-term maintenance protects public investment and ensures consistent standards.
- Portsmouth won Gold at the National Bus Awards for Partnership with bus operators and key strategic partners.

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

Case study: Milton Keynes Council (MKC) – MK Connect

The following link provides best practice Guidance for DRT: [DRT Guidance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/demand-responsive-transport)

MKC introduced MK Connect as a flexible, demand-responsive transport service to improve connectivity for areas with limited conventional bus coverage. Bookable via an app or by phone, the scheme aims to provide affordable, accessible, and sustainable travel options, complementing fixed-route services and reducing reliance on private cars.

Features:

- MK Connect complements fixed-route buses and rail services, providing first/last-mile connectivity and reducing transport gaps in rural and semi-urban areas.
- The app provides passengers with a 'virtual bus stop' where they meet the driver – usually no more than 400m but on average around 200m. The app also allows users to follow the vehicle's progress in real-time.
- A minimum of 30% of the fleets vehicles are wheelchair-accessible, and the booking system allows passengers to specify accessibility needs.
- Uses a dynamic routing algorithm to group trips efficiently, reducing dead mileage and emissions.
- Affordable fares aligned with local bus pricing, with concessions available for eligible passengers.

Reported results:

- 2022-23 figures show MK Connect replaced 56,000 journeys that would have otherwise been made using a car.
- A 2023 survey of passengers found that 13% of respondents were now using MK Connect instead of a private car.
- MK Connect has expanded public transport access to areas previously without regular bus services, reducing transport exclusion.
- Positive feedback highlights convenience, reliability, and accessibility as key benefits.
- Shared rides and efficient routing help reduce car dependency and emissions compared to single-occupancy trips.
- Supports mobility for older and disabled passengers, improving access to healthcare, employment, and social activities.

VAWG and ASB: Personal safety, reporting mechanisms and communications

Case study: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council – Improved safety at bus stops

As part of their approach to the EP, BCP Council has invested in infrastructure to support commercial bus operations driving changes in bus services and quality from bus operators. The council have delivered a series of interventions to improve passenger safety at bus stops aligning to their BSIP objective of “improving safety, security and passenger security”.



Features:

- **Extension of bus stop clearways to 27m:** This ensures that all passengers have safe access to the bus, reduces problems for bus drivers (e.g. kerb damage) and improves reliability overall.
- **Enhancements to bus shelters:** All new shelters installed with light and airy glass roofs, giving natural light in addition to LED lighting. Shelters have been orientated towards the road where possible, providing clear visibility of the bus and easy access onto the vehicle. Full width seating is provided, with a wheelchair/buggy space at head of stop to give priority.
- **Bus shelter and bus station CCTV:** CCTV fitted to 250 of the busiest bus shelters and travel interchanges livestreamed and monitored to the council's CCTV Control Room. The cameras have been retrofitted into existing Real Time Displays to provide a very cost- effective solution.
- **Transport Safety Officers (TSO):** TSOs employed to tackle anti-social behaviour at buses and key transport interchanges.
- **Text service:** A text service enabling for passengers to report incidents on buses and bus stops.

Reported results:

- 85% satisfaction (increase by 2% from the previous year) with “Bus Stop where you caught your bus” from the 2024 Transport Focus survey with BCP ranking third overall for passenger satisfaction in the country.
- Reduced shelter vandalism and ASB incidents at bus stations/stops from enhanced CCTV and presence of TSOs.

Annex 2: Potential metrics for assessing SNLS

The following table lists possible metrics that could be used to score against your services to determine the SNLS list. This includes data sources that could be used to support the assessment against each metric.

Note that the metrics listed below could be expanded or combined based on what you have defined classes as a SNLS within your local area

Table 8: SNLS possible metrics and data sources

Metric	Description	Open data sources	Data that could be requested from operators
Population catchment	The total population that has access to the service. For example, this could be measured as the total population that lives within 400m from a bus stop covered by the service. Overlaying the route with population data estimates the service's catchment.	• GTFS (can provide route and operational information) • ONS Population and demographic data	-
Patronage and utilisation	Passenger volumes per service over a period. This could cover a year to give an overall picture of utilisation by passengers.	-	• Detailed patronage data by service can be requested from operators under an NDA.

