

Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme

May 2022 (Version 4)

DRAFT

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1. Enhanced Partnership Scheme

THE CHESHIRE EAST ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138G(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY:

CHESHIRE EAST BOROUGH COUNCIL

This document fulfils the statutory requirements for an Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EP Scheme).

In accordance with statutory requirements in Section 138 of the Transport Act 2000, the EP Scheme document sets out:

Section 2 – Scope of the EP Scheme and Commencement Date,

Section 3 – Obligations on the Local Authorities,

Section 4 – Obligations on Bus Operators, and

Section 5 – Governance Arrangements.

The EP Scheme can only be put in place if an associated Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan) has been made.

Therefore, this document should be considered alongside the associated EP Plan.

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 services¹ 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 the associated EP Plan.

¹ A "qualifying local service" is a registered local bus service which has one or more stopping places within the geographical area of the EP Plan or Scheme, and it is not an exempted service.

2. Scope of the EP Scheme and Commencement Date

2.1 Map and description of Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme Area

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 2.1 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.

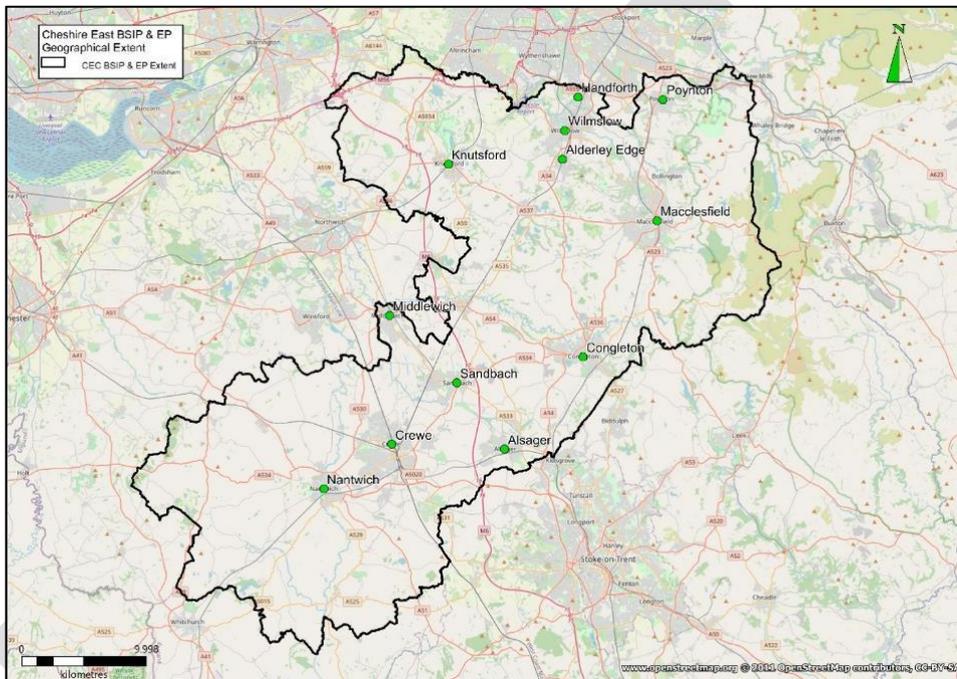


Figure 2.1: Extent of Cheshire East EP Plan and Scheme(s)

The EP Plan and Scheme will support the improvement of local bus services operating within Cheshire East borough, including the following areas across the principal towns and key 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

2.2 Commencement Date

The EP Plan and EP Scheme are made on [date, TBC]] (“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.

2.3 Exempted Services

In accordance with *The National Bus Strategy Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans using an Enhanced Partnership Guidance* exempted services:

- Are services operated under Section 22 of the Transport Act 1985 (a community bus service). The EP does not apply to this type of registered service – although there is nothing to prevent an operator from voluntarily complying with some or all of the EP requirements that would otherwise apply to that service;
- Any other service not registered as a public bus service with the Traffic Commissioner. Examples include:
 - All scheduled intercity bus or coach services
 - All sightseeing tour buses operating in the area
 - School services
- A service which has part, or all, of its route registered as a local service in the EP Plan and Scheme geographical area, but where that part of its route is 10% or less of the overall route distance covered by the service from its service start to service end point.

3. Obligation on the Authority

3.1 Summary of Obligation on Authorities

The following table summarises the specific interventions that Cheshire East Borough Council, as the Local Transport Authority, has the responsibility to deliver as part of the EP Scheme.

In April 2022, DfT announced² that no Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding was to be made available for the delivery of the Cheshire East BSIP, upon which the Enhanced Partnership Plan and this Enhanced Partnership Scheme are based.

Cheshire East Council remains committed to working with local communities, public transport users and local bus operators to secure services and deliver transformational change across the network. Cheshire East Borough Council will continue to seek funding opportunities to achieve this aim, whilst committing to deliver the following interventions with Local Transport Authority funding:

Interventions	Commitments
Facilities	
Boroughwide Bus Shelter Renewal Programme (3.2.1)	10 per annum
Boroughwide Bus Stop Renewal Programme (3.2.2)	5 per annum
Boroughwide Information Totems (3.2.3)	0 per annum
Measures	
Develop a Passenger Charter for Cheshire East (3.3.1)	Establish a Passenger Charter
Improved process for the management of roadworks in the EP Scheme area (3.3.2)	Establish a mechanism to minimise disruption to local bus services
Evidence base study for bus priority measures in the EP Scheme area (3.3.3)	Commission a bus priority feasibility study to support the introduction of Quality Corridors and priority measures.
Action Plan and Delivery Programme for retrofitting bus fleet to Euro VI standards (3.3.4)	Develop an action plan
Improved Information Provision (3.3.5)	Enhance the dissemination of paper-based public transport information & Encourage Operators to maintain or improve their electronic public transport provision

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cheaper-and-better-buses-in-7-billion-package-to-level-up-transport-outside-london>

Interventions	Commitments
Ticketing & Fares	
Multi-operator/Multi modal ticketing (3.4.1)	Work with Bus Operators to develop a feasibility study on the deliverability of multi-operator ticketing.
Simplification of fares (3.4.2)	Work with bus operators to develop a feasibility study to identify fare simplification mechanisms.

3.2 Facilities

This section describes the ‘facilities’ that Cheshire East Borough Council has agreed to take to improve buses setting out what is to be provided, for the duration of the EP Plan and Scheme, as adopted on [the Commencement Date].

