

Highways and Transport Committee

Agenda

Date: Wednesday, 13th April, 2022
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PLEASE NOTE - This meeting is open to the public and anyone attending the meeting is advised to wear a face covering when not seated (unless exempt).

Lateral Flow Testing: Anyone attending the meeting is asked to undertake a lateral flow test on the day of the meeting before embarking upon the journey to the venue. If your test shows a positive result, then you must not attend the meeting and must follow the latest advice on self-isolation.

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the top of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making meetings are audio recorded and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda.

For requests for further information

Contact: Josie Lloyd

Tel: 01270 686 466

E-Mail: josie.lloyd@cheshireeast.gov.uk with any apologies

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 March 2022.

4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

5. **National Bus Strategy - Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme(s)** (Pages 11 - 84)

To consider a report updating the Committee on the Council's draft Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme as well as seeking the Committee's endorsement prior to its submission to the Department for Transport (DfT).

6. **Highways and Transport 2022-23 Programmes** (Pages 85 - 104)

To consider a report informing the Committee of the capital and revenue budgets available for the highway service for 2022/23 and the allocation of those budgets to the various programmes of work.

7. **Work Programme** (Pages 105 - 112)

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

8. **Minutes of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Sub-Committee** (Pages 113 - 116)

To receive the minutes of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Sub-Committee.

Membership: Councillors S Akers Smith, M Benson, C Browne (Chair), L Braithwaite, B Burkhill, L Crane (Vice-Chair), H Faddes, A Gage, L Gilbert, M Hunter, M Sewart, D Stockton and P Williams

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Highways and Transport Committee**
held on Wednesday, 2nd March, 2022 in the The Capesthorpe Room - Town
Hall, Macclesfield SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor C Browne (Chair)
Councillor L Crane (Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Akers Smith, M Benson, L Braithwaite, B Burkhill, J Clowes
(Substitute), H Faddes, A Gage, L Gilbert, M Sewart and P Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs S Baxter (Democratic Services Officer), Mr M Davenhill (Contract Asset
Manager), Mr J David (Interim Director of Highways & Infrastructure), Mr S
Davies (Operations Manager, Maintenance and Localities), Mr R Hibbert
(Head of Strategic Transport and Parking), Ms J Traverse (Executive Director-
Place), Ms J Wilcox (Head of Financial Management) and Mrs M Withington
(Principal Lawyer)

53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Hunter and D
Stockton.

54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

55 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 January 2022 be
approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

56 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Councillor R Bailey attended the meeting and spoke on item 5 - Referral of
Notice of Motion: Second Winter Gritting Consultation.

Town Councillor H Ellwood attended the meeting and spoke on item 6 -
Highway Winter Service Mid-Season Review.

Councillor M Warren attended the meeting and spoke on item 6 - Highway
Winter Service Mid-Season Review.

57 REFERRAL OF NOTICE OF MOTION: SECOND WINTER GRITTING CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report responding to the Notice to Motion raised at Council relating to the call for a second round of consultation on the amendments to the winter gritting network, entitled "Further Streamlined Winter Service Consultation.

Councillor J Clowes explained her reasons for bringing the motion to the attention of the Council. She considered some of the data on the website to be confusing and lacked clarity. Further to this she felt the information did not provide an analysis of the consultation results which had caused residents to struggle with understanding the scores allocated to certain roads within the borough's network and which she felt needed addressing. She welcomed the opportunity to raise the matter with Members of the Highways and Transport Committee, however she felt the report did not address all of the questions raised within the Notice of Motion.

RESOLVED

1. That it be noted the information requested in the Notice of Motion, where missing, had been added to the web page below:

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/road-maintenance/well-managed-highway-infrastructure.aspx.

2. That it be noted a link to the WMHI webpage had been added on the Council's public consultation webpage.

58 HIGHWAY WINTER SERVICE MID-SEASON REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report updating the Committee on the implementation of the revised policy for the Winter gritting route network in the borough.

Councillor M Sewart moved an amendment to the substantive motion which was to include a further recommendation that bullet point one, paragraph 6.22 of the report be included with the addition of the words 'in consultation with Ward Councillors'. Councillor C Browne seconded the amendment with the proviso that the five bullet points listed under paragraph 6.22 of the report, including the addition of the words 'in consultation with Ward Councillors' after each bullet point to also form part of the final recommendation.