Table 8 (continued): SNLS possible metrics and data sources

Metric	Description	Open data sources	Data that could be requested from operators
Socio-economic characteristics	Socio-economic characteristics could be used to consider local indicators of vulnerability of the areas covered by a service. This could be based on measuring the service's coverage of people who fit a particular demographic and socio-economic characteristic such as: • Access the service provides for older or disabled populations • Proportions of car ownership • Deprivation Overlaying the route with the population covered by the service that fit the socio-economic characteristics defined by your metric could be used.	• GTFS (can provide route and operational information) • ONS Census data • Open mapping tools that measure vulnerability for example: - Gov. UK 'Deprivation in England' explorer tool, - TfN's 'Transport Related Social Exclusion', which also includes an online mapping tool.	-
Primary journey purpose	A metric could be defined to score based on the service's access to key locations such as: • Education • Employment hubs • Essential retail services • High streets and city centres • Healthcare • Community facilities • Culture, sport and leisure centres This could also be more generic and cover a scale of: • Urban – Rural • Peak – Off-peak • Leisure - Work	• List of key locations • GTFS (can provide route and operational information)	• Classification of each service

Table 8 (continued): SNLS possible metrics and data sources

Metric	Description	Open data sources	Data that could be requested from operators
Alternative travel options	Alternative travel options that are available for passengers that cover the parts or all of the service. This could be based on: • Existence of other transport modes (rail/ tram) • Additional services provided by DRT or CT • Overlap with other bus services that may use the same route or different route to reach the same destination • Alternative bus routes which require additional interchanges	• GTFS (can provide route and operational information or alternative travel) • The DfT Connectivity Tool displays how locations are connected to everyday services	
Passenger and stakeholder views	Based on community feedback and local services, a metric could be defined based on quantifying passenger views on the importance of a particular service.	• Consultation with passengers, communities and local stakeholders	• Passenger feedback surveys conducted by operators

Annex 3: Templates

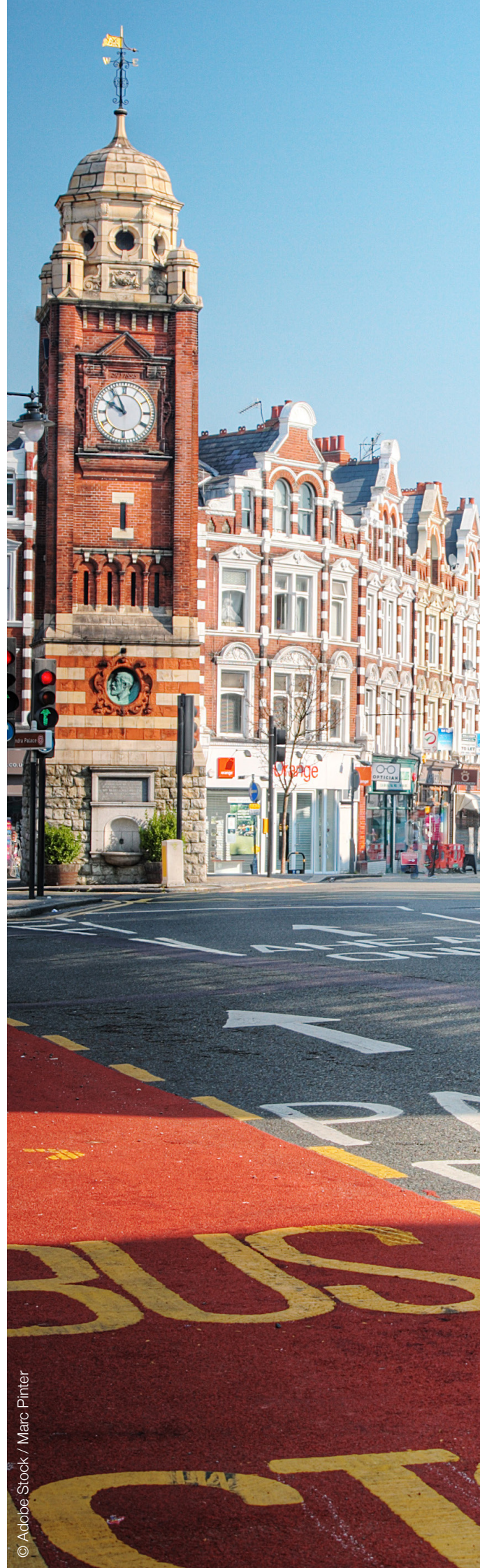
You can find the most current versions of the following templates on the GOV.UK homepage for this manual [here](#).

What should be included in an EP plan & how to present an EP scheme.

Qualifying agreements – Example wording.

Partnering for Success – Pledge Partnership (West Northamptonshire) – Example wording.

Template NDA that can be used between LTAs and operators to share information.



Annex 4: EP processes – step-by-step practical advice

This annex is a deep dive into each of the EP processes outlined in the EP guidance by providing more practical material. This includes templates for issuing notices/objections, top tips supplementing the EP guidance and practical examples.

Please note that the advice provided in the EP manual is intended to complement the statutory requirements and should not be used independently of the EP guidance.

Making an EP plan and scheme

Step 1 – LTA published a notice of intention to make an EP

The following template can be used to inform all local bus operators running services within or into the proposed geographical area of the EP of the intention to ‘make’ the EP for example on the LTA website or local newspapers. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA.

Notice of intention to make an enhanced partnership (ep)

Date: [Insert date]

At its meeting on [date], [name of LTA] gave approval to proceed with the development of an EP. The commencement of this is confirmed through this notice of the intention to prepare an EP plan and accompanying EP schemes, as required and set out in section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.