3.2.1 Bus Shelters

Cheshire East Borough Council will provide the following facilities:

- Boroughwide Bus Shelter Renewal Programme includes **10** per year to align with the existing Cheshire East Borough Council renewal programme.
- Cheshire East Borough Council will also work with Operators, **develop a programme for identifying and improving roadside infrastructure** including bus shelters.
- Develop a **specification for minimum standards** for facilities management and maintenance (in partnership with bus industry).

Existing bus shelters to be improved, as detailed in Schedule of Facilities [Appendix A], and will incorporate:

- Appropriate size and siting (location);
- Information displays (paper-based);
- Bus Stop Flag;
- Bus Box (as appropriate to location),
- Lighting (as appropriate to location),
- Bench seating (as appropriate to location), and
- Accessibility adjustments where appropriate both to and at the bus stop (walk access route, hardstanding and kerb)

3.2.2 Bus Stops

Cheshire East Borough Council will provide the following facilities:

- Boroughwide Bus Stop Renewal Programme includes **5** per year to align with the existing Cheshire East Borough Council renewal programme.

- Boroughwide Bus Stop Renewal Programme includes the commitment to **replace existing bus stops when required**.
- As in section 3.2.1, Cheshire East Borough Council will also work with Operators, **develop a programme for identifying and improving roadside infrastructure** including bus stops.

The existing bus stop renewal programme will work to:

- Improve local bus stop infrastructure, to generate bus user confidence in using the network, with a commitment to ensure improved paper-based or electronic information is available for all services and all bus stops across the borough.
- Improve the physical access to bus services for users through improved bus stop infrastructure, where this will address qualitatively the 'look and feel' of roadside bus stop infrastructure, combined quantitatively with the need for more stops as a result of increased service levels or new routes.

3.2.3 Bus Totems

Cheshire East Borough Council will provide the following facilities:

As in section 3.2.1, Cheshire East Borough Council will work with Operators, **develop a programme for identifying and improving roadside infrastructure** including key hub stops, with information totems (i.e. at key visitor attractions, interchanges, principal towns/service centres, hospitals).

3.3 Measures

This section describes the 'measures' that Cheshire East Borough Council has agreed to take to improve buses setting out what is to be provided, for the duration of the EP Plan and Scheme, as adopted on [the Commencement Date].

Cheshire East Borough Council will provide the following measures:

- Develop, with local bus operators, a Passenger Charter for Cheshire East.
- Improved process for the management of roadworks in the EP Scheme area.
- Evidence Base study for bus priority measures and demonstration corridor(s) within Cheshire East Borough Council boundary.
- The development of an Action Plan and Delivery programme to retro fit buses operating in CEC area to Euro VI.
- Improved public transport information provision including paper-based and online information.

3.3.1 Passenger Charter

Within six months of the Commencement Date Cheshire East Borough Council as the LTA will establish with local bus operators and bus user groups a **Passenger Charter** outlining commitments to Cheshire East bus passengers.

Engagement with bus user groups, Passenger Focus and other wider conference stakeholders will be included as part of the development of the Passenger Charter. A passenger charter will give bus users the right to a specified standard of service, covering punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, information and a system for redress.

3.3.2 Managing Roadworks in the EP Scheme area

Within six months of the Commencement Date Cheshire East Borough Council as the LTA will engage with local bus operators to establish a **mechanism to minimise disruption to local bus services** from both planned and emergency roadworks.

The development of the mechanism will include liaison with bus operators, as part of the EP Forum and Board, to strengthen communication and notifications of planned roadworks, ensuring that the co-ordination of works across the network minimises disruption, as well as setting out their processes and procedures for the provision and management of streetworks permits in the EP Scheme area.

Any mechanism will amend the Scheme using the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Bespoke Variation arrangements at Section 5.

3.3.3 Bus Priority

Cheshire East Borough Council will **commission a bus priority feasibility study** (within 12 months of the Commencement Date) including an evidence base and a process to identify bus priority measures, prioritise and deliver schemes.

The Council will facilitate close engagement with Bus Operators and other stakeholders such as neighbouring authorities and town and parish councils throughout the development of the study.

The Council will maintain existing bus priority infrastructure as outlined within the Schedule of Facilities [Appendix A].

The feasibility study will identify short term and long-term bus priority facilities and aid understanding of the scope and value of bus priority measures within Cheshire East. The feasibility study will include as a minimum:

- Description of works
- Area of influence
- Services affected
- Predicted journey time saving
- Predicted journey time reliability improvement
- Predicted patronage effects.

The outcome of the feasibility study will be the identification of a prioritised list of demonstration corridors and/or locations for discrete bus priority measures.

These findings will also feed into the LTP Delivery Plan development where additional interventions are identified for the borough.

To inform this study Bus Operators will share a representative sample of patronage and journey time information for all qualifying bus services operating in the study area.

Council data including highway infrastructure, traffic flow, highway delay data and development planning will feed into the evidence base for the feasibility study. This will also include the outcomes from the ongoing trial of smart signals within Cheshire East.

Cheshire East Borough Council will deliver this **Phase 1** ambition for bus priority from the EP Plan, by focusing on routes (or sections of routes) that serve Crewe or Macclesfield.

The EP Board will direct the specification of the feasibility study and Operators will be involved throughout the development. Where there is a requirement to vary the nature of the feasibility study, this will be agreed by Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation, for example the adaptation of the programme of feasibility studies.

3.3.4 Emission Standards

Within 12 months of the Commencement Date Cheshire East Borough Council as the LTA will develop with local bus operators an **action plan for retrofitting bus fleets to Euro VI standards**.

3.3.5 Public Transport Information Provision

(a) Paper-based provision

Cheshire East Borough Council, as the LTA, will work with the EP Forum and Board to ensure the **dissemination of paper-based public transport information** for every qualifying local bus service operating across the borough (within six months of the Commencement Date).

(b) Electronic-based information provision

Cheshire East Borough Council, as the LTA, will work with the EP Forum and Board to **encourage Operators to maintain or improve their corporate web- or app-based real time information and timetabled information**.

Cheshire East Borough Council will work with the local Bus Industry to coordinate standardised public transport information, in “electronic” format, including but not be limited to:

- Service timetables for all registered local bus services within the borough for download or interrogation,
- Maps to illustrate main towns, villages and roads served, and a network overview map,
- Bus services fare information and mobile ticket purchasing functionality,
- News and events information, and

Coordinated information will be maintained and reviewed annually throughout the EP Scheme.

