Cheshire East
Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan

April 2022 (Version 2)

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Working for a brighter future together

Cheshire East Council

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1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

On 30th June 2021, Cheshire East Borough Council committed to establishing an Enhanced Partnership with Local Bus Operators. A Notice of Intent was published at this time which enabled continued access to the COVID Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) funding.

Following this commitment, Cheshire East Borough Council is expected to deploy their Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators from [the Commencement Date] as a statutory arrangement under the 2017 Bus Services Act. This arrangement allows for Cheshire East as the Local Transport Authority (LTA) to take over the role of registering bus services from the Traffic Commissioners.

The principal objectives of the Enhanced Partnership are those contained within the Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) published on October 31st 2021[1]. These objectives have been drawn together considering the key principles, themes and aspirations for the borough's bus network as outlined within the following strategy and policy documents.

- Transport for the North (TfN) Strategic Transport Plan (2019),
- Cheshire East Corporate Plan (2021-2025),
- Cheshire East Economic Strategy[2] (2020-2025),
- Cheshire East Local Plan (2017),
- Cheshire East Local Transport Plan (2019-2024),
- Cheshire East Environmental Strategy (2020-2024),
- Cheshire East Low Emission Strategy (2018), and
- Cheshire East Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (2020-2025).

Objectives have been split over three distinct phases and have been designed to underpin current issues and barriers to travel by bus, as well as the opportunities and future aspirations for the bus network in Cheshire East, these objectives depend on the BSIP funding ask and include:

Phase 1 – Stabilisation of the Network (2021-2023)

- Stabilisation of network coverage,
- Improve Reliability and Punctuality of services,
- Simplification of Fares,
- Make Services easier to understand and improve information,
- Improve integration with other tickets and modes of transport, and
- Reduce Vehicle Emissions.

[1] https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/public-transport/bsip/cheshire-east-bsip-2021.pdf
[2] 2019 consultation draft version

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Phase 2 – Quality Improvement (2022 to 2025, and beyond to 2030)

- Improve accessibility and network coverage,
- Improve Reliability and Punctuality of services,
- Better Value for money on fares,
- Make Services easier to understand and improve information,
- Make buses easier to use and improve passenger safety, security and accessibility, and
- Reduce Vehicle Emissions and support decarbonisation of the transport network.

Phase 3 – Network Growth (2023 to 2025, and beyond to 2030)

- To promote a post Covid network that is more affordable and financially resilient,
- Improve Reliability and Punctuality of services,
- Better value and multimodal tickets,
- Make Services easier to understand and improve information,
- To increase the attractiveness of the bus as a travel alternative, and
- Reduce Vehicle Emissions and support decarbonisation of the transport network.

The basis for this plan is focused on aspirations which are contained within Phase 1 (network stabilisation) and Phase 2 (quality improvements) of the BSIP document and are dependent on successful DfT BSIP funding.

The benefits of this partnership include an initial stabilisation of the network and subsequent enhancements to network quality and coverage. Enabling access to funding for schemes that can make a real difference and strengthen the current bus network through investment in infrastructure, technology and careful forward planning. The Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership is in two parts:

An Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan – this document**)** – a clear vision of the improvements to bus services that the EP is aiming to deliver, mirroring the BSIP.

Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s) (EP Scheme) – an accompanying document that sets out the requirements that need to be met by local bus services that stop in the geographical area defined in the EP scheme(s), to achieve BSIP outcomes.

Together with the BSIP, the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme(s) seek to achieve local transport and bus networks for residents and businesses that are safer, support thriving urban and rural economies and support the Council's Environment Strategy. The overall aim is for speed and efficiency enhancements of public transport to encourage more residents to make fewer car journeys, therefore contributing to Council and community carbon reduction.

Drawing on the Cheshire East BSIP, this document fulfils the statutory requirements of an Enhanced Partnership Plan as set out in the 2000 Act, including:

- A map of the geographical area it covers.
- 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 in the area and the priorities of users and non-users for improving them.
- A summary of any available data on trends in bus journey speeds and the impact of congestion on local bus services.
- What outcomes need to be delivered to improve local bus services in the plan area
- What overall interventions the partnership believes need to be taken to deliver those outcomes.

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2. Extent of the Enhanced Partnership

The Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s) extend across the full extent of the Cheshire East Borough. Any changes to this boundary will represent an Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation.

Figure 1 demonstrates the extent of the EP Plan and Scheme coverage. It includes all local bus services within it (including cross-boundary services which commence in Cheshire East) and considers the varying needs of different parts of the borough.