Step 2 – LTA requests specified information about local services that operator either within or into the EP area for operators

The EP guidance specifies the type of information that can be requested from operators under the schedule to the information regulations. The table below shows the purpose and how this information can be used to input into the EP plan/scheme.

A template NDA that can be used between LTAs and operators to share information can be found here in A.3.

Table 9: Information for EP plan and/or scheme

Type of information	Recommended structure	Example usage for EP plan and/or scheme
How and when a local service operated by an operator is used by passengers once the EP has been made or varied	- Demographic e.g. age, gender - Ticket type e.g. adult, child - Date - Time of day	Analysis of current service patronage and future forecasts by demographic, time of year, time of day etc. to inform current network/service analysis for the EP plan and when local services may be used once the EP plan and scheme is formally made.
The structure of fares for journeys on the local service	- Ticket type e.g. adult, child - Price - Ticket period e.g. single, return, day, week, month	Enables an LTA to understand current customer offer in fare structures from various operators that services are currently delivering to help design multi-operator ticketing schemes.
The types of tickets used by passengers, and by particular types of passenger, on the local service	- Ticket type e.g. adult, child - Ticket period e.g. single, return, day, week, month - Demographic of passenger - Local service where the ticket was purchased on	- Analysis of current ticket usage by demographic, time of year, time of day, service etc. to inform current network and service analysis for the EP plan and when local services may be used once the EP plan and scheme is formally made. - Enables an LTA to understand ticket usage from various operators that services are currently delivering to help design multi-operator ticketing schemes.
The time taken for journeys, and parts of journeys, on the local service including information about adherence to timetables at all times or at certain times of the day	- Comparison analysis based on: - Timetables/frequency of service - Actual journey times - Route	Analysis of reliability and journey time to inform current network/service analysis for the EP plan.

Table 9 (continued): Information for EP plan and/or scheme

Type of information	Recommended structure	Example Usage for EP Plan and/or Scheme
The total distance, in miles or kilometres, covered by all vehicles used by the operator in operating qualifying local services in the area	• Route • Operator • Operating miles/kilometres	• Provides a picture of market share by operator as well as total service provision. • Used for the operator objection mechanism.
The vehicles used on local bus services, including information about the age of those vehicles, emissions and types of fuel or power	• Vehicle • Age • Fuel type e.g. diesel, electric • Vehicle type e.g. single decker, double decker	• Provides a picture of the vehicle fleet current operated within the EP's geographical area to determine interventions and enhancements for vehicles to be outlined in the EP scheme.
The result of any activities undertaken with a view to promoting increased passenger use of the local service	• List and details of marketing initiatives undertaken by bus operators with outcomes realised.	• Based on current ongoing initiatives, this can inform marketing and promotion activities listed in the EP scheme.
The particulars of a local service's registration under section 6 of the Transport Act 1985	• List and details of local service registrations.	• If the LTA intends (or is required) to take over the registration function from the traffic commissioner, this information could be useful.

Step 3 – LTA prepares the EP plan and scheme, in collaboration with operators and other stakeholders

The EP guidance outlines the required and potential content for the EP plan and scheme. These documents should be created in collaboration with all stakeholders to address early issues, avoid objections later on in the process and maximise impact of the EP.

In compliance with the new provisions under the Bus Services Act 2025, authorities must consider elements of accessibility and, for the case of EP schemes, whether the requirements proposed will enable persons with disabilities to travel independently, and in safety and reasonable comfort.

Step 4 – LTA publishes a notice that a draft EP Plan and Scheme has been prepared

The following template can be used to inform all bus operators of qualifying local service that a draft EP plan and scheme has been prepared. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA:

Notice of preparation of a draft enhanced partnership (ep) plan and scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is to inform all relevant parties that a draft EP plan and scheme has been prepared.

Overview

The EP plan and scheme set out a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between local transport authorities (LTAs) and local bus operators. This aims to deliver the objectives of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Right to object

Operators of qualifying local services have the right to object to the EP Plan. A qualifying local service is defined as a registered local bus service operating within the geographical area covered by the EP Plan and Scheme.

Objection threshold

The EP plan and scheme will not proceed to consultation if either of the following criteria is met:

- **Criteria 1:**
 - The combined registered distance of all qualifying local services operated by objectors in the EP area is at least **25%** of the total registered distance of all local bus services in that area; **and**
 - If there are **four or more operators**, at least **three** must object;
 - If there are **fewer than four operators**, **all** must object.

- **Criteria 2:**

- At least **50%** of the total number of operators of qualifying local services in the EP area have objected; **and**
- The combined registered distance of their services is at least **4%** of the total registered distance of all local bus services in that area.

Objection period

Objections must be submitted within 28 calendar days from the date of this notice. The process may conclude earlier if all relevant parties respond positively before the end of the objection period.