3.3.6 Demonstration Quality Corridor / Superbus routes

As outlined in section 3.2.1, Cheshire East Borough Council will also work with Operators, develop a programme for identifying and improving roadside infrastructure including bus

shelters, stops and totems to inform locations along a potential demonstration corridor or corridors.

As outlined in section 3.3.3, Cheshire East Borough Council will **complete a bus priority feasibility study by** (date within 12 months of the Commencement Date) including an evidence base and a process to identify bus priority measures, prioritise and deliver schemes. This will include locations for a potential demonstration corridor or corridors. The Council will work closely with Operators as part of the development of this feasibility study.

3.4 Ticketing & Fares

3.4.1 Multi-operator Ticketing

In collaboration with Bus Operators, Cheshire East Borough Council will lead the development of a **feasibility study on the deliverability of multi-operator ticketing** within the EP Scheme area (within 12 months of the Commencement Date).

The Council will facilitate close engagement with Bus Operators and other stakeholders such as neighbouring authorities and town and parish councils throughout the development of the study.

The EP Board will direct the specification of the feasibility study and where there is a requirement to vary the nature of the feasibility study, this will be agreed by Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation.

Future plans for multi-operator ticket types will be arrived at by agreement with the Enhanced Partnership, including affected operators, at a level that reflects increased customer utility compared with broadly equivalent single-operator tickets. Undercutting the single-operator ticket is generally undesirable as the impact on the Operator's revenue can adversely affect the commercial viability of its service.

Competition concerns are mitigated by the involvement of the Council as scheme promoter.

For monitoring purposes, Cheshire East Borough Council will receive monthly sales returns for all ticketing schemes, in which Bus Operators within the borough participate, separated by type and period.

The price and technology associated with multi-operator tickets will be developed as part of the feasibility study. Implementation and any amendments to prices will use the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Bespoke Variation arrangements.

3.4.2 Simplification of fares

Cheshire East Borough Council, as LTA, will collaborate with Bus Operators to:

Develop a feasibility study to identify **fare simplification mechanisms** that covers the extent of the EP Scheme area (within 12 months of the Commencement Date).

The feasibility study will:

- Work to establish the best mechanisms for simplification of fares and coordinated ticketing across the borough, across operators and across modes.

- Encourage CEC and Operators to work together as part of the Enhanced Partnership to identify Operator-led fare simplification possibilities across the borough.
- Investigate the potential for better value for money on fares. Consideration of fare caps for short-hops and competitiveness (with other modes) and affordability of fares on inter-urban & town/urban routes.

Where there is a future requirement to vary the nature of the fares structure, this will be agreed by Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation.

3.4.3 Integration with other modes

Cheshire East Borough Council will work alongside Bus Operators to investigate opportunities for **increased bus service coordination and integration**:

- with rail services at Crewe and Macclesfield Railway Stations, and
- between local bus services or between local buses and other types of road transport such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT).

Opportunities to better coordinate services will be considered where these can be shown to increase patronage, provide benefits to passengers and improve the efficiency of the public transport network within Cheshire East.

4. Obligation on Local Bus Operators

This section describes the standards of service and commitments to be met by bus operators operating registered local qualifying bus services in the EP Scheme area.

In April 2022, DfT announced³ that no Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding was to be made available for the delivery of the Cheshire East BSIP, upon which the Enhanced Partnership Plan and this Enhanced Partnership Scheme are based.

Cheshire East Council remains committed to working with local communities, public transport users and local bus operators to secure services and deliver transformational change across the network. Cheshire East Council will continue to seek funding opportunities to achieve this aim, and, in the interim, operators of local qualifying bus services are obliged to commit to deliver the following:

Interventions	Commitments
Vehicle Standards	
Emission Standards (4.1.1)	Work with CEC to develop an action plan for retrofitting bus fleet to Euro VI standards
Technology (4.1.2)	With CEC set minimum standards for new and existing vehicle technology.
Timetable Changes	
Change Dates (4.2)	Timetables changes to take place on four dates per year.
Passenger Charter	
Passenger Charter for Cheshire East (4.3)	Establish a Passenger Charter
Ticketing and Fares	
Multi-operator/Multi modal ticketing (4.4.1)	Work with CEC to develop options for multi-operator ticketing systems.
Simplification of fares (4.4.2)	Work with CEC to develop options for fare simplification mechanisms.
Enhanced Frequency	
Network Stabilisation (Error! Reference source not found.)	Ensure changes to existing commercial networks are minimised and potential mitigations are discussed with CEC before notifications are made on changes.
Public transport information provision	
Paper based information (4.6.1)	Enhance the dissemination of paper-based public transport information
Electronic-based information provisions (4.6.2)	Operators to maintain or improve their corporate web/app based real time information and timetabled information.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cheaper-and-better-buses-in-7-billion-package-to-level-up-transport-outside-london>

Interventions	Commitments
Demonstration Quality Corridor(s) / Superbus Routes	
Demonstration Quality Corridor (4.7)	Work with CEC on a feasibility study including an evidence base and a process to identify bus priority measures, including provision of punctuality data

4.1 Vehicle Standards

4.1.1 Emission Standards

Bus Operators are expected to work with Cheshire East Borough Council to:

Develop an **action plan for retrofitting bus fleet** to Euro VI standards (within 12 months of the Commencement Date). This action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The Council will facilitate close engagement with Bus Operators and other stakeholders such as neighbouring authorities and town and parish councils throughout the development of the action plan.

The EP Board will direct the specification of the initial action plan and Operators will be involved throughout the development. Where there is a requirement to vary the nature of the action plan, this will be agreed by Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation.

4.1.2 Technology

Bus Operators within the EP Scheme area are expected to commit to the following existing **minimum standards** for new and cascaded vehicles operating across the network which are registered on or after the EP Scheme Commencement Date, these vehicles must meet the following requirements:

- CCTV installed for safety and security. This will provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security and also facing forwards from the vehicle to help identify traffic issues.
- Automatic Vehicle Location equipment (i.e. linked to electronic ticket machine technology) installed that will feed into any new Cheshire East Borough Council led or coordinated real time information system.
- Customer comfort (i.e. heating and ventilation).

Implementation and any amendments to minimum vehicle standards will use the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Bespoke Variation arrangements. The Council will facilitate close engagement with Bus Operators and other stakeholders such as neighbouring authorities throughout the development of the minimum standards.