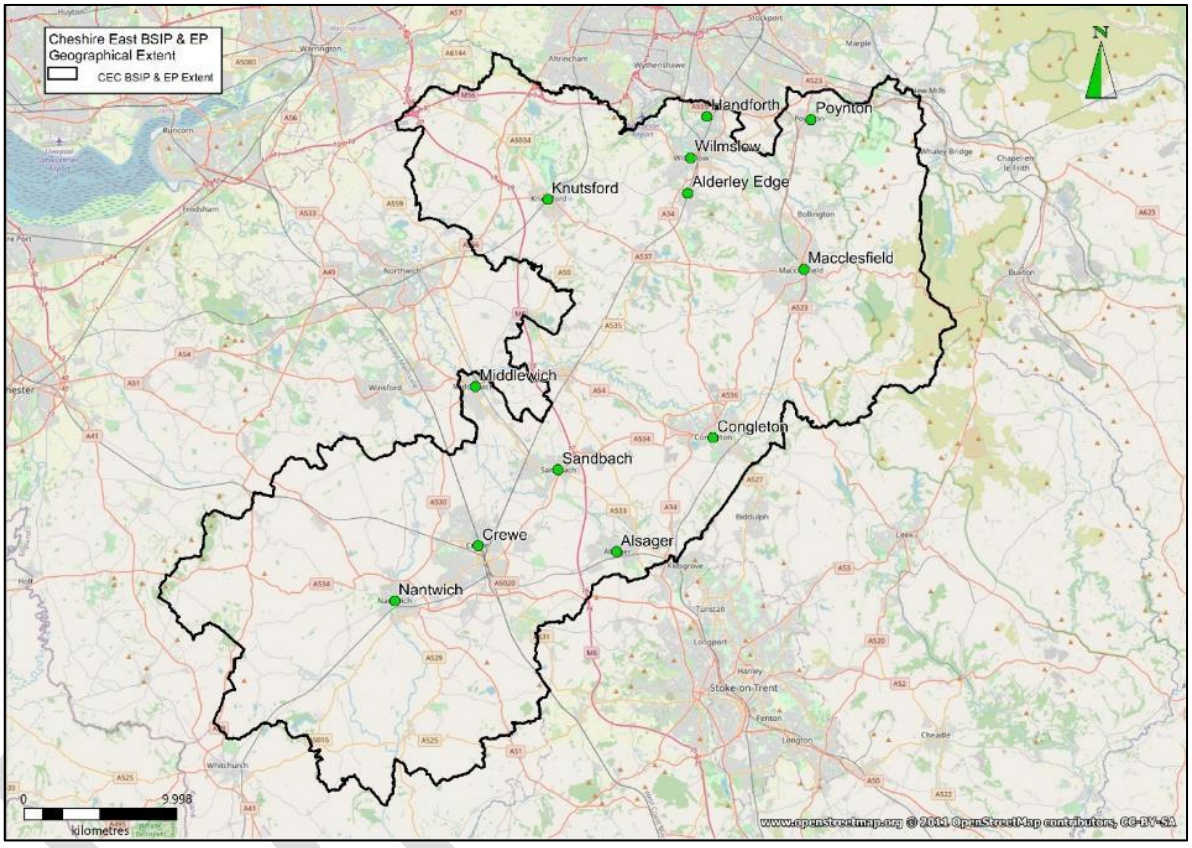

Figure 1-1: Extent of Cheshire East EP Plan and Scheme(s)

Table 1-1 identifies the principal towns and key service centres within Cheshire East.

Table 2-1: Cheshire East - principal towns and service centres

Role and tier in retail hierarchy	Centre name	Cheshire East Centres
Principal town	Principal town centres	Crewe and Macclesfield
Key service centres	Town centres	Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.
Local service centres	Local centres	Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley and Prestbury

At this stage the proposed Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme(s) are limited to the area outlined within Figure 1. However, engagement with neighbouring authorities including, Cheshire West & Chester, Warrington, Derbyshire and Shropshire is ongoing, particularly regarding cross-boundary bus services. To avoid inconsistencies in bus service provision and standards across borders, engagement with neighbouring authorities will be ongoing.

This Enhanced Partnership Plan will have no end date but will be reviewed on an annual basis from the commencement date (xxxxx). This will include a review of compliance with competition legislation and will recommend any changes to be considered for the Enhanced Partnership Plan and future Scheme(s).

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3. Bus Network Overview

There has been a steady decline in bus use across Cheshire East in the ten years prior to preparing this EP Plan.

Since 2010 / 2011 there has been a 24% decrease in passenger journeys, with a reduction in the number if passenger journeys down from 5.5m to just under 4.2m in the period. With this decline however, it is important to stress that buses in Cheshire East continue to play a crucial role in connecting users to local services for health, employment, education and recreational purposes.

The current network of local bus services operating across Cheshire East provide access between, and links within, the major settlements of Crewe and Macclesfield as well as to a number of smaller towns and parishes across the borough including Congleton, Wilmslow, Nantwich and Sandbach. Buses across the borough play a critical role in linking passengers to rail hubs in Crewe and Macclesfield, where 'first and last' mile links only offer a limited alternative to private car use, which is invariably the sole transport option for many rail passengers to access and use key local services.

The Cheshire East local bus network comprises a mix of commercially operated and financially assisted services. The Cheshire East Borough Council is responsible for the coordination of these socially necessary routes, combined with the preparation and delivery for supporting information provision.

A number of factors affect the use of local bus services within Cheshire East, these have been summarised throughout this section of the EP Plan.

3.1.1 Punctuality and reliability of existing services

Bus journey time reliability and punctuality within Cheshire East has and continues to be impacted by congestion and delays, particularly for town/urban bus services during peak periods. Traffic delays through 'Trafficmaster' data has been analysed from 2019 (pre-pandemic) and 2020 (latest full mid-pandemic data) to identify consistent congestion hotspots on the bus network. This has been undertaken specifically to understand how delays to traffic have been impacting on bus journey times and to identify where average vehicle speeds are notably lower than anticipated.

Key locations of delay have predominately been identified in the principal towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, as well as to a lesser extent other key service centres.