Members made the following comments:-

- (i) Welcomed the recommendation to develop a network hierarchy;
- (ii) Any future review should take into account the fact that the current Winter had been mild and that any future policy

- decisions should not be based on an abnormal Winter season;
- (iii) The data was not indicative of all of the concerns residents were raising in terms of what was happening on the roads within their areas;
 - (iv) In terms of national guidelines whilst it was important to adhere to this as far as possible, it was considered there was room for a wide range of interpretation in respect of the guidelines;
 - (v) Rural communities had been impacted and this fact should not be overlooked;
 - (vi) Understanding of how the figures in table 1 of paragraph 6.12 of the report which set out how many treatments had been undertaken and on what days the treatments had been carried out. There was request to analyse how the figures compared to the same period over the last three years in order to understand how representative the figures were;
 - (vii) Member involvement would be key in terms of gathering and communicating evidence to a centrally agreed deposit.
 - (viii) Focus, should initially as part of any meaningful review be on the roads that did score highly but not highly enough to meet the criteria to be included within the Winter gritting programme.

Councillor S Akers Smith asked a question in respect of how much of the budget had been spent on treatment days. Members were advised that a written response to this question would be circulated after the meeting.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

1. That implementation of the new Winter gritting routes continued to be carefully monitored by the Highways and Transport Committee over the remainder of the Winter season.

2. That a report be presented to a future Highways and Transport Committee which responded to the points raised by the Committee as outlined above and which provided detailed analysis of the impacts of the new routes with consideration being given if any changes would be required to the new policy.

3. That a review would re-score any roads on which there had been significant representations and consideration should be given whether they be included in the gritting programme if they met the criteria after re-scoring.

4. That a review would consider evidence relating to accidents on the highway network during icy conditions to assess any implications of the recent change.

5. That a review would consider whether there should be minor amendments to the scoring matrix in the light of the winter experience.

6. That a review would present the details of a potential local “top up” scheme and recommend whether this should be taken forward.

7. That recommendations 3 to 6 to be carried out in consultation with Ward Councillors.

59 LOCAL TRANSPORT DELIVERY PLAN - TRANCHE 1

Consideration was given to a report seeking the Committee’s approval for the first set of Local Transport Delivery Plans, which had been prepared as part of the Council’s transport strategy framework.

It was proposed by Councillor L Crane and seconded by Councillor S Akers Smith that the substantive motion be approved subject to any reference within the recommendations to the word ‘delivery’ being replaced with the word ‘development’. Prior to the motion being voted upon the following amendment was put forward by Councillor M Benson and seconded by Councillor L Gilbert:-

- (i) That recommendation 3.1.4 become 3.1.1 and the words ‘Note that the’ be removed.
- (ii) That recommendation 3.1.1 become recommendation 3.1.2 and would have the inclusion of the words ‘subject to satisfactory feedback’ at the beginning of the recommendation.
- (iii) That recommendation 3.1.2 become recommendation 3.1.3.
- (iv) That recommendation 3.1.3 become recommendation 3.1.4.

This amendment was debated, voted upon and lost.

Members debated the substantive motion which was approved subject to any reference within the recommendations to the word ‘delivery’ being replaced with the word ‘development’.

RESOLVED

1. That the Local Transport Development Plans as in Appendices A – E, which would become part of the Councils policy and programme planning framework for transport be approved.

2. That it be noted the individual projects in any Development Plan would be subject to programming of the annual highways and transport capital budgets. Projects would be progressed only after funding had been agreed and subject to all necessary scheme design and development works including consultation with stakeholders.

3. That it be noted each Development Plan could be reviewed periodically to take account of any significant changes to either national guidelines or relevant local policy context.

4. That it be noted that the Development Plans would be shared with Ward councillors and town/parish councils, who would be engaged in meetings and workshops to develop programmes to deliver relevant transport projects.

60 **NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY - ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN AND SCHEME(S)**

Consideration was given to a report on the Council's Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme.

Concerns were raised the report did not make it clear there would be Member involvement in the Enhanced Partnership Governance arrangements. An amendment to the substantive motion was put forward by Councillor M Sewart and seconded by Councillor J Clowes that an additional recommendation be included which confirmed Member involvement in the Enhanced Partnership Governance Structure. In response to the amendment, Mandy Withington, the Principal Lawyer advised that such an amendment would be unconstitutional.