How to object

Objections must be submitted in writing and sent to either:

Email: [LTA contact email address]

Post: [LTA contact postal address]

Please include the name of your organisation, the services you operate, and the grounds for your objection.



Step 5 – Operators formally review the EP plan and scheme and raise any objections

Objections should be sent to the email/postal address within the notice of preparation of a draft EP plan and scheme. Objections should clearly specify the exact aspects of the EP plan and scheme that the operators are opposing. As outlined in the EP guidance, it is encouraged that operators should raise any concerns to the LTA that may lead to an objection before the objection period commences.

The following template can be used to raise any objections on the draft EP plan and scheme:

Objection to draft enhanced partnership (ep) plan and scheme

Date: [Date of objection]

Organisation name: [Operator name]

Contact: [Name of lead contact from operator]

Email: [Operator contact email address]

Post: [Operator contact postal address]

Reasons for objection: [Clearly outline the reasons for objection]

Step 6 – Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA carries out a formal consultation

In addition to bus operators, it is important for LTAs to consult a wide range of consultees to understand the details of the benefits and impacts of the content in the EP. This will enable for the EP plan and scheme to be appropriately modified if necessary. The EP guidance states the statutory consultees that LTAs have to consult and signposts to [Transport Focus's "Bus Service Review: Consulting on changes to local services"](#) best practice toolkit.

Top tips:

- ✓ **Collaborate with consultees while drafting the EP plan/scheme at 'step 3':** Consultees should be informally engaged while drafting the EP plan and scheme to minimise the amount of changes required after the formal consultation period to avoid a formal statutory objection period.
- ✓ **Ensure that the consultation is completed lawfully:** LTAs should be aware of the 'Gunning Principles' that should be applied to all consultations as well as legal considerations to the PSED. Under the Bus Services Act 2025, it is also a requirement to consult with disabled people and/or the organisations which represent them.
- ✓ **Allow for enough time to carry out consultation:** As a principle, the formal consultation period should last between 4-6 weeks. This should allow for sufficient time to capture sufficient detail and analyse feedback gathered from consultees.
- ✓ **Design your consultation with intent:** Ensure that questions align with the consultation objectives and that it targets relevant content to specific consultee groups. At a minimum, this should satisfy the statutory requirements in the Transport Act 2000 and follow the EP guidance.
- ✓ **Keep consultation questions open:** To encourage meaningful input, consultees should be given the opportunity to explain their reasoning and provide comments

Step 7 – LTA modifies the EP plan and/or scheme, as required, after consultation

Based on formal consultation, the EP plan and scheme should be modified where appropriate. Modifications should be documented with reasons why for the change. Please note that modifications will need to run through the statutory operator objection process.

Summary and top tips:

- ✓ **Consult with bus operators on the modifications:** To minimise objections to the modified EP plan and scheme, seek bus operators' views on the changes.
- ✓ **Document all modifications to the EP plan/scheme:** An effective approach could be to maintain a feedback log that records comments received during consultation, identifies the consultee, and outlines how each comment has been addressed - whether through amendments to the EP plan/scheme or by providing clarification.
- ✓ **Inform consultees of modifications:** To ensure transparency, consultees should be notified of any relevant modifications to the EP plan and scheme. LTAs should also be assured that feedback has been appropriately addressed from consultees.

Step 8 – LTA completes the schedule 10 test to ensure that Making an EP does not restrict competition

Below provides a summary of the part 1 and part 2 test procedures.

Part 1 test summary procedures:

Making or varying an EP and any multi-operator ticketing scheme that is a part of them, are subject to the test in part 1 of schedule 10 to the Transport Act 2000.

This test has three elements:

1. Is there likely to be a significantly adverse effect on competition? If yes:
2. Is the exercise of the function being done with a view to securing one or more of the three purposes specified, either:
 - To secure improvements in the quality of vehicles or facilities used to provide local services,
 - To secure other improvements in local services of benefit to users of local services, or
 - To reduce or limit traffic congestion, noise or air pollution; and
3. Is the effect on competition proportionate or likely to be proportionate to the achievement of that purpose?

The tests would be expected to be satisfied, but they should still be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Example text that for the schedule 10 test is shown below:

Example wording for schedule 10 test

If the LTA believes that the EP as a whole will not or is unlikely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition, then only a simple declaration to that effect is required:

The [LTA] has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of the EP plan and scheme [made on [date]] on competition and believes it will not or is unlikely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition, for the purposes of Part 1 of schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000.