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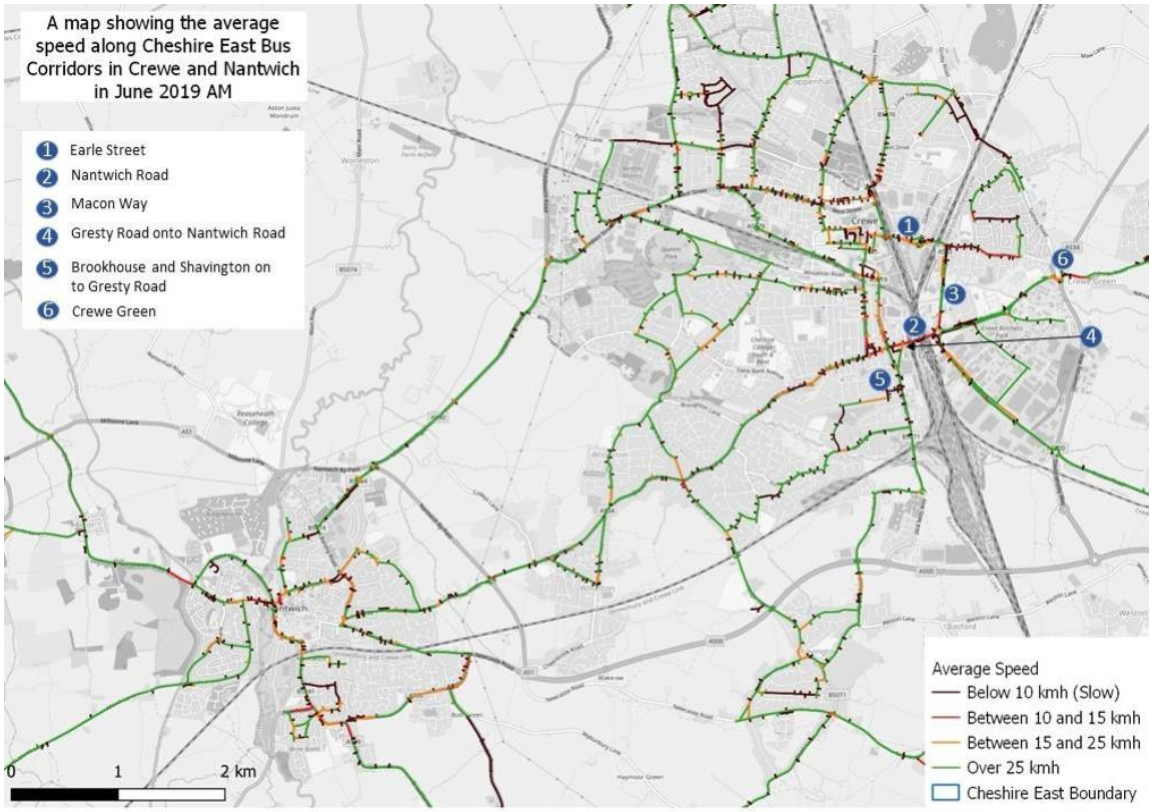
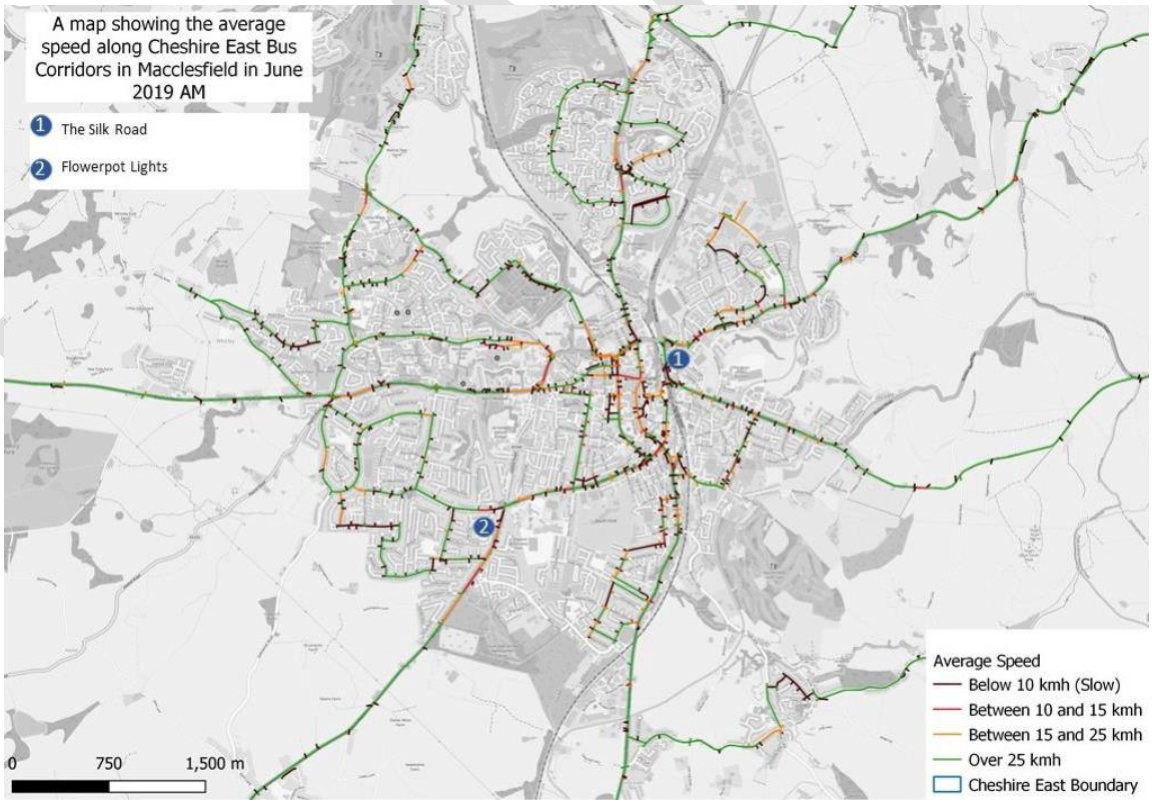

A map showing the average speed along Cheshire East Bus Corridors in Crewe and Nantwich in June 2019 AM
1 Earle Street
2 Nantwich Road
3 Macon Way
4 Gresty Road onto Nantwich Road
5 Brookhouse and Shavington on to Gresty Road
6 Crewe Green
0 1 2 km
Average Speed
Below 10 kmh (Slow)
Between 10 and 15 kmh
Between 15 and 25 kmh
Over 25 kmh
Cheshire East Boundary


A map showing the average speed along Cheshire East Bus Corridors in Macclesfield in June 2019 AM
1 The Silk Road
2 Flowerpot Lights
0 750 1,500 m
Average Speed
Below 10 kmh (Slow)
Between 10 and 15 kmh
Between 15 and 25 kmh
Over 25 kmh
Cheshire East Boundary

3.1.2 Limited existing bus priority;

There is currently limited bus priority in place within Cheshire East. A single bus lane (approx. 250m in length) is located in Crewe along the A534 Crewe Road, passing the retail park, between the Crewe Green Road junction and the junction with Nantwich Road and Weston Road.

The congestion and delays as a result of the level of traffic flows in central Crewe, owing to accessing the retail park had been causing punctuality and reliability issues to bus services using the road. Cheshire East is currently developing a trial for intelligent adaptive signals pilot in two locations in Crewe, to address operational and performance issues at the specific signal junctions. There are opportunities to further develop these schemes to facilitate bus priority, as well as the potential to roll out to other locations within Crewe and wider Cheshire East, if the trial proves successful.

3.1.3 Competition with other modes (car ownership and parking charges);

Cheshire East has significantly fewer households without the available use of a car or a van (16%) than the North West or England, where slightly more than one in four households do not use of a car or van. Equally, Cheshire East has a higher proportion of households that have 2, 3 or more access to an available car or van (43%) in their household than in the region or the country. Therefore, it could be suggested that Cheshire East has a higher dependency on the private car than other areas. This can be partly explained by the more rural nature and the higher average earnings, but also reflective of the current limitations in the bus network.