A further amendment was then put forward by Councillor L Crane and seconded by Councillor C Browne which included an additional recommendation stating that the views of the Committee regarding the importance of Member involvement with the Enhanced Partnership Governance Structure be reported to Members of the BSIP Advisory Panel for their consideration.

RESOLVED (Unanimously)

1. That the **draft** Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan) and Scheme (EP Scheme) documents be noted.

2. That the Director of Highways and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Bus Services Member Advisory Panel be authorised, to finalise the **draft** Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme documents.

3. That the finalised **draft** EP Plan and Scheme documents be approved and submitted to the Department for Transport before the end of April, in accordance with their deadline.

4. That it be noted the final version of a Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme would be reported to a future meeting of this Committee for approval.

5. That the comments of the Committee regarding the importance of Member involvement in the Enhanced Partnership Governance Structure be reported to Members of the BSIP Advisory Panel.

61 HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT 2022-23 PROGRAMMES

It was noted that as the information from the Department for Transport (DfT) had been submitted within the last 24 hours, it was agreed that the item should be deferred to an additional meeting of the Highways and Transport Committee scheduled to be arranged for the end of April.

RESOLVED

That the item be deferred to an additional meeting of the Highways and Transport Committee.

62 REQUEST BY COUNCILLOR L GILBERT FOR AN ITEM TO BE INCLUDED ON THE WORK PROGRAMME IN RELATION TO IDLING VEHICLE ENGINES

Consideration was given to Councillor L Gilbert's request for an item relating to idling vehicle engines to be included as a future item on the work programme.

Initial comments from some Members raised concerns that the impact on the workload of the enforcement team potentially could be significant and that educating members of the public perhaps would be a more appropriate approach to adopt.

Members debated the request and it was agreed that the item should be included on the work programme for further discussion.

RESOLVED

That a report which included a feasibility study on the matter of idling vehicle engines be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

63 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.50 pm

Councillor C Browne (Chair)

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Working for a brighter future together

Highways and Transport Committee

Date of Meeting:	13 th April 2022
Report Title:	National Bus Strategy – Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme(s)
Report of:	John David, Interim Director of Highways & Infrastructure
Report Reference No:	HT/39/21- 22
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards in Cheshire East

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1.** The purpose of this report is to present an update on the Council's draft Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme and seek Committee's endorsement prior to its submission to Department for Transport (DfT). At its March meeting, committee considered a report on this matter and members expressed concerns relating to the proposed approach at that time. In response, further work has been done to address members concerns, including further engagement with industry partners. The outcomes of this are reflected in revised proposals as set out in this report. Committee is recommended to consider the revised approach and approve it for submission to DfT and statutory consultation commencing in April.
- 1.2.** The Enhanced Partnership will assist in delivering the following strategic objectives in the Council's Corporate Plan (2021-2025).
 - 1.2.1.** **OPEN** - undertaking consultation and engagement with the bus industry, key stakeholders and statutory consultees will ensure that the Councils response to developing an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators meets the Government's stated requirements and maximises the prospect on securing funding for bus networks in Cheshire East. Active and open engagement with the bus sector is a pre-requisite for developing successful partnership working arrangements.

- 1.2.2. **FAIR** – the approach to partnership working and evidence-sharing with the commercial bus operators is expected to help the Council address some of the gaps and inconsistencies in the provision of local bus services across the Borough.
- 1.2.3. **GREEN** - through our responses to the National Bus Strategy the aim would be to develop proposals that improve the local bus network and ensure it plays a stronger role in meeting the transport needs of local communities, encouraging greater reliance on local bus as a viable alternative, and more sustainable mode of transport across the Borough. Achieving these outcomes will contribute to the Council's stated aims for reducing carbon impacts and improving local air quality.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. A new National Bus Strategy "*Bus Back Better*" was published on 15th March 2021. This report sets out the next stage in Cheshire East Council's response, which comprises the development of an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme. This approach will strengthen the formal working arrangements that deliver local bus services throughout the Borough, providing a framework for delivering the ambitions set out in our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), that was submitted to Government in October 2021.
- 2.2. The local bus network in Cheshire East is facing a number of critical challenges arising from a persistent and structural decline in patronage; compounded by more recent loss of ridership during the COVID-19 pandemic. Action to address these issues, in partnership with the bus industry, is essential if local buses are to contribute to the Council's strategies for inclusive economic growth and carbon reduction by providing affordable, convenient and sustainable travel options for local communities.
- 2.3. In accordance with the National Bus Strategy for England and through collaborative work with Local Bus Operators the following draft documents have been developed (see appendices):
- 2.4. Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan) – Appendix 1
- 2.5. Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EP Scheme) – Appendix 2
- 2.6. The EP Plan seeks to achieve local transport and bus networks that are safer, support a thriving economy and contribute to the Council's goal of being carbon neutral by 2025. More directly, the EP Plan endorses our BSIP objectives to improve the speed and efficiency of public transport and encourage more residents to make fewer car journeys, thus contributing to Council and community carbon reduction.
- 2.7. The EP Scheme is the first step towards providing network stability and quality enhancements across the borough, therefore delivering the aspirations within Cheshire East's BSIP associated with Phase 1 and