If the LTA believes that the EP plan and scheme will or are likely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition, then the LTA must carry out a more detailed assessment because further tests need to be satisfied. If, in the opinion of the LTA, those tests are met and the EP is justified, here is some example wording to that effect:

The [LTA] has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of the EP plan and scheme [made on [date]] on competition for the purposes of part 1 of schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. The authority believes it will or is likely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition. However, the authority believes the EP plan and scheme(s) is justified because:

1. It is with a view to achieving one or more of the following purposes:
 - Securing improvements in the quality of vehicles or facilities used for or in connection with the provision of local services;
 - Securing other improvements in local services of benefit to users of local services; and
 - Reducing or limiting traffic congestion, noise or air pollution.
2. Its effect on competition is or is likely to be proportionate to the achievement of that purpose or any of those purposes.

The Competition and Markets Authority has also been consulted on the proposals as required by section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.

[If there are other competition issues that require additional content, this should also be included in the declaration document.]

Part 2 test summary procedures:

The part 2 test is required where there is an agreement between bus undertakings (called a qualifying agreement) which ‘has as its object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition in the area of the authority, or the combined area of the authorities’.

Example of when the part 2 test is required: An EP imposes a route restriction that requires a degree of cooperation between operators, this arrangement will be a ‘qualifying agreement’ made under part 2 of schedule 10 of the 2000 Act. This might be needed because, say, two or three operators on a route need to coordinate timetables, so that a headway or frequency restriction imposed by the EP on that route is complied with. Or it may be required if a new operator wishes to run services on the route that has a frequency restriction and the existing ones need to co-ordinate with the new operator to ensure all their services, taken together, comply with the route restriction.

Where such arrangements ‘prevent, restrict or distort competition’ they are allowed if certain requirements are satisfied. Such agreements must be certified by the LTA on the following basis:

1. The agreement must be in the interests of passengers using local services in the LTA(s) concerned; and
2. It must not impose on the undertakings concerned restrictions that are not indispensable to the attainment of the bus improvement objectives (in this case compliance with the relevant route requirement).

In addition, the agreement must contribute to the attainment of the following:

- To secure improvements in the quality of vehicles or facilities used to provide local services,

- To secure other improvements in local services of benefit to users of local services, or
- To reduce or limit traffic congestion, noise or air pollution;

It must not impose on the undertakings concerned restrictions which are not indispensable to the attainment of those objectives and must not afford the undertakings concerned the possibility of eliminating competition in respect of a substantial part of the services in question.

The tests would be expected to be satisfied, but they should still be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Example qualifying agreement template can be found here in A.3.

Step 9 – If any changes are made to the EP plan and/or scheme, operators formally review the EP plan and scheme and raise any objections

The same objection template may be used as in step 5 above.

Step 10 – Once sufficient support has been obtained by operators, LTA to ‘make’ the EP Plan and Scheme and publishes notice to all operators and relevant stakeholders

The following template can be used to inform all relevant bus operators, the traffic commissioners and relevant stakeholders that the EP plan and scheme has been ‘made’. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA. Please note that this notice must be given no later than 14 days after the EP plan and scheme has been ‘made’.

Notice of a ‘made’ enhanced partnership (ep) plan and scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is to inform all relevant parties that the EP plan and scheme have been officially made.

Details of the EP plan and scheme:

The EP plan and scheme set out a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between local transport authorities (LTAs) and local bus operators. This aim to deliver the objectives of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Modifications:

The following elements of the EP plan and scheme have been modified following public consultation:

[List of modifications to the EP plan and scheme]

Varying an EP

Bespoke variation/revocation arrangements

This section provides boilerplate example text for bespoke arrangements, including a separate operator objection mechanism, that can be included in an EP scheme when it is 'made'.

Example template wording setting out bespoke variation/revocation mechanisms

[Text within square brackets, stylised bold and italics provide instructional text]

[Text within square brackets are to be filled by the LTA]

Under powers at s.138E of the Transport Act 2000, enhanced partnership scheme variations where this section is quoted will be subject to the bespoke voting mechanism also as set out in this section.

[Even the bespoke variation mechanism itself can be changed or new variation procedures for particular sections (e.g. to modify ticketing arrangements) added. The example below uses the statutory objection mechanism to do so.]

Changes to or new flexibility provisions added to the EP scheme under s.138E of the Transport Act 2000 shall only be included in the EP scheme if they satisfy the statutory objection mechanism as set out in The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018.

Consideration will be given to proposed variations to the EP scheme submitted by a local authority, an organisation represented on the EP forum, or a local bus service operator. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the BSIP, EP plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be in writing and submitted to [email address]. The LTA will forward all requests onto all EP forum members within [5 working days].

Decision-making process and bespoke objection mechanism:

[There are a number of mechanisms that can be used to decide whether to adopt a variation using bespoke arrangements. It does not need to be elaborate. For example, this can be using a simple vote of hands by bus operators at an EP forum in the example directly below. Or a separate 'decision board' could be established comprising, for example, only the LTA and an EP forum-nominated quorum of representatives from bus operators providing local bus services.]