Cheshire will continue work to deliver town-based local transport strategies that will be multi-model, taking full account of the potential for local bus improvements in each town alongside the demand and supply of pay-and-display parking spaces. The Council will also work with bus operators and user-groups to seek better alignment and greater competitiveness between bus fares and the charges for car parking in our town centres – where applicable – as part of a broader demand management strategy that promotes the use of bus services.

3.1.4 Competition with and connectivity to rail services;

Stakeholder feedback provided by Town and Parish Councils, as well as part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) Delivery Plan consultation, included comments regarding a lack of coordination between bus and rail timetables, impacting the attractiveness of using bus services to access railway stations in the borough, including Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Sandbach, as well as Knutsford and Congleton.

Currently interchange waiting times between bus services and rail services at Sandbach railway station are more likely to be 30 minutes or greater, with interchange times at Macclesfield and Wilmslow railway stations often between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on destination.

As well as the waiting times, the unattractiveness of some interchange facilities between bus services and railway stations has also been raised during LTP consultation.

3.1.5 Connectivity to key trip attractors;

The existing bus network is focused on connecting principal towns and key service centres, to residential areas. Stakeholder feedback has identified a lack of connectivity or limited-service provision for business parks and key employment sites, Manchester Airport, Leighton Hospital

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and leisure and tourism sites (i.e. Tatton Park and Jodrell Bank). This limited connectivity is viewed as a barrier to using bus services to access key trip attractors.

3.1.6 Post Covid-19 recovery;

Covid-19 and government restrictions on travel have drastically reduced bus usage and changed mobility patterns. It is currently uncertain whether bus ridership will fully recover and reach pre-Covid levels anytime soon, suggesting there is need for public support given the fall in revenue and the social, economic and environmental benefits associated with bus services provision.

Whilst traffic levels are approaching pre-pandemic levels, the corresponding bounce back on bus services has not yet materialised, although there are some indications that since September (2021) there has been an increase in patronage, with the return to school and some employees starting to return to office-based working.

3.1.7 Population & Socio-economic factors;

In 2019, Cheshire East had a population of 384,152 residents, of which 49% are male and 51% female, living in 123,800 households. Of this, 18% of the population are aged 0-15, 59% are 15 to 65 and 23% are aged 65 or older. The borough's population is projected to grow by approximately 5% from 2019 up to 2030, again masking a much larger growth of the elderly population (+24%) and a decrease of the other two age bands (-2% for under 16 and -1% for 16-64 years respectively).

In terms of population density (ONS 2021), Cheshire East in its entirety is much less densely populated (329 inhabitants/km^2), than the North West (497/km^2) or England (430/km^2) average, owing in part to its rural make-up. A number of the borough's more rural areas have fewer than 100 inhabitants per km^2 and the population is concentrated in the borough's towns and key service centres. Population density is at its highest in Crewe, Nantwich and Macclesfield.

Cheshire East's population is more economically active than the wider region and the country, with circa 84% percent of the borough's residents aged 16 – 64 working. Both the unemployment rate (around 3%) and the proportion of economically inactive population is lower than in the North West and England. The median annual gross pay per worker in Cheshire East was estimated at £27,053, significantly higher than the median pay in the North West (£24,334) and also higher than the national average (£26,844).

Therefore, from a socio-economic perspective, on average, the local population of Cheshire East earns more, is more qualified and is more economically active than the national average but again there are important disparities within the borough.

As a consequence of the rural nature and the higher earnings, car availability is significantly higher in Cheshire East, which is also reflected in the chosen travel to work mode, where bus is a marginal mode with around 2% and limited to the urban areas, in particular to/from Crewe and Macclesfield.

Bus passenger journeys have dropped by a quarter in the last decade, with concessionary journeys falling a bit slower, leading to the share of concessionary travel to increase relatively. The fall in total journeys was worse than nationally and while the past rate of 15.1 was already comparatively low, Cheshire East has now one of the lowest overall numbers of bus journeys per head in England with 10.9 journeys.

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Overall the available data on local travel behaviour and bus transport suggests that Cheshire East, as many other areas in the country, is stuck in a vicious circle of bus decline where lower demand service cuts are continuously reinforcing each other.

3.1.8 Growth in Cheshire East.

Growth in housing is centred around the principal towns and key service centres, with proposals of between 200 and 500 dwellings in most locations.

Additionally a number of larger developments are planned, including North Cheshire Growth Village in Handforth delivering 1500 dwellings and 2,100 dwellings planned for Nantwich (1,100 near Kingsbourne and 1,000 in Waterlode).

In addition to housing growth, there are a number of mixed-use/employment developments and infrastructure projects planned for Cheshire East, which include:

- Major infrastructure project - HS2/Crewe Hub,
- 10ha of sports and leisure development at Glastonbury Drive, Poynton,
- 5.69ha of employment land (B8) at Gresty Road, Crewe,
- 6ha of employment development at London Road, Holmes Chapel,
- Congleton Leisure Centre refurbishment,
- Crewe History Centre,
- Crewe Market Hall,
- Crewe Royal Arcade – includes the new bus station,
- Macclesfield Town Centre Retail Redevelopment,
- Nantwich Cultural Quarter development, and
- North West Crewe Package.

Growth is envisaged in locations which currently exhibit traffic congestion delays, and more broadly given the limitations in the network, both temporally and in terms of coverage, in parts of the county which has current poor levels of bus service provision.

3.1.9 Passenger Feedback

Currently within Cheshire East, passengers are able to provide feedback and views on their bus network and services through bus operator satisfaction surveys, Transport Focus surveys and directly to Cheshire East Borough Council via their Local Councillor.

Transport Focus regularly carries out bus passenger surveys. Feedback for bus passengers (492 responses) in Cheshire East from 2016 outline a satisfaction level of 60% for value for money and 74% for punctuality. It should be noted this survey was undertaken prior to the 2018 bus service review carried out by Cheshire East Borough Council.

Both Town and Parish Councils also provide forums for local communities and bus users to raise concerns relating to local bus services. In addition, a number of voluntary and community organisations have a role in reflecting and representing bus passengers. Within Cheshire East, the more pro-active user-groups that are often a focus for passenger views include Crewe and District Bus Users Group (CDBUG) and MaccTastic, in Macclesfield. Cheshire East Borough Council has strong working relationships with these groups and a wider range of stakeholders which will help us to take account of passenger views as our plan is delivered.