Phase 2. The EP Scheme outlines the requirements that must be met by local bus services serving Cheshire East, to achieve BSIP outcomes. These are binding commitments which once made must be delivered.

- 2.8. In accordance with DfT guidance, Local Transport Authorities must deliver a **draft** plan and scheme by the end of April 2022. Failure to do so would put current and future Government funding for local bus at risk. Our draft documents have been prepared in consultation with the bus industry and passenger groups in Cheshire East. Government is still to confirm when final Enhanced Partnerships are expected to be agreed, we anticipate this will be later in 2022. The Members Advisory Panel is expected to continue to steer the development of the EP, taking into account any further guidance and feedback received from DfT.
- 2.9. As outlined within Section 1 of this report, the Enhanced Partnership will assist in delivering the strategic objectives to be OPEN, FAIR and GREEN in the Council's Corporate Plan (2021-2025).
- 2.10. The EP Plan and EP Scheme have been developed alongside our Local Transport Delivery Plans for each of our towns, ensuring consistency of infrastructure planning that will enable bus services to support regeneration initiatives, town centre vitality and the visitor economy.
- 2.11. Following the March Committee meeting, further work has been completed on the proposals to address concerns raised by members relating to:
 - 2.11.1. Representation on the EP Board
 - 2.11.2. Protocols for decision-making under the Partnership
 - 2.11.3. Clarification of the links to Highways and Transportation CommitteeThe revised proposals which aim to address those concerns expressed by committee in March, are described in Paragraphs 6.13 to 6.22 below.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:
 - 3.1.1. Note and comment on the **draft** Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan) and Scheme (EP Scheme) documents.
 - 3.1.2. Authorise the Director of Highways and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Bus Services Member Advisory Panel, to finalise the **draft** Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme documents.
 - 3.1.3. Approve that the finalised **draft** EP Plan and Scheme documents be submitted to the Department for Transport before the end of April, in accordance with their deadline.
 - 3.1.4. Authorise the commencement of statutory consultations on the **draft** proposals.

- 3.1.5. Note that the final version of a Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee for approval.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. The EP Plan and EP Scheme documents will build upon the objectives and targets as outlined within the most recent Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). These documents will therefore guide future investment and ensure that future bus operations are in accordance with the expectations of the Department for Transport.
- 4.2. The EP Plan and Scheme documents are recommended for endorsement as they have been produced in accordance with the published guidance, including the *Transport Focus Enhanced Partnership Briefing Sessions*, DfT's *Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans using an Enhanced Partnership Guidance* and DfT's *Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme Agreement Guidance*.
- 4.3. The proposed approach to forming an Enhanced Partnership has been discussed in detail with representatives of bus operators working in Cheshire East. The proposals are generally supported by the industry as a proportionate and workable interpretation of the national guidance that is appropriate to the context in Cheshire East. Support from operators for the proposals is essential as industry partners have a statutory right to object as set out in national guidance. Subject to approval by committee, it is proposed to commence a 28-day statutory Operator Objection period to test the proposals further and seek formal endorsement from industry partners.
- 4.4. This recommendation has been put forward because having an established Enhanced Partnership is a prerequisite of any future funding. Without an Enhanced Partnership in place, Cheshire East and bus operators is at risk of losing access to funding streams including future COVID-19 recovery funds, Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) and opportunities that arise as a direct result of the new National Bus Strategy and the Comprehensive Spending Review. For an Enhanced Partnership to be considered operational, the DfT must have sight of a **draft** Enhanced Partnership Plan and a Scheme by the end of April 2022.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. An alternative option is to do nothing, setting aside the opportunity to develop an Enhanced Partnership. This would likely lead to the loss of a number of existing revenue support mechanisms for local buses, including Bus Service Operator Grant (BSOG) and Covid Bus Service Support Grant (CBSSG). Therefore, this option would not see bus operations continuing their current level of service and further passenger decline would be anticipated. This option would also close the door on any future funding prospects, including COVID-19 recovery funds and those made available as