On receipt of a request for a variation under this section, [name of LTA] will reconvene the EP forum, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. If the proposed variation is agreed by all bus operator representatives present, and if [name of LTA] also agrees, the LTA will make the EP scheme variation within seven working days and publish the revised EP scheme on its website. EP forum members who are absent or not expressing a view at the meeting (either in person or in writing) will be deemed to be abstaining from the decision.

[Or it can use the statutory objection mechanism:]

On receipt of a request for a variation under this section, [name of LTA] will reconvene the EP forum, giving at least 14 days' prior written notice for the meeting to all EP forum members, to consider the proposed variation. If the proposed variation is agreed by all bus operators present and [name of authority] also agrees, [name of LTA] will commence the statutory objection mechanism.

If objections do not reach the statutory objection limits, the variation will be made [70 days] after the end of the objection period.

[Alternatively, specific arrangements can be put in place to deal with particular types of variation. Take the example below of bus priorities that will comprise new ‘facilities’ provided by the LTA on a specific bus corridor:]

The LTA, other local authority body or operator of local bus services may put forward specific proposals for introducing bus priority measures on an individual section of defined highway or bus corridor.

Those operating local services on that corridor may also put forward a package of improvements to local bus services that they agree to introduce if the bus priority measures are delivered.

If the LTA agrees and the operators of local services on that corridor confirm in writing to the LTA their acceptance of these arrangements, the LTA will vary the scheme using these bespoke arrangements to include those arrangements and the obligations on bus operators will come into force [70 days] after the agreed package of bus priority measures has been implemented by the LTA.

Step 1 - LTA issues a notice of intention to prepare a variation to the EP plan or scheme to operators and other relevant stakeholders affected by potential variation

The following template can be used to inform all relevant bus operators and relevant stakeholders that the LTA wishes to prepare a variation to the EP plan or scheme. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA.

Notice of intention to prepare a variation of the enhanced (ep) partnership plan and/or scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is to inform all relevant parties of the intention to vary the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme by [LTA]. As part of this process, [LTA] invites all local bus operators to participate in the preparation of the proposed variation.

Overview

The EP plan and scheme 'made' on the [date] sets out a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between local transport authorities (LTAs) and local bus operators. This aims to deliver the objectives of the bus service improvement plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Proposed variation

The proposed variation(s) is/are as follows:

[Details and reasons for proposed variation(s)]

Step 2 - LTA prepares draft variation to the EP plan or scheme

The LTA should prepare the draft variation whilst consulting bus operators and impacted stakeholders. This should help to identify potential impacts and dependencies of a proposed variation.

Top tips:

- ✓ **Consult bus operators and impacted stakeholders:** To minimise the number of objections at step 3, it is important to consult bus operators to understand potential concerns and amend the draft variation if required. Impacted stakeholders should be consulted to understand details of the benefits and impacts of the variation with potential dependencies identified. Depending on the scale of the variation, the public should be directly informed and consulted.
- ✓ **Identify and document the impacts and dependencies of the proposed variation:** Based on stakeholder feedback and further analysis, the impacts and dependencies of the proposed variation should be documented to ensure transparency. In compliance with accessibility requirements, the authority must consider how the proposals may contribute towards enabling disabled people to travel independently and in safety and reasonable comfort.
- ✓ **Where the EP plan and scheme documents are publicly available, it should be noted on the landing page that there may be potential upcoming changes.**

Step 3 - LTA publishes a notice that a draft variation has been prepared to operators affected by potential variation

The following template can be used to inform all bus operators affected by the potential variation that a draft variation EP plan and scheme has been prepared. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA. Please note that the content of this notice will vary depending on if the statutory objection mechanism or the bespoke variation mechanism is used.

Notice of preparation of a draft variation of the enhanced (ep) partnership plan and/or scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is to inform all relevant parties that a draft variation of the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme has been prepared by [LTA].

Overview

The EP plan and scheme ‘made’ on the [date] sets out a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between local transport authorities (LTAs) and local bus operators. This aims to deliver the objectives of the bus service improvement plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Proposed variation

The prepared proposed variation(s) is/are as follows:

[Full details and reasons for proposed variation(s)]

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

The objection process to be used will operate under [the statutory objection/ bespoke variation mechanism as outlined within the EP scheme].

[If statutory objection mechanism is to be used]

Right to object

Operators of qualifying local services have the right to object to the EP plan. A qualifying local service is defined as a registered local bus service operating within the geographical area covered by the EP plan and scheme.

Objection threshold

The proposed variation of the EP plan and/or scheme will not proceed to consultation if either of the following criteria is met:

- **Criteria 1:**

- The combined registered distance of all qualifying local services operated by objectors in the EP area is at least 25% of the total registered distance of all local bus services in that area; and
- If there are four or more operators, at least three must object;
- If there are fewer than four operators, all must object.

- **Criteria 2:**

- At least 50% of the total number of operators of qualifying local services in the EP area have objected; and
- The combined registered distance of their services is at least 4% of the total registered distance of all local bus services in that area.