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Opportunities for residents of Cheshire East to feed into what they want from their bus network is also available as part of the consultation on Local Transport Plans (LTP). Recent engagement on the LTP Delivery Plans (2021) has outlined a number of key themes and areas for improvement.

3.1.10 Conclusion

The above evidence, taken together with the Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) objectives, makes a compelling case for strengthening the existing bus network. Using statutory Enhanced Partnership powers, the Council and the Bus Operators will work together to identify and implement schemes designed to reduce journey times and increase reliability, as well as undertake other activity to increase the attractiveness of local bus services.

These initiatives are intended to initially stabilise the bus network and subsequently deliver quality enhancements and network growth for commercial bus services in Cheshire East. This will be achieved by initiating a modal shift from the private car. It will not be acceptable in environmental, social or economic terms to sustain the substantial planned population growth in Cheshire East through continued car reliance. Increased use of the bus network will contribute to environmental, social and economic benefits by reducing car reliance and social isolation which are associated with a bus network not operating to its full potential.

The Enhanced Partnership Scheme document is intended to assist in achieving the objectives as outlined within the Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and section 4 of this EP Plan document.

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4. Enhanced Partnership Plan

4.1 Objectives

The Cheshire East EP Plan has the following objectives, which align with the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and support published policy and strategy documents including:

- Transport for the North (TfN) Strategic Transport Plan (2019),
- Cheshire East Corporate Plan (2021-2025),
- Cheshire East Economic Strategy (2020-2025),
- Cheshire East Local Plan (2017),
- Cheshire East Local Transport Plan (2019-2024),
- Cheshire East Environmental Strategy (2020-2024),
- Cheshire East Low Emission Strategy (2018), and
- Cheshire East Carbon Neutrality Action Plan (2020-2025).and
- LTP Delivery Plans.

Table 4.1 outlines the core objectives detailed within Cheshire East's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Tables 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 demonstrate the actions, deliverables and measurements associated with each of the outlined objectives.

Figure 4-1: Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Objectives

Cheshire East Phasing	Objective	Deliverable
Phase 1: Network Stabilisation **2021-2023**	Stabilisation of the network.	*Set requirement for 4 timetable changes within the Enhanced Partnership* *Secure financial assistance for current bus network, post CBSSG (2021 to 2025)*
	Improve Reliability and Punctuality of services.	*Feasibility report to assess and prioritise bus priority interventions.*
	Simplification of Fares.	*Feasibility study to understand the impacts of fare simplification (including concessionary considerations for young persons, job seekers etc.)* *Commitment to pursue multi-operating ticketing arrangement through EP.*
	Make Services easier to understand and improve information.	*Publication of the 'Passenger Charter'* *Secure financial assistance for improved paper-based public transport information for all stops in principal towns and key service centres, hospitals and railway stations*
	Improve integration with other tickets and modes of transport.	*Feasibility study on the cost and deliverability of a multi-modal ticketing scheme in Cheshire East*

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Cheshire East Phasing	Objective	Deliverable
	Reduce Vehicle Emissions.	*Action plan for retro-fitting bus fleet to Euro VI standards*
Phase 2: Quality Improvements **2022 to 2025 and beyond to 2030**	Improve accessibility and network coverage.	*Secure financial assistance for bus service frequency enhancements, expansion of operating times and network growth* *Secure financial assistance for the pilot or full delivery of 2 DRT areas*
	Improve Reliability and Punctuality of services.	*Deliver top 20 prioritised interventions and signal trials*
	Better Value for money on fares.	*Support for simplification and rationalisation of fares*
	Make Services easier to understand and improve information.	*Deliver programme of operator improvements for information provision via app and at stops (where required)*
	Make buses easier to use and improve passenger safety, security and accessibility.	*Deliver programme of bus stop renewals (renewed infrastructure and information)*
	Reduce Vehicle Emissions and support decarbonisation of the transport network.	*Deliver programme to retrofit buses operating in CEC area to Euro VI standard* *As part of two quality corridors, deliver low emission buses to the network*
Phase 3: Network Growth **2023 to 2025 and beyond to 2030**	To promote a post Covid network that is more affordable and financially resilient.	*Secure financial assistance for frequency enhancements to deliver minimum standards, expansion of operating times and network growth.* *Secure financial assistance for the delivery of further 2 DRT pilot or full areas, dependent on funding*
	Improve Reliability and Punctuality of services.	*Deliver top 20 prioritised interventions and signal trials*
	Better value and multimodal tickets.	*Commitment to participate in working group for development of multi-modal ticketing schemes*
	Make Services easier to understand and improve information.	*Deliver programme of key hub stops and information totems.*
	To increase the attractiveness of the bus as a travel alternative.	*Deliver infrastructure improvements to bus/rail interchanges* *Support network growth to key employment and service centres.*
	Reduce Vehicle Emissions and support decarbonisation of the transport network.	*Deliver programme to retrofit buses operating in CEC area to Euro VI*

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Figure 4-2: Phase 1 – Stabilisation of the Bus Network