part of the National Bus Strategy. Therefore, this option has been discounted.

5.2. Options appraisal:

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Enhanced Partnership would not be developed with Bus Operators within Cheshire East.	Leads to the loss of existing revenue support mechanisms for local buses.

6. Background

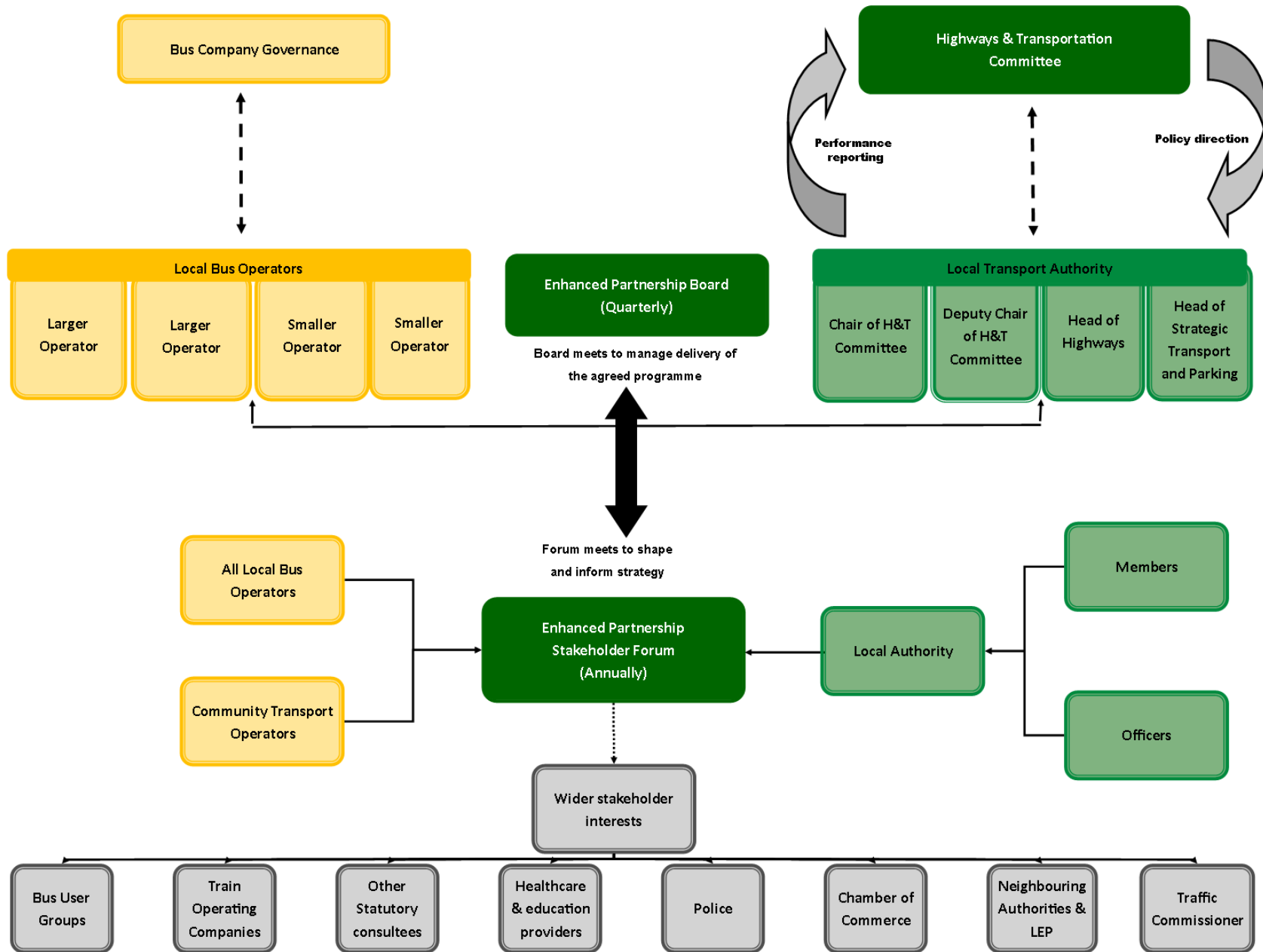
- 6.1. At present the bus network in Cheshire East is facing a number of important challenges, including a decline in patronage, budget constraints affecting the council's ability to support bus services and more recently reduced ridership as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.2. In recent years bus patronage across the borough has declined progressively and consistently. In 2016/17, there were approximately 4.5 bus passenger journeys per resident with bus patronage declining by 22% since 2009/10. These statistics place Cheshire East within the bottom five Local Authorities for the lowest number of passenger journeys per head and amongst the lowest number of trips per head of resident population in England.
- 6.3. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, Cheshire East bus network was facing significant challenges regarding utilisation and the financial viability of a lot of the services in terms of commercial sustainability. During the early stages of the pandemic, the industry demonstrated some resilience as services were able to adapt and maintain at least some level of service relevant to patronage levels before Government help was provided.
- 6.4. However, as a result of reduced utilisation, the profitability of running bus services has been a significant challenge and serious questions have been raised whether the resilience is there for operators to withstand falling profitability associated with a crisis alike to COVID-19.
- 6.5. As bus service patronage continues to fall year on year and services become less financially viable, there is a risk that services across Cheshire East will be deregistered which could have lasting impacts on communities.
- 6.6. On the 15th March 2021 the UK Government released a National Bus Strategy for England. This strategy sets out the vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered.