4.2 Timetable Changes (Network Stability)

Bus Operators will commit to **4 timetable changes** throughout the year within the whole EP Scheme area.

These changes will take place during the following months over a two-week (14-day) period:

- January (post-Christmas early timetable changes)
- April (Easter timetable changes),
- July (pre-summer holidays) and
- September (post-School summer holiday timetable changes)

This aligns with the following BSIP Ambitions:

- Limit the number of timetable changes per year, to a number which can build confidence in the travelling public in order that they use buses more, are operationally achievable for the local bus operators, and are aligned (as best as they can be) with our local neighbouring authorities.
- Formally monitor every six months to be more proactive in identifying timetable changes and rolling out bus priorities.

The occurrence of these changes may be influenced by external factors including emergencies. It is also noted that cross boundary exemptions may apply where a service is deemed to operate majorly within another LTA. Coordination and appropriate engagement on the timing of these changes across the year will take place with neighbouring local authorities, where local bus operators or their services are represented in other local authority boundaries.

The exact timing of these will be considered by the Board and adapted by Enhanced Partnership Variation.

4.3 Passenger Charter

Within six months of the Commencement Date, Bus Operators will commit to working with Cheshire East Borough Council (as the LTA) to establish a **Passenger Charter** outlining commitments to Cheshire East bus passengers.

Engagement with bus user groups, Passenger Focus and other wider conference stakeholders will be included as part of the development of the Passenger Charter. A passenger charter will give bus users the right to a specified standard of service, covering punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, information and a system for redress.

4.4 Ticketing & Fares

4.4.1 Multi-operator Ticketing

In collaboration with Cheshire East Borough Council, Bus Operators will assist the development of a **feasibility study on the deliverability of multi-operator ticketing** within the EP Scheme area (within 12 months of the Commencement Date).

The Council will facilitate close engagement with Bus Operators and other stakeholders such as neighbouring authorities and town and parish councils throughout the development of the study.

The EP Board will direct the specification of the feasibility study and Operators will be involved throughout the development. Where there is a requirement to vary the nature of the feasibility study, this will be agreed by Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation.

Bus Operators are expected to commit to participating in a working group for the development of multi-modal ticketing schemes, as outlined within the EP Plan.

To achieve this ambition, Bus Operators in the Cheshire East Enhanced Quality Partnership need to demonstrate a willingness to participate in a multi-operator ticketing scheme. This would offer bus users the opportunity to make journeys which involve several operators, enabling users to travel more conveniently than having to purchase separate tickets for each journey.

Ticket types will be arrived by agreement with the Enhanced Partnership, including affected operators, at a level that reflects increased customer utility compared with broadly equivalent single-operator tickets. Undercutting the single-operator ticket is generally undesirable as the impact on the Operator's revenue can adversely affect the commercial viability of its service.

Competition concerns are mitigated by the involvement of the Council as scheme promoter.

For monitoring purposes, Bus Operators are expected to provide monthly sales returns for all ticketing schemes, in which Bus Operators within the borough participate, separated by type and period.

The price and technology associated with multi-operator tickets will be developed as part of the feasibility study. Implementation and any amendments to prices will use the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Bespoke Variation arrangements.

4.4.2 Simplification of fares

Bus operators are expected to collaborate with Cheshire East Borough Council to:

Develop a feasibility study to identify **fare simplification mechanisms** that covers the extent of the EP Scheme area (within 12 months of the Commencement Date)].

The feasibility study will:

- Work to establish the best mechanisms for simplification of fares and coordinated ticketing across the borough, across operators and across modes.
- Encourage CEC and Operators to work together as part of the Enhanced Partnership to identify Operator-led fare simplification across the borough.
- Investigate the potential for better value for money on fares. Consideration of fare caps for short-hops and competitiveness (with other modes) and affordability of fares on inter-urban & town/urban routes.

Where there is a future requirement to vary the nature of the fares structure, this will be agreed by Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation.

4.4.3 Integration with other modes

Bus Operators are expected to work alongside Cheshire East Borough Council to investigate opportunities for **increased bus service coordination and integration**:

- with rail services at Crewe and Macclesfield Railway Stations, and
- between local bus services or between local buses and other types of road transport such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT).

4.5 Enhanced Frequency

Bus Operators within the EP Scheme area are expected to work alongside Cheshire East Borough Council to ensure:

Any **changes to the existing commercial networks are minimised** and potential mitigations are discussed with CEC before notifications are made on changes to service frequency.

The Enhanced Partnership Plan outlines an ambition to deliver enhanced bus service frequency across the borough. The delivery of these frequency enhancements is subject to future funding and will be revisited by Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation should appropriate funding be forthcoming.

4.6 Public Transport Information Provision

4.6.1 Paper-based Information Provision

Bus Operators will work with Cheshire East Borough Council to ensure the **dissemination of paper-based public transport information** for every bus service operating across the borough (within six months of the Commencement Date).

4.6.2 Electronic-based Information Provision

Bus Operators will work with Cheshire East Borough Council to **maintain or improve their corporate website or app-based real time information and timetabled information**.

4.7 Demonstration Quality Corridor(s) or Superbus Routes

Within 12 months of the Commencement Date, Bus Operators will commit to working with Cheshire East Borough Council (as the LTA) to deliver a bus priority feasibility study including an evidence base. This includes providing punctuality data for existing bus routes and other operational or anecdotal evidence of delays to bus services within Cheshire East.

The feasibility study will identify short term and long-term Bus Priority facilities and aid understanding of the scope and value of Bus Priority measures within Cheshire East.

5. Governance Arrangements

5.1 Enhanced Partnership Forum & Board

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.

- Enhanced Partnership Forum** (section 5.2) – Within the Forum all Bus Operators who operate within the Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme area will be invited and entitled to participate. However, attendance by individual operators is voluntary.
- Enhanced Partnership Board** (section 5.3) – The Board has the mandate to make decisions using an Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation mechanism on proposals and issues put to them by the Enhanced Partnership Forum, and other issues identified as being relevant to partnership delivery.

The EP Forum and Board governance structure is summarised within Figure 5.1 and detailed within the remainder this section of the document.