National BSIP Objectives		More frequent services More comprehensive services Better integration with other modes		Faster and more reliable journeys	Cheaper fares	Easier to understand services	Easier to use for passengers	
Transport Focus pillars TF link		*Buses running more often*	*Buses going more places*	*More buses on time/faster JTs*	*Better Value for Money*	*Better quality of information at bus stops*	*Accessible buses & More effort to tackle any anti-social behaviour*	*Cleaner buses*
CEC BSIP Principles/Key priorities (honeycomb)		**Accessibility (network coverage) Sustainability, consolidation & growth Connectivity of network to other modes and across borders**		**Reliability & punctuality**	**Collaboration with Operators Integration with ticketing Sustainability, consolidation & growth**	**Accessibility (info provision) Collaboration with Operators and BUGs**	**Integration with other technologies, systems and ticketing**	**Decarbonisation & reducing vehicle emissions**
Phase 1 - Stabilisation of the network	**Objectives**	**Stabilisation of the network**		**Improve reliability and punctuality of services**	**Simplification of fares**	**Make services easier to understand and improve information**	**Improve integration with other tickets and modes of transport**	**Reduce vehicle emissions**
	Action	Limiting number of timetable changes per year to 4 (Sept, Jan, Apr, July) Initial support for marginal/semi-viable services (to be informed by Operators and costed - considering value for money)		Better management of roadworks and information sharing with Operators (as part of an EP working group) Develop an evidence base and process for identification of bus priority opportunities, linked to LTP Delivery Plans and in collaboration with Bus Operators.	CEC and Operators to work together as part of the enhanced partnership to identify Operator-led fare simplification	Develop of a passenger charter Improve paper-based and online information provision across the borough	Set out plans for ticketing and potential for modal integration.	Set out actions with operators and energy providers to transform local bus fleet
	Deliverable	***Set requirement for 4 timetable changes within the Enhanced Partnership*** ***Secure financial support for current bus network, post CBSSG (2021 to 2025)***		***Feasibility report to assess and prioritise bus priority interventions***	***Feasibility study to understand the impacts of fare simplification (including concessionary considerations for young persons, job seekers etc.)*** ***Commitment to pursue multi-operating ticketing arrangement through EP***	***Publication of the 'Passenger Charter'*** ***Secure financial support for improved paper-based public transport information for all stops in principal towns and key service centres, hospitals and railway stations***	***Feasibility study on the cost and delierability of a multi-operator and / or multi-modal ticketing scheme in Cheshire East***	***Action plan for retro-fitting bus fleet to Euro VI standards***
	Measurement	*4 timetable changes per year* *Support to be measured by retention/growth of services (pax growth and bus kms), no. commercial and supported services*		*Improved punctuality during roadworks on specific affected routes.* *Delivery of process for priority identification (and ranking)*	*Operators and CEC to develop and publish forward plans for fares within CEC*	*Publish a passenger charter*	*Operators and CEC to develop and publish forward plans for ticketing within CEC*	*Action plan with programme and targets for number of low emission buses in total bus fleet*

Figure 4-3: Phase 2 – Quality Improvements

National BSIP Objectives		More frequent services More comprehensive services Better integration with other modes	Faster and more reliable journeys	Cheaper fares	Easier to understand services	Easier to use for passengers	
CEC BSIP Principles/Key priorities (honeycomb)		**Accessibility (network coverage) Sustainability, consolidation & growth Connectivity of network to other modes and across borders**	**Reliability & punctuality**	**Collaboration with Operators Integration with ticketing Sustainability, consolidation & growth**	**Accessibility (info provision) Collaboration with Operators and BUGs**	**Integration with other technologies, systems and ticketing**	**Decarbonisation & reducing vehicle emissions**
Phase 2 - Quality improvement	**Objectives**	**Improve accessibility and bus network coverage**	**Improve reliability and punctuality of services**	**Better value for money on fares**	**Make services easier to understand and improve information**	**Make buses easier to use and improve passenger safety, security and accessibility**	**Reduce vehicle emissions and support decarbonisation of the transport network**
	Action	Improve operating hours of existing services between 06:00-19:00. Identify existing services for enhanced frequencies and some new routes to facilitate increase in % of population within 400m of 40min JT to key service centre. Improvements in frequency of weekday and daytime services to town centre locations including Crewe and Macclesfield.	Identify, prioritise and maintain a list of where bus priority measures are needed	Consideration of fare caps for short-hops and competitiveness (with other modes) and affordability of fares on inter-urban & town/urban routes	Operators to improve web/app- based real time information vs timetabled information. Reduce day-to-day variation in service provision.	With Operators, develop a programme for improving roadside infrastructure (bus stops) and on-bus technology for the betterment of passenger safety, security and accessibility	To support the transition to a low-emission fleet
	Deliverable	***Secure financial support for bus service frequency enhancements, expansion of operating times and network growth Secure financial support for the pilot delivery of 2 DRT trial areas***	***Deliver top 20 prioritised interventions and signal trials***	***Secure Financial Support for the simplification and rationalisation of fares***	***Deliver programme of operator improvements for information provision via app and at stops (where required)***	***Deliver programme of bus stop renewals (renewed infrastructure and information)***	***Deliver programme to retrofit buses operating in CEC area to Euro VI standard and deliver a number of new bus technologies to support qualioty corridors / super-bus routes.***
	Measurement	*Comparison of bus timetables and operating information of services Change in % of population within 400m of 40 min JT to key service centre.*	*List of interventions Bus punctuality data Operator feedback Customer survey feedback*	*Fare price comparison, particularly in Crewe and Macclesfield. Competitiveness of fares against parking charges*	*Reliability/punctuality data from operators Customer survey feedback*	*Bus passenger/customer survey feedback No. of bus stop improvements delivered*	*Increase the number of low emission buses in total bus fleet*

Figure 4-4: Phase 3 – Network Growth

National BSIP Objectives		More frequent services More comprehensive services Better integration with other modes	Faster and more reliable journeys	Cheaper fares	Easier to understand services	Easier to use for passengers	
CEC BSIP Principles/Key priorities (honeycomb)		Accessibility (network coverage) Sustainability, consolidation & growth Connectivity of network to other modes and across borders	Reliability & punctuality	Collaboration with Operators Integration with ticketing Sustainability, consolidation & growth	Accessibility (info provision) Collaboration with Operators and BUGs	Integration with other technologies, systems and ticketing	Decarbonisation & reducing vehicle emissions
Phase 3 - Network growth	Objectives	To promote a post-Covid bus network that is more affordable and financially resilient.	Improve reliability and punctuality of services	Better value and multimodal ticketing	Make services easier to understand and improve information	To increase the attractiveness of the bus as a travel alternative.	Reduce vehicle emissions and support decarbonisation of the transport network
	Action	Improve the frequency of existing network (identify minimum standards and different measures for the different types of services - town, rural and core inter-urban) Improve the connectivity of the network with additional services to key locations and further consideration of operating hours/days	Further delivery of punctuality improvements and priority measures Additional service frequencies	CEC to work with neighbouring authorities / regional / national bodies to develop multi-modal ticketing scheme across transport modes	Development of an integrated website or app, collating all real-time information for bus services within CEC. Identify a programme of key hub stops, with information totems (i.e. at key visitor attractions, interchanges, principal towns/service centres, hospitals)	Improve connectivity to job opportunities for principal towns and key service centres in CE and cross-border. To better connect bus network to key railway stations (Crewe, Sandbach, Macclesfield, Wilmslow and in the future HS2 hub at Crewe).	Further support the transition to low- and zero-emission in total bus fleet. Encourage mode shift to bus from private car
	Deliverable	***Secure financial support for frequency enhancements to deliver minimum standards, expansion of operating times and network growth*** ***Secure financial support for the delivery of further 2 DRT trial areas, dependent on funding***	***Deliver top 20 prioritised interventions and signal trials***	***Commitment to participate in working group for development of multi-modal ticketing schemes***	***Deliver programme of key hub stops and information totems.***	***Deliver infrastructure improvements to bus/rail interchanges*** ***Support network growth to key employment and service centres.***	***Deliver programme to retrofit/renew buses operating in CEC area to Euro VI and/or zero-emission nd deliver a number of new bus technologies to support qualioty corridors / super-bus routes.***
	Measurement	*Change in % of population within 400m of 40 min JT to key service centre.* *Analysis of key employment areas and levels of bus service provision.* *Measuring retention/growth of services (pax growth and bus kms), no. commercial and supported services*	*Bus punctuality data and bus journey times vs car journey times* *Operator feedback* *Customer survey feedback*	*Fare price comparison and availability of multi-modal ticketing.* *Competitiveness of fares against parking charges*	*Provision of app/web-based information* *Delivery of key hub stops* *Customer survey feedback*	*Bus passenger/customer survey feedback* *Competitiveness of bus fares against parking charges.* *Number of cross border routes at 1 bph frequency or greater.* *Number of services and interchange times between bus services and rail services.*	*Increase the number of low- and zero-emission buses in total bus fleet.* *Bus pax and JtW data*