- 6.7.** As part of the National Bus Strategy, all LTAs were expected to produce and publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), detailing how the LTA propose to use their powers to improve services. In October 2021 Cheshire East Borough Council submitted a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in response to the National Bus Strategy for England. This consisted of an evidence base reviewing the current bus provision and a set of ambitious objectives and targets for the future. The Cheshire East BSIP can be found here:
- 6.8.** <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/public-transport/bsip/cheshire-east-bsip-2021.pdf>
- 6.9.** Following BSIP submission, the next phase of work involved the development of an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme.
- 6.10.** The EP Plan and EP Scheme have been drawn up following the Department for Transport's published guidance – *The National Bus Strategy: Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans using an Enhanced Partnership*.
- 6.11.** The EP Plan is a high-level vision and objectives for bus services in the local area and closely follows relevant sections of the BSIP.
- 6.12.** The EP Scheme sets out the precise detail of how the BSIP vision and objectives will be achieved, including any commitments made by the local authority or standards to be met by bus operators.
- 6.13.** Decision making for the Enhanced Partnership is to be conducted by use of an Enhanced Partnership Forum and Enhanced Partnership Board.
- 6.14.** The EP Forum is open to all bus operators who operate within the Cheshire East plus a wide range of stakeholders, passenger groups and industry partners. The Forum is intended to be a platform for discussion regarding all issues faced by the Cheshire East bus network.
- 6.15.** Enhanced Partnership Forum meetings will take place no less than annually, normally midway between each Enhanced Partnership Board meeting. Forum meetings will be arranged, chaired and minutes taken by Cheshire East Borough Council. Discussion at the Forum is intended to shape and influence the work of the EP Board by regularly confirming stakeholder priorities.
- 6.16.** The EP Board is the decision-making body of the Enhanced Partnership and has the mandate to make decisions using an Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation mechanism. The Board is responsible for delivery of the project and actions agreed in the EP Plan, which are achievable only through a combination of public sector and industry effort and investment.
- 6.17.** The aim is to convene a Board that can be accountable for delivery of the Partnership's programme, whilst being proportionate and representative of

the bus network in Cheshire East. As proposed, and amended following the March committee, the EP Board is to comprise:

- 6.17.1. representatives of two larger bus operators,
 - 6.17.2. representatives of two smaller bus operators, to be identified by and agreed with the pool of smaller operators working in the borough
 - 6.17.3. Chair of Highways & Transportation Committee,
 - 6.17.4. Deputy Chair of Highways & Transportation Committee,
 - 6.17.5. the Council's Head of Highways, and
 - 6.17.6. the Council's Head of Strategic Transport and Parking
- 6.18.** Enhanced Partnership Board meetings will take place no less than twice per year at regular intervals between each Forum meeting. The Board will elect one of its members as chair based on nominations put forward by participating organisations.
- 6.19.** The following protocols have been developed for conducting business through the EP Board. These protocols are intended to clarify the approach to decision-making. In so doing, they provide assurance to the Council that there is appropriate accountability with regard to expenditure of public funding. The proposed protocols are, as follows:
- 6.19.1. All decisions must be within the Council's agreed policies
 - 6.19.2. Decision-making will be by consensus not by vote
 - 6.19.3. The Chair will ask the Councillor representatives for their view first before asking the council officer.
 - 6.19.4. If agreement between Councillors and officers cannot be reached, then the issue will be referred to the Highways & Transport Committee for decision
 - 6.19.5. If agreement is reached, then the Director of Highways & Infrastructure will formally record their decision and a copy of this will be retained with the minutes of the meeting. No formal decisions can be taken at the meeting unless the Director of Highways (or delegated officer) is present.
- 6.20.** The Council retains a right of veto as set out in the national guidance. The purpose of this veto is to ensure that there are no actions arising from the EP Board that would be either anti-competitive or against the wider public interest. As a general principle, the veto will be used by exception.
- 6.21.** Full details of the proposed governance arrangements are set out in the EP Plan and EP Scheme documents, as appended to this report. The revised governance proposals for a Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership are summarised in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Governance proposals for Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership



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- 6.22. In January 2022, the DfT updated its guidelines relating to preparation of Enhanced Partnerships, with a revised timescale requiring the submission of a **draft** Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme to DfT by the end of April 2022. Subject to approval at Committee the documents appended to this report will be the basis for that submission.
- 6.23. Members should note that these documents remain draft and they can be finalised only following feedback from DfT, completion of statutory consultations and confirmation of the funding envelope as outcome of our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). We anticipate that a final EP Plan and Scheme may be confirmed later this year, with reports to a future meeting of the committee to seek approval at that time.
- 6.24. Following completion, the EP Plan and EP Scheme documents will then be reviewed on an annual basis, alongside the BSIP, with an annual progress report to committee.

7. Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1. The first task involved early engagement with Bus Operators, passenger groups and other key stakeholders such as town and parish councils. These discussions outline the parameters of the partnership, consideration of policies and what Cheshire East would like a future bus network to look like. This engagement focussed on any key issues and considerations to fine tune the approach and outline the requirements and expectations of an Enhanced Partnership.
- 7.2. Following the development of draft EP Plan and EP Scheme documents further engagement was conducted, particularly with local Bus Operators through one-to-one engagement. These sessions helped to identify and rectify any major concerns raised by operators and ensure measures are in place to mitigate potential future risks.
- 7.3. Within the DfT announcement regarding the adjusted timescales (received Tuesday 11th January 2022), LTAs were advised to pause the operator objection process (if it had not already been conducted) and statutory consultation stage until Government confirmed the final funding allocations.
- 7.4. Subject to approval at April's committee, the 28-day Bus Operator Objection period will be commence based upon the draft documents that accompany this report.
- 7.5. Following the Operator Objection period, there is also a need for a consultation period where the documents are shared with statutory consultees. This enables statutory consultees to provide comments regarding the draft EP Plan and Scheme. Statutory consultees include:
 - 7.5.1. All operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals
 - 7.5.2. Organisations that represent local passengers

- 7.5.3. Other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals (Neighbouring Authorities)
 - 7.5.4. The Traffic Commissioners
 - 7.5.5. The Chief Officer of Police for each area to which the plan relates
 - 7.5.6. Transport Focus
 - 7.5.7. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)
- 7.6. Subject to approval of the recommendations in this report, it is intended to commence the formal Operator Objection period at the end of April 2022 to be followed by statutory consultations (4 weeks), as described above.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