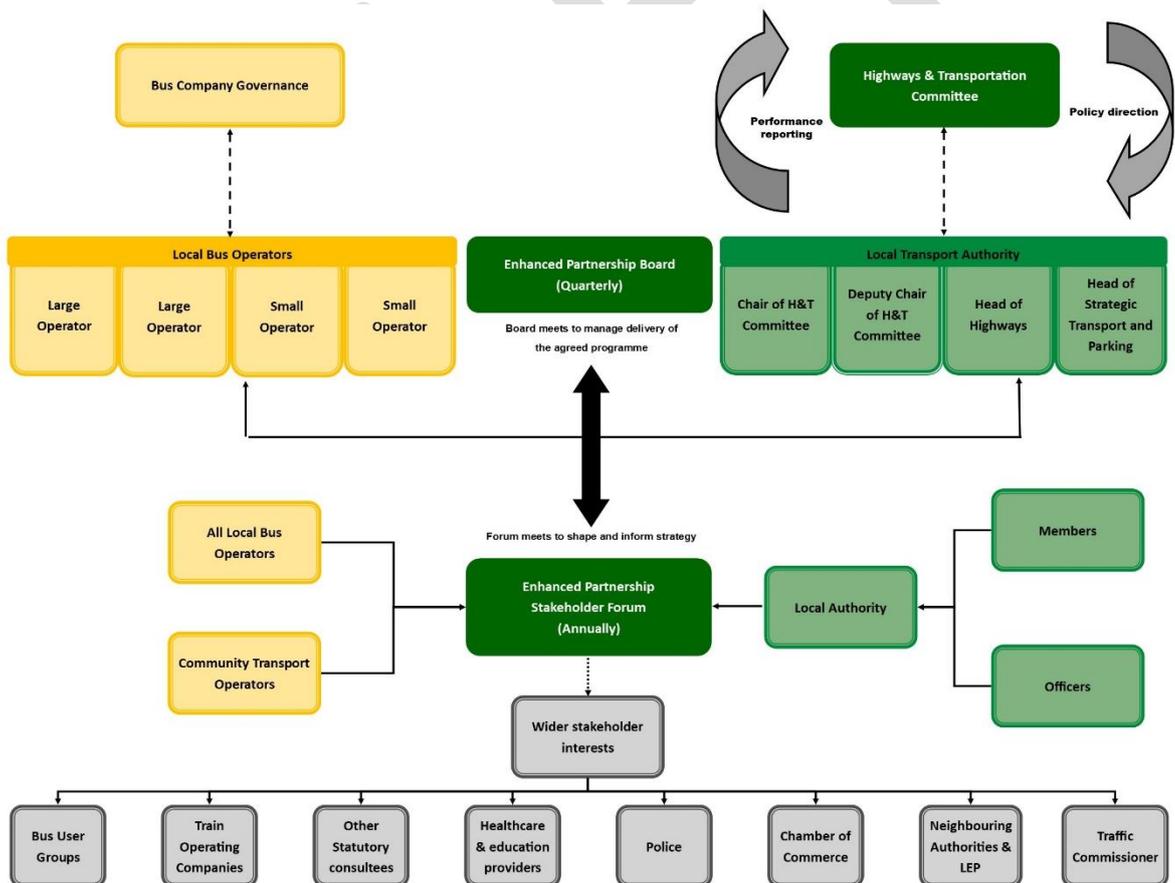


Figure 5.1: EP Forum & Board Governance Structure

5.2 Enhanced Partnership Forum

The Enhanced Partnership Forum will provide a platform for discussions regarding all opportunities and issues currently faced by the Cheshire East Bus Network, consulting with and building consensus across the various stakeholders and making recommendations for decisions to the Enhanced Partnership Board.

5.2.1 Membership of the Enhanced Partnership Forum

Membership of the Forum will comprise the following:

- All bus operators running qualifying bus services
- Cheshire East Borough Council

A service is a "qualifying local service" for objection purposes if it is a registered local bus service which has one or more stopping place within the geographical area of the EP plan or scheme concerned and it is not an exempted service. In accordance with DfT Guidance, an exempted service:

- Are services operated under Section 22 of the Transport Act 1985 (a community bus service). The EP does not apply to this type of registered service – although there is nothing to prevent an operator from voluntarily complying with some or all of the EP requirements that would otherwise apply to that service;
- Any other service not registered as a public bus service with the Traffic Commissioner. Examples include:
 - All scheduled intercity bus or coach services
 - All sightseeing tour buses operating in the area
 - School services
- A service which has part, or all, of its route registered as a local service in the EP Plan and Scheme geographical area, but where that part of its route is 10% or less of the overall route distance covered by the service from its service start to service end point.

External organisations may also be invited to participate in the Enhanced Partnership Forum on an advisory basis for fixed periods to provide specialist expertise.

A wider conference of all relevant parties, including representatives of organisations such as bus user groups, businesses and the Local Enterprise Partnership, in addition to existing Enhanced Partnership Forum members may be invited to review and discuss the progress of, and future opportunities for, the partnership.

5.2.2 Meeting Arrangements

Enhanced Partnership Forum meetings will take place annually. Forum meetings will be arranged and minutes to be taken by Cheshire East Borough Council. Meeting length will vary according to agenda content but ordinarily expected to be two hours.

Agendas and meeting papers will be circulated by the Council no less than 14 days in advance of each meeting, and draft minutes circulated no more than two weeks after each meeting. Draft minutes will be approved at the next Forum meeting.

5.2.3 Enhanced Partnership Forum Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Enhanced Partnership Forum meeting will also be the Enhanced Partnership Forum AGM. During the AGM, all Bus Operators within the EP Plan and Scheme area will be invited to self-nominate or nominate other willing Operators for Enhanced Partnership Board membership, to represent themselves and all other operators in their category. A ballot will be held at the AGM to select the preferred Board representatives as selected by the Operators. The ballot will be organised by Cheshire East Borough Council.

5.3 Enhanced Partnership Board

The Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Board will be the decision-making body of the Enhanced Partnership.

Certain decisions of the Board may constitute Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations if the requirements are met. Membership of the Board will comprise the following representatives:

- Four Bus Operators (4 votes):
 - Two Large Operators
 - Two Small Operators
- Four Cheshire East Borough Council representatives (2 votes):
 - Two Council Members:
 - Chair of Highways and Transport Committee
 - Deputy Chair of Highways and Transport Committee
 - Two Cheshire East Council Officer:
 - Head of Highways
 - Head of Strategic Transport and Parking

Under the Cheshire East Council constitution the LTA's votes are vested in the Officers and will be exercised in consultation with the Councillors, as described in the protocol (see section 5.3.2).

The Chair of the EP Board will be a member of the Board (i.e. Operator, Councillor or Council Officer) and will be confirmed by all Board members annually.