4.2 Cheshire East BSIP Targets

With appropriate funding to meet our objectives, it is possible that Cheshire East can have a local bus network that not only meets the needs of users, manages the expectations of service delivery to our local bus operating partners, but is comparable to those areas of the country which are seen as 'best practice' where well connected and accessible local bus services are able to deliver fast, frequent services to meet the needs of users at a fare level which is affordable and comparable to the cost of using their cars for short journeys or parking.

Furthermore, improved discrete bus priority improvements across our town networks, particularly across Crewe and Macclesfield, will enable buses to be more reliable and punctual, as well as working towards removing any unnecessary additional operating costs brought about through congestion and delay.

The key indicators and targets required to bring about these improvements are outlined in the sub-sections below.

4.2.1 Journey Time

Developing targets or indicators for journey time, will consider a number of key components. These will relate to the existing and new local bus network, its service frequencies and how these may compare against the same journey by private car.

With this, we will develop a monitor process which captures data by our proposed service typology. Our aim is to compares bus journey times alongside the that of the private car journey to establish where, on the network, there are greater disparities between these journey types, to understand how future changes or investments can be made in bus services delivery and highways priorities and infrastructure.

This also reflects the position that Cheshire East is starting from a 'low base' in bus services delivery, lower than a regional or national average in bus use and a higher than regional or national average in private car or van ownership or use. This reflects the desire by the Council to reverse these trends.

We will work with local bus industry partners to formally monitor journey time on an annual basis and combine this analysis as part of the metrics for subsequent annual BSIPs.

We will focus our monitoring process against the following journey time indicators:

- **Indicator One** - *Improved journey times across our network typologies: town to town, urban and rural bus routes.*
- **Indicator Two** – *Improved journey times on key routes where they are comparable to car journeys,*
- **Indicator Three** – *In line with industry methods of monitoring, monitor public perception of local bus services compared to* alternative and comparable journeys made by other modes of travel.

TARGET 2024/2025 – *Improve journey times for direct bus services – no more than **50%** greater than the equivalent car journey time. Improve journey times for routes requiring one interchange, to be no more than **double** the equivalent car journey time and minimise time penalties for interchanging between services.*

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4.2.2 Bus Service Reliability

For the purposes of monitoring of bus services rollability, we are starting from a comparable base, to that of a number of our local authority counterparts in the region.

Whilst the DfT national statistics data reflects that bus services operating across the borough was – in the 10 years to 2019 – 85% we are looking at a realistic target of improving this figure to 95%, by 2024/25.

With appropriate levels of funding to implement bus priorities, we believe this target is achievable.

We will also continue to monitor reliability reports to the Traffic Commissioners department with an indicator which is focussed on 'zero' reliability returns.

As we continue to develop the network in future years, post pandemic recovery, we will work closely with local bus operators and industry partners to deliver further network enhancements, to deliver a more reliable network.

We will work with local bus industry partners to formally monitor this on an annual basis and work to combine this analysis with more innovative methods industry data through and existing and new industry technologies.

We will work towards developing reliability metrics for future annual BSIPs.

We will focus on the following reliability targets:

- **Indicator One** – *measure the % of on-time services operating on town-to-town and urban services at timing points*,
- **Indicator Two** – *measure the public perception % of passenger satisfaction, either separately or as part of national satisfaction surveys (i.e. Transport Focus or National Highways and Transport surveys),*
- **Indicator Three –** *measure the public perception % of passenger satisfaction of Demand Responsive Transport services, aligned with bus services (which working with industry providers towards identifying additional methodologies in which to monitor and support the future roll out of DRT or new technologies).*

TARGET 2024/2025 – *we have set a target of building on current DfT local reliability targets to achieve **95%** of reliability of all services across the network by the end of the initial BSIP funding window at 2024/25. This extends to ensuring we will maintain '**zero**' reliability reports to the North Western Traffic Commissioner across the same period.*

4.2.3 Passenger Numbers and Growth

For this first BSIP, we continue to see differences in the local bus market on travel behaviours and patterns as a result of the pandemic. Our aspiration to stabilise the network, introduce quality improvements and deliver network growth, we believe brings forward an opportunity to grow confidence in a future network, and deliver growth.

We will base future predications on a baseline figure at 2018/2019, where we aim to reverse a local declining trend of bus use.

As required by national guidance, we have outlined a borough-wide target for growth in passenger numbers. However a borough-wide target does not truly reflect the potential for bus use in parts of Cheshire East. Therefore we have taken the opportunity to set an additional target which applies to those localities and routes where we believe there is greater propensity to use bus and consequently a greater potential for growth.

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It is the intention of Cheshire East to work with local bus industry operators and business partners, to build patronage levels to pre-covid levels by the end of 2022/23.

As we develop our Enhanced Partnership, we will work with bus operators to derive more sophisticated targets for passenger growth.