Objection period

Objections must be submitted within 28 calendar days from the date of this notice. The process may conclude earlier if all relevant parties respond positively before the end of the objection period.

How to object

Objections must be submitted in writing and sent to either:

Email: [LTA contact email address]

Post: [LTA contact postal address]

Please include the name of your organisation, the services you operate, and the grounds for your objection.

[If the bespoke variation mechanism is to be used]

[Full detail of bespoke variation mechanism including rights to object, objection threshold, objection period and how to object].

Step 4 - Operators formally review the draft variation and raise any objections

The same objection template may be used as in step 5 of making the plan and scheme.

Step 5 - Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA publishes notice of the intention to vary the EP plan or scheme to operators and other stakeholders

Notice of the intention to vary the enhanced partnership (ep) plan and scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is to inform all relevant parties that the [LTA] intends to vary the EP plan and/or scheme.

Overview:

The EP plan and scheme set out a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between local transport authorities (LTAs) and local bus operators. This aim to deliver the objectives of the bus service improvement plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Proposed variation

The prepared proposed variation(s) is/are as follows:

[Full details and reasons for proposed variation(s)]

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Step 6 - LTA completes the schedule 10 test to ensure that the variation does not restrict competition

See step 8 of making an EP plan and scheme.

Step 7 - LTA publishes notice of intention to make the variation to operators

The following template can be used to inform all bus operators that the LTA intends to make the variation to the EP plan and scheme. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA. Please note that the content of this notice will vary depending on if the statutory objection mechanism or the bespoke variation mechanism is used.

Notice of intention to make a variation of the enhanced partnership (ep) plan and scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is issued to inform all relevant operators that [LTA] intends to 'make' a variation to the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme.

Overview:

The EP plan and scheme outline a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between LTAs and local bus operators. These arrangements aim to deliver the objectives of the EP plan or bus service improvement plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Proposed variation

The proposed variation(s) to the EP plan and/or scheme are as follows:

[Insert full details and reasons for the proposed variation(s)]

Alternatively, the full details of the variation(s) can be inspected at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

This variation [is/is not] a modified version of the original proposals previously shared.

[If modified, briefly describe the nature of the modifications.]

The objection process to be used will operate under [the statutory objection/ bespoke variation mechanism as outlined within the EP scheme].

[If statutory objection mechanism is to be used]

Right to object

Operators of qualifying local services have the right to object to the EP plan. A qualifying local service is defined as a registered local bus service operating within the geographical area covered by the EP plan and scheme.

Objection threshold

The proposed variation of the EP plan and/or scheme will not proceed to consultation if either of the following criteria is met:

- **Criteria 1:**
 - The combined registered distance of all qualifying local services operated by objectors in the EP area is at least 25% of the total registered distance of all local bus services in that area; and
 - If there are four or more operators, at least three must object;
 - If there are fewer than four operators, all must object.
- **Criteria 2:**
 - At least 50% of the total number of operators of qualifying local services in the EP area have objected; and
 - The combined registered distance of their services is at least 4% of the total registered distance of all local bus services in that area.

Objection period

Objections must be submitted within 28 calendar days from the date of this notice. The process may conclude earlier if all relevant parties respond positively before the end of the objection period.

How to object

Objections must be submitted in writing and sent to either:

Email: [LTA contact email address]

Post: [LTA contact postal address]

Please include the name of your organisation, the services you operate, and the grounds for your objection.

[If the bespoke variation mechanism is to be used]

[Full detail of bespoke variation mechanism including rights to object, objection threshold, objection period and how to object]

Step 8 - LTA provides notice of making the variation to operators, traffic commissioners and relevant stakeholders

The following template can be used to inform all bus operators, the traffic commissioner and other relevant stakeholders that the LTA has 'made' the variation to the EP plan and/or scheme. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA. Please note that the notice must not be given later than 14 days after the decision to 'make' the variation.

Notice of making a variation to the enhanced partnership (ep) plan and scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is issued by [LTA] to inform all relevant parties that a variation to the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme has been made on the [Insert date].

Overview

The EP plan and scheme set out a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between LTAs and local bus operators. These arrangements support the delivery of the bus service improvement plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme, along with the 'made' variation, are available and can be inspected at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Details of the variation

The variation(s) made to the EP plan and/or scheme are as follows:

[Insert full details of the variation(s)]

This variation [is/is not] a modified version of the original proposals previously published.

[If modified, briefly describe the nature of the modifications.]

Postponing an element of an EP

Step 1 – LTA selects a date to postpone any of the implementation dates for any elements specified in the EP scheme

Top tips:

- ✓ **Cross-check the EP guidance to ensure that the date chosen can be postponed:** The EP guidance lists the implementation dates that can be postponed.
- ✓ **Avoid delaying postponements:** Make sure there is sufficient time to conduct a formal consultation before changing the original implementation date.