Board meetings will require a quorum attendance of one Bus Operator per category (one Large and one Small) and two Council representatives (with a minimum of one Officer). An Operator representative may, if necessary, arrange for an alternate or deputy from the same category to participate with voting rights.

Cheshire East Borough Council will provide a secretary for Board Meeting arrangements and minuting.

5.3.1 Operator representative selection

Operators representing each of the categories of Operator Membership above will be invited to self-nominate or nominate other willing operators in writing to the secretary for the Enhanced Partnership Board (care of Cheshire East Borough Council Democratic Services) prior to each Forum AGM.

Where there are more than two nominees for a single category, all Bus Operators in the same category will be given the opportunity to vote by secret ballot undertaken among those present at the Enhanced Partnership Forum AGM for a preferred representative.

Voting will be on the basis of one vote per Operator (where Operators are part of the same holding company or group, they will only be entitled to one vote between them). Operator representatives will be reselected on an annual basis.

The voting procedure for membership selection will be a simple majority and be administered by the Council. Where there is a tie, a run-off vote will take place between the leading tied Operators.

In the event that a Forum AGM ballot fails to select Operator representatives for one or more Operator category, the default Operator objection mechanism set out in the Enhanced Partnerships and Schemes (Objections) Regulations will be used to determine the views of Operators in that category for the purposes of Board votes (in terms of objection or otherwise to the proposals).

Operator representatives will be acting on behalf of all Operators in that category, not on behalf of their own company alone. Representatives will be responsible for ensuring attendance at all Enhanced Partnership Board meetings in that year, and ensure they have:

- fully reviewed and understood all meeting papers in advance of attendance,
- the required mandate from the Operators they represent.

5.3.2 Protocol for Enhanced Partnership Board Members

Members on the Board must ensure:

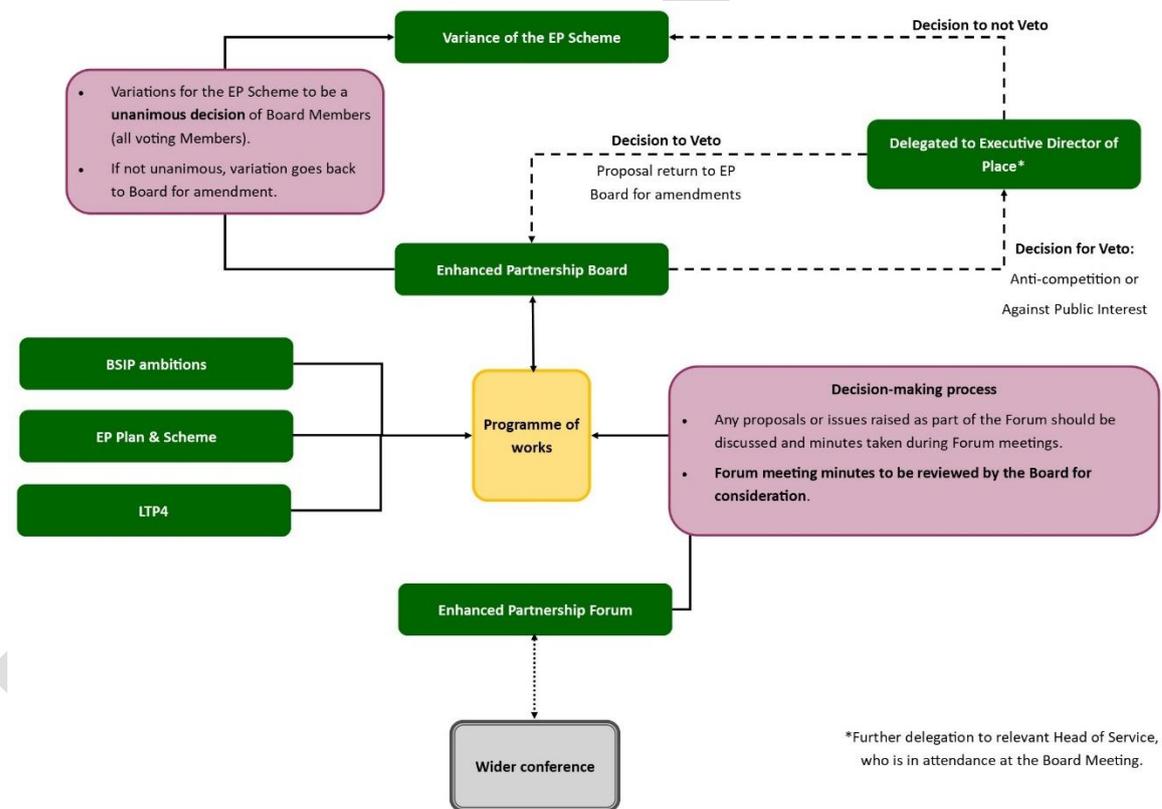
- all decisions must be within the Cheshire East Council's agreed Policies
- decision-making will be by consensus not by vote
- the Chair will ask the Councillor representatives for their view first before asking the LTA Officer
- if agreement between Councillors and Officers cannot be reached, then the matter will be referred to the Highways and Transport Committee for advice, before returning to the EP Board.
- if agreement is reached, then the Director of Highways and Infrastructure will formally record their decision and a copy of this will be retained within the minutes of the meeting. No formal decisions can be taken at the meeting unless the Director of Highways (or delegated officer) is present.

5.3.3 Enhanced Partnership Board Decision Making

Decisions of the Enhanced Partnership Board will be made by way of a vote through a show of hands. Unless stated otherwise in this document, decisions will be passed by way **unanimous vote** from all members of the Board entitled to vote (on a one Operator representative, one vote basis).

Operators will be entitled to make known their concerns in writing to the Council’s Strategic Transport Team if they object to a particular vote of the Board. The Council will review the circumstances and consider whether these are such that use of its veto is required as provided for below.

Board decisions will be made by those Board members in attendance at the meeting, subject to the meeting being deemed quorate.



It is expected that the EP Board will provide an annual progress report to the Council’s Highways and Transport Committee.

5.3.4 Cheshire East Borough Council Veto

These controls ensure that the voting system does not allow an individual Operator to influence the Enhanced Partnership to its own commercial benefit or to harm competitors; there is no opportunity for a group of Operators to vote in a co-ordinated manner to mutual benefit on a sustained basis; there is no discrimination between Operators; and that actual or potential competition, entry to new services and by new Operators, or innovation, is not inhibited.