This will be subject to commitment by the bus industry to work to develop a network which can achieve this target and work to secure service enhancements, but most crucially the opportunity to secure available funding.

The opportunity to develop passenger numbers, and growth in future years, relies on developing the future network with improved service headways and frequencies, bus stop and bus priority infrastructure and improved marketing and publicity information using cost effective electronic methods of dissemination.

We will work with local bus industry partners to formally monitor passenger numbers and growth on an annual basis and combine this analysis with metrics for subsequent annual BSIPs.

We will focus on the following Passenger Numbers and Growth targets:

- **Indicator One** – *stabilisation of network to reflect baseline patronage levels at pre - pandemic 2018/2019 levels (i.e. halt the decline in passenger numbers),*
- **Indicator Two** – *build patronage levels to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2022/23,*
- **Indicator Three –** *increase patronage levels by 10% on 2018/19 baseline figure by 2024/25.*
- **Indicator Four –** *increase patronage levels by 20% on 2018/19 baseline figure by 2030*

TARGET 2024/2025 – *we have set a borough-wide target of improving patronage by **10%** on the 2018/19 baseline figure, by the end of the initial BSIP funding window at 2024/25.*

TARGET 2024/2025 - *we have set a target to double patronage by 2025 on the 2018/2019 baseline figure on bus routes in areas with high propensity for bus use*.

4.2.4 Passenger Satisfaction

We recognise that a critical component to our aspirations in stabilising the current network, but then by introducing quality improvements and ultimately network growth hinges on ensuring our passengers are satisfied with, and have confined in, using our local bus services.

In comparison to our neighbouring local authority partners, we have seen lower levels of passenger satisfaction with our bus networks. There is limited, recent data upon which we can draw an accurate reflection on how satisfied our passengers are with bus services, other than in 2016, with Transport Focus data which shows a figure of 74% for punctuality of services and 60% for Value for Money.

We are making a commitment through this BSIP to monitor passenger satisfaction.

We will work with our local bus industry partners to identify how best to achieve this and make it a condition of a ‘Passenger Charter’ with industry, where we will define the appropriate methodology and reporting mechanism to meet our indicators and targets.

This ‘Passenger Charter’ will form a key commitment within the Enhanced Partnership to be develop in early 2022/23.

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Equally, through the Enhanced Partnership process we will explore new mechanisms, technologies and industry innovations to improve passenger satisfaction, with a commitment to consider how bus services across the borough are delivered. We will draw on future phases of by reviewing and analysing the development of new advances in vehicle technologies and delivery mechanisms such as Demand Responsive Transport.

We will work with local bus industry partners to formally monitor passenger satisfaction in line with Local Transport Plan and BSIP monitoring on at least an annual basis and combine this analysis as part of the metrics for subsequent annual BSIPs.

We will focus on the following Passenger Satisfaction targets:

- **Indicator One** – *measurement and monitoring to reflect overall passenger satisfaction with the punctuality of bus services to be at or above average of regional authorities by 2023/24 and at 74% (or higher) by 2024/25.*

- **Indicator Two** – *measurement and monitoring to reflect overall passenger satisfaction with 'Value for Money' for bus services across all services to increase to 64% (or higher) by 2024/25.*

- **Indicator Three –** *Creation of a Passenger Charter, to be aligned with the development and delivery of an Enhanced Partnership. To be delivered by no later than the end of 2022.*

TARGET 2024/2025 – *we have set a target to maintain our current (2018/19) satisfaction with bus service punctuality targets at **74%** to 2024/25.*

We recognise that this figure is retained, but we also recognise that with appropriate funding it is our ambition that we anticipate more bus operating on the network, with a greater coverage and an increased service frequency.

TARGET 2024/2025 - *we have set a target to increase passenger satisfaction with 'Value for Money' from 60% to **64%** by 2024/25.*

Measurement to be based on national DfT passenger satisfaction statistics.

4.3 Funding Arrangements

The Cheshire East EP will draw on numerous funding sources to deliver the above-mentioned objectives and outcomes these include:

- National Bus Strategy 'Bus Back Better' funding
- Cheshire East Borough Council Capital Programme Funding
- Cheshire East Borough Council Revenue Funding
- Private Developer Contributions (i.e. s106, s278)
- Reinvestment of operator revenue generated by schemes
- Bus Operator match funding
- Other external funding opportunities

Some of the actions and deliverables are dependent on funding made available as a result of BSIP development.

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5. Summary

The Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s) extend across the full extent of the Cheshire East Borough.

The principal objectives of the Enhanced Partnership are those contained within the Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) published on October 31st 2021.

The EP Plan and EP Scheme are made on [date, subject to DfT announcement]] ("the Commencement Date"). The EP Plan will have no end date but will be reviewed on an annual basis from the Commencement Date. The EP Scheme will have no specific end date but will be reviewed by Cheshire East Borough Council on an annual basis from the Commencement Date.

5.1 Plan

Objectives have been split over three distinct phases and have been designed to underpin current issues and barriers to travel by bus, as well as the opportunities and future aspirations for the bus network in Cheshire East, these objectives depend on the BSIP funding ask and include:

- Phase 1 – Stabilisation of the Network (2021-2023)
- Phase 2 – Quality Improvement (2022 to 2025, and beyond to 2030)
- Phase 3 – Network Growth (2023 to 2025, and beyond to 2030)

The basis for this Plan is focused on aspirations which are contained within Phase 1 (network stabilisation) and Phase 2 (quality improvements) of the BSIP document and are dependent on successful DfT BSIP funding.

The benefits of this partnership include an initial stabilisation of the network and subsequent enhancements to network quality and coverage. Enabling access to funding for schemes that can make a real difference and strengthen the current bus network through investment in infrastructure, technology and careful forward planning.

5.2 Scheme

The EP Scheme has been jointly developed by Cheshire East Borough Council as Local Transport Authority (LTA) and Bus Operators that provide local qualifying bus services in the EP Plan and Scheme area.

It sets out obligations and requirements on both the Local Transport Authority and Operators of local bus services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of this EP Plan.

The future content and arrangements for the variation and revocation of the EP Plan and EP Scheme will be subject to consideration by the EP Forum and Board. Governance arrangements for the EP Plan and Scheme, as well as the EP Forum and Board are outlined in section 5 of the accompanying EP Scheme document.

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