- 8.1.1. The development of an Enhanced Partnership is set out within the Bus Services Act 2017 which amends the Transport Act 2000. When adopted by a Council an Enhanced Partnership contains legally binding commitments which the Council and bus operators must fulfil.
- 8.1.2. In developing and implementing an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme the Council must have regard to the transport needs of all of the residents in the borough, which may include disabled persons, persons who are elderly or have mobility problems and mothers with young children. Development of plans will need to be in accordance with statutory and legal requirements for Community Engagement, Equalities Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Appraisal.
- 8.1.3. Members must be fully aware of the equalities implications of the decisions they are taking. This will ensure that there is proper appreciation of any potential impact of any decision on the Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum, this requires decision makers to carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessments produced by officers.
- 8.1.4. Before implementing the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme the Council should consult with local bus operators, various organisations including the chief of police for the area to seek their views on the planned proposals.
- 8.1.5. The Secretary of State may issue secondary legislation and additional guidance in relation to the Enhanced Partnership plans and schemes, the Council must have regard to the guidance.

8.2. Finance

- 8.2.1. £100,000 has been made available from the Government for each LTA to support with the development of Bus Service Improvement Plans, Enhanced Partnership Plans and Enhanced Partnership Schemes.

Cheshire East has been granted access to this funding in full and has used it to produce a BSIP in advance of the end of October 2021 deadline and **draft** EP Plan and Scheme documents in advance of the end of April 2022 deadline.

- 8.2.2. The Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme will be implemented using funding provided by the long-term funding commitments of the National Bus Strategy and the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG). To date these funds are not committed.

8.3. Policy

- 8.3.1. Cheshire East corporate documents and strategies stress the importance of an enhanced public transport and bus network for attaining key strategic objectives such as improving local transport, reducing air pollution, achieving carbon neutrality, enabling housing and employment growth, improving quality of place and protecting the environment. They support improvements to local bus transport both in terms of infrastructure and service provision and call for the development of a bus strategy. Developing an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme that aligns with the Bus Service Improvement Plan will help to achieve these goals.
- 8.3.2. At a National level, the development of an Enhanced Partnership (with associated Plan and Scheme documentation) ensures that the council fulfils its duty as the Local Transport Authority in accordance with the responsibilities outlined within the National Bus Strategy.
- 8.3.3. On a regional and subnational level, the Cheshire & Warrington LEP acknowledges the importance of buses for public transport in its transport strategy and LEP Bus Strategy. The LEP bus strategy should be aligned with the EP Plan and Scheme where possible to ensure any duplication of work is avoided. The South-Eastern Manchester Multimodal Strategy (SEMMS) and Greater Manchester's Transport Delivery Plan also acknowledge the importance of public transport and call for the coordination of cross boundary services, particularly following a commitment to bus franchising within Greater Manchester.

8.4. Equality

- 8.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment has been commenced. This builds upon the EqlA developed for the Cheshire Bus Strategy and BSIP. Further Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken for specific bus schemes and investment programmes as they come forward.

8.5. Human Resources

- 8.5.1. There are no direct implications for Human Resources other than staff time required to deliver and monitor performance against the plan and participate in partnership meetings.

8.6. Risk Management

- 8.6.1. A Project Board has been established chaired by the Director of Infrastructure and Highways to ensure appropriate project governance and strategic direction. A project risk register has been developed and maintained, detailing mitigation measures.
- 8.6.2. Separate consultative meetings were held with Bus Industry contacts. The frequency of these meetings was determined following initial early discussions and are used to understand any external risks associated with each bus operator.

8.7. Rural Communities

- 8.7.1. The Corporate Plan outlines targets to reduce areas of the borough not served by public transport. The Council has already demonstrated a commitment to this through its successful bid for DfT funding as part of the Rural Mobility Fund, a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service is now in operation as a result of this funding. DRT is to be considered as an option for connecting rural communities and has been discussed with bus operators and reflected in the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership Plan. The criteria used to identify Nantwich as a suitable area for DRT operation has been used to identify additional potential sites across the borough which will be assessed further within future EP Scheme documents.
- 8.7.2. The Corporate Plan also identifies the desire for thriving and active rural communities by 2025. Delivering improved accessibility to services and employment opportunities by improved bus connectivity supports this target. Any issues and opportunities for rural communities has been identified throughout the process of developing the EP Plan and EP Scheme.

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 8.8.1. The Corporate Plan outlines that some of the biggest pressures are in children's services, particularly placements for looked after children and services for children with special educational needs, including home to school transport.
- 8.8.2. Following BSIP ambitions, the EP Plan and Scheme seek opportunities to