Step 2 – LTA carries out formal consultation with operators affected by postponement

Similar advice from step 6 of making a plan and scheme can be followed. At this step, it is also important to identify and document the impacts and dependencies of the proposed postponement. Based on stakeholder feedback and further analysis, the impacts and dependencies of the proposed postponement should be documented to ensure transparency.

Step 3 – LTA publishes a notice, including reasons for postponement to operators, relevant stakeholders and traffic commissioner

The following template can be used to inform all relevant bus operators, the traffic commissioners and relevant stakeholders an element of the EP plan and scheme has been postponed. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA.

Notice of making a postponement of an element to the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is issued by [LTA] to inform all relevant parties that an element of the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme has been postponed on the [Insert date].

Overview

The EP plan and scheme set out a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between LTAs and local bus operators. These arrangements support the delivery of the bus service improvement plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Details of the postponement

The postponements(s) made to the EP plan and/or scheme are as follows:

[Insert full details of the postponement(s)]

Revoking an EP

Step 1 - LTA gives notice of proposal to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme to all stakeholders and the Secretary of State for Transport

The following template can be used to inform all stakeholders and the Secretary of State for Transport of an LTA proposal to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA.

Notice of intention to make revoke the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is issued to inform all relevant parties that [LTA] intends to propose a revocation of the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme.

Overview

The EP plan and scheme outline a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between LTAs and local bus operators. These arrangements aim to deliver the objectives of the bus service improvement plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Proposed revocation

[Details of the revocation and LTA's reasoning]

Step 2 - LTA consults operators, the CMA and other relevant stakeholders

Top tips:

- ✓ **Do a thorough consultation with bus operators, the CMA and other relevant stakeholders:** To minimise the number of objections at step 4, it is important to consult bus operators to fully understand potential concerns and mitigations to impacts of revoking the EP. Revoking an EP and mitigations should be thoroughly considered.
- ✓ **Identify and document the impacts and dependencies of the revocation:** Based on stakeholder feedback and further analysis, the impacts and dependencies of the proposed variation should be documented to ensure transparency.
- ✓ **Where the EP plan and scheme documents are publicly available, it should be noted on the landing page that the EP may be potentially revoked.**

Step 3 - LTA gives notice of intention to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme to operators

The following template can be used to inform all bus operators of the LTA's intention to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA.

Notice of intention to make revoke the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is issued to inform all relevant operators that [LTA] intends to revoke the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme.

Overview

The EP plan and scheme outline a coordinated approach to improving local bus services through collaborative partnerships between LTAs and local bus operators. These arrangements aim to deliver the objectives of the EP plan or bus service improvement plan (BSIP).

Full details of the EP plan and scheme are available at:

[Insert link or location where documents can be accessed]

Proposed revocation

[Full details of the revocation and LTA's reasoning]

The objection process to be used will operate under [the statutory objection/ bespoke revocation arrangement as outlined within the EP scheme].

[If statutory objection mechanism is to be used]

Right to object

Operators of qualifying local services have the right to object to the EP plan. A qualifying local service is defined as a registered local bus service operating within the geographical area covered by the EP plan and scheme.

Objection threshold

The revocation of the EP plan and/or scheme will not proceed to consultation if either of the following criteria is met:

- **Criteria 1:**

- The combined registered distance of all qualifying local services operated by objectors in the EP area is at least **25%** of the total registered distance of all local bus services in that area; and
- If there are **four or more operators**, at least **three** must object;
- If there are **fewer than four operators**, **all** must object.

- **Criteria 2:**

- At least **50%** of the total number of operators of qualifying local services in the EP area have objected; **and**
- The combined registered distance of their services is at least **4%** of the total registered distance of all local bus services in that area.

Objection period

Objections must be submitted within 28 calendar days from the date of this notice. The process may conclude earlier if all relevant parties respond positively before the end of the objection period.

How to object

Objections must be submitted in writing and sent to either:

Email: [LTA contact email address]

Post: [LTA contact postal address]

Please include the name of your organisation, the services you operate, and the grounds for your objection.

[If the bespoke variation mechanism is to be used]

[Full detail of bespoke variation mechanism including rights to object, objection threshold, objection period and how to object]

Step 4 - Operators formally review the notice to revoke and raise any objections

The same objection template may be used as in step 5 of making the plan and scheme.

Step 5 - Once sufficient support has been obtained from operators, LTA can decide to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme and issue a notice of revocation to operators, relevant stakeholders and traffic commissioner

The following template can be used to inform all bus operators of that the LTA has decided to revoke the EP plan and/or scheme. Additional information can be included to the notice if required by the LTA.

Notice of making a postponement of an element to the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme

Date: [Insert date]

This notice is issued by [LTA] to inform all relevant parties, including operators affected and the traffic commissioners, that the enhanced partnership (EP) plan and/or scheme has been revoked on the [Insert date].