The Council may, in exceptional circumstances, **exercise a veto over Board decisions** which it may reasonably believe or suspect as having **anti-competitive implications** or **not within the wider public interest**.

Should the Council seek to exercise its veto, this will be via a report to the Executive Director of Place (as the Delegated Officer for the Councils' Highways and Transport Committee). If the Council decides to exercise its veto, notification of intent will be at the Enhanced Partnership Board meeting by the relevant Head of Service for Cheshire East Council in attendance (as further delegation from the Executive Director of Place), this will allow the need for the veto to be discussed by all Board Members.

In any instances where commercially sensitive matters arise these would be considered by the Executive Director of Place (as the Delegated Officer for the Councils' Highways and Transport Committee) via private submission by affected bus operators.

5.3.5 Meeting Observers

Any other Bus Operator and Council representatives will be able to attend the Board meetings as observers but will not have the right to vote.

Observers may be invited to make comments or ask questions of the Board at the Chair's discretion or invited to defer these until the next Forum meeting.

5.3.6 Meeting Arrangements

Enhanced Partnership Board meetings will take place quarterly at regular intervals throughout the year, with provision for additional meetings as required to take decisions which in the opinion of the Chair cannot be deferred to a scheduled meeting, provided that a minimum number can be achieved, with no less than one week's notice being given.

Meetings will be arranged and minutes to be taken by the Council. Meetings will normally be held at Delamere House. Meetings will be chaired by the Chair of the EP Board. Meeting length will vary according to agenda content but ordinarily be one to two hours. Agendas and meeting papers will be circulated to all Board members no less than one week in advance of each meeting date, and draft minutes circulated no more than two weeks after each meeting. Copies will also be distributed to all Forum members so any issues or concerns can be discussed with the relevant Operator representative, to be raised at the Board meeting. Draft minutes will be approved at the next Board meeting.

5.3.7 Enforcement

Where the Council has Traffic Commissioner Powers delegated to it, the following arrangements will apply to relevant local bus service registrations.

- If a Bus Operator should fail to observe or perform any of the Requirements of this agreement or meet the Punctuality and Reliability standards to the reasonable satisfaction of the Council, then the Council shall be entitled to serve a written warning notice on the Bus Operator.

The warning notice will detail the failure to observe or perform the Requirements or Punctuality or Reliability standards in question with sufficient detail as the Bus Operator may require it to understand and identify the alleged failure(s) (a 'Warning Notice'). The Council may also, at its discretion, invite the Operator to participate in discussions about any specified failures before a Warning Notice is issued.

- In the event that a Warning Notice is served on a Bus Operator which, in the opinion of the Bus Operator (acting reasonably) is factually inaccurate, is unfair or unreasonable, or

has been issued in error, the Bus Operator shall be entitled to provide evidence to support their claims. The Operator may also request a face-to-face meeting with the relevant representatives of the Council to discuss the evidence and express its concerns in person. The parties shall meet as soon as reasonably practicable at a mutually convenient location and discuss the Warning Notice and the Bus Operator's concerns in good faith. In the event that the Council is of the view that the Bus Operator's concerns are valid, it shall withdraw and cancel the Warning Notice with immediate effect. Such withdrawn and cancelled Warning Notice shall not be deemed a valid Warning Notice for the purposes of calculating the number of Warning Notices issued against a Bus Operator as below.

The Warning Notice shall state on its face that it is a Warning Notice and shall set out the measures which the Council requires the Bus Operator to take (acting reasonably) to ensure that the Requirement(s) or Punctuality or Reliability standards are met, do not occur again, and the reasonable timescales within which the Bus Operator is to implement such measures. The Bus Operator shall use all reasonable endeavours to comply with the terms of the Warning Notice. In the event that the Council serves more than three Warning Notices on a single Bus Operator within any continuous twelve-month period, or the Bus Operator fails to remedy a Warning Notice within the specified timescales without reasonable excuse, the Council shall, subject first to the outcome of the statutory appeals process available to the Bus Operator if engaged, be entitled to cancel the local bus service registration.

- In arriving at a decision regarding the issuing of a Warning Notice or the cancelling a bus service registration, the Council will consider the effects of any agreed scheme or improvement which was anticipated to have a beneficial effect on the Bus Operator's operations, but which has not been delivered or materialised, to the extent that the delivery of such scheme or improvement was outside the Bus Operator's control.

5.3.8 Implications for small (and medium) sized operators

Given the variety of bus operators involved (in terms of market share, fleet size, company turnover and structure), it is important to ensure that the effects of the partnership do not unduly impact upon smaller operators' ability to engage or to comply with requirements.

The Enhanced Partnership Board will therefore allocate operator votes based on a small and large market share, measured as a proportion of total registered mileage.

In addition, Bus Operator Requirements will not be placed upon certain categories of service (non-qualifying services), which represent many smaller operators' main commercial interests.

5.4 Review of EP Scheme

Once the EP Scheme is made, it will be reviewed by the EP Board annually following publication of data on progress towards targets, as required by the BSIP – this will ensure any necessary action is taken to deliver the targets set out in the BSIP as outlined in the EP Plan.

Cheshire East Borough Council will initiate each review.

The EP Forum can also decide to review specific elements of the scheme on an ad-hoc basis. EP Forum members should contact the Cheshire East Borough Council using the following email address [\[email address tbc\]](#) explaining what the issue is and its urgency.

Cheshire East Borough Council will then decide whether to table at the next scheduled meeting or make arrangements for all or the necessary EP Board members to gather more quickly.

5.5 Bespoke Arrangements for Varying or Revoking the Enhanced Partnership Scheme

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.

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.

5.5.1 Proposer of a variation

Consideration will be given to potential EP Scheme variations highlighted either by a local authority, one of the organisations represented on the EP Forum, or by an operator of local bus services. 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 [\[email address tbc\]](#).

Cheshire East Borough Council will forward all requests onto all EP Board members within 5 working days.

5.5.2 Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations

Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations to area-wide Facilities and Measures described in section 3 and 4 will be subject to a bespoke voting mechanism as set out within section 5.3.3.

Any Enhanced Partnership Variation requires both of the following conditions to be met:

- A unanimous vote of the EP Board in favour of the Scheme Variation; and
- Council veto on the EP Board has not been invoked in response to this vote.

The following process will be followed in response to variation proposals:

1. Variation discussed at EP Forum
2. EP Forum discussions captured and minuted by Cheshire East Borough Council
3. Variation presented by Cheshire East Borough Council from EP Forum minutes to EP Board
4. Recommendation accepted, accepted subject to variation or rejected by EP Board vote
5. Once accepted by unanimous vote of the board and not vetoed by Cheshire East Borough Council Formal Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation is created
6. Enhanced Partnership Variation is then circulated to the EP Forum.

5.5.3 Decision-making process and bespoke objection mechanism

Cheshire East Borough Council is committed to working collaboratively with local bus operators to arrive at decisions for the betterment of the local bus network and its passengers.

Upon receipt of a request for a variation to the EP Plan or EP Scheme, Cheshire East Borough Council, under this section, will reconvene the EP Board, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation.

If the proposed variation is agreed by all representatives present at the EP Scheme Board, and provided Cheshire East Council does not exercise its veto in accordance with the terms of this EP Scheme, the Proposed Variation shall be made in accordance with its terms.

If there is not full agreement to a proposed variation at the EP Board pursuant to paragraph above, then the proposed variation may be put to the operator objection mechanism as set out in The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018, as if the proposed variation was a variation to this EP Scheme notified under section 138L of the Transport Act 2000.

5.6 Revocation of an EP Scheme

If Cheshire East Borough Council or another member of the EP Board believes it is necessary to revoke the EP Scheme, the EP Board will be reconvened.

If at any point in the future, any area covered by this EP Scheme is included in a new or modified EP scheme, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Scheme document will cease to apply to areas covered and incorporated in line with the proposed future arrangements.

Appendix A Schedule of Facilities

Current bus lanes

The current bus lane detailed in the table below will be maintained by the Local Transport Authority (as the Highway Authority) as part of the EP Scheme.

Intervention number	Bus lane description	Hours of operation	Category of vehicles permitted	Responsibility for maintaining
1	Crewe Road	24-hours, 7 days a week	Bus services, bicycles, motorcycles, hackney carriage vehicles	Cheshire East Council

Bus stop/shelter improvements

The existing bus stops and shelters detailed in the table below will be renewed/installed and maintained by Cheshire East Council as the LTA as part of the EP Scheme for 2022/2023.

Bus stop description	Existing infrastructure	Proposed treatment
Delamere Road, West Heath, Congleton	Unmarked bus stop outside 1 Delamere Road.	Yellow bus stop road markings
A534 Congleton Road, Sandbach op Chimneys Hotel	Existing stop adjacent to main road, pole, flag & timetable. No hardstanding	New hardstanding area required to address safety concerns
B5082 Northwich Road, Cranage	No current infrastructure (school service), grass verge	Install hardstanding and shelter at one location.
Hulley Road, Hurdsfield	No current infrastructure (in one direction).	Install 2 new stops with raised kerbs, pole, flag and TT case. Possible shelters.
Brocklehurst Way, Hurdsfield	No current infrastructure.	Install 2 new stops with raised kerbs, pole, flag and TT case. Possible shelters.
Thorneyholme Drive, The Shambles, Knutsford	Flag and bus stop box	New Pole, Flag and large Portrait TT required. Renewal of Bus stop box
Holmes Chapel, A535 Macclesfield Road with Sandiford Road	Unmarked bus stop	Install bus stop pole, flag and timetable frame, bus stop box
A51 Nantwich Road, Wardle	Existing shelter demolished following road traffic incident	Install new 3-bay bus shelter
A6 Newtown, Disley	Existing stop	New 2 bay cantilever shelter with solar power to be provided with Flag, large landscape timetable frame.

Bus stop description	Existing infrastructure	Proposed treatment
Canal Road/ Daven Road, Congleton (opp. the Memorial hospital)	Existing stop	2 Bay cantilever shelter with solar power.
A34 Congleton Rd, Scholar Green opp. The Old Post Office.	Existing stop	New shelter at this location for school children
A34 Congleton Rd, Scholar Green. Travellers Rest side of the road opp. Portland Drive.	Existing stop	New shelter at this location for school children
Bus stop replacement programme		
Crewe railway station to Crewe bus station corridor	13 existing bus stops	Replace existing flag vinyls at 13 bus stops with new CEC design.
Crewe to Macclesfield (service 38)	Existing bus stops	Replace existing flag vinyls at bus stops with new CEC design.

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Appendix B Definitions for use in the Document

Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) – means for automatically determining and transmitting the geographic location of a vehicle, allowing it to be tracked in real time.

Bus Stop (stand or halt) – bus stop clearway as defined in accordance with paragraph 1(a) of Part 1 to Schedule 19 of The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002, but which will permit a local bus to stand within the clearway for as long as maybe necessary up to a maximum period of 10 minutes.

CCTV – closed circuit television system, whereby static or mobile cameras are used to record offences or for surveillance and safety and security purposes.

EP Scheme Area – area to which this EP Scheme document applies.

Euro VI equivalent standards – Euro VI diesel bus or a bus with CVRAS approved technologies retrofitted to a diesel bus to reduce NOx and PM emissions and achieve Euro VI equivalent standards

Facilities – physical assets that are provided at specific locations along particular routes (or parts of routes) within the EP scheme area or new and improved bus priority measures. This is deemed for such purposes of section 138D(1) of the Transport Act 2000.

Measures – improvements with the aim of:

- Increasing the use of local bus service serving the routes to which the measures relate or ending or reducing a decline in their use; or
- Improving the quality of local bus service.

Local Authorities – prescribed under section 23 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Local Highway Authorities – Local Authority with responsibility for the maintenance of highway infrastructure in its local authority area. In the case of this EP Scheme, this means Cheshire East Borough Council.

Local Transport Authority (LTA) – collective name of authority(ies).

Multi-Operator Capping – common fares and ticketing product, applied across multiple bus operators, that will cap a user's travel cost according to the lowest price available for the journey or journeys made.

Multi-Operator Ticketing – common fares and ticketing product applied and accepted by multiple operators.

Network Stability – specified dates through the year, agreed between Cheshire East Borough Council and bus operators, on which local bus service changes take place.

Real Time Information – using technology to track the location of buses in real time. Information is transmitted to bus stops or devices to indicate to passengers the predicted arrival time at a particular point.

Registered Local Bus Service – as set out in Section 2 of the Transport Act 1985.

Cheshire East Borough Council Enhanced Partnership Plan – document made pursuant to section 138A of the Transport Act 2000 and which is required to be in place for an EP Scheme to be made.

Zero Emission Vehicle – vehicle that emits no pollutants at its tailpipe.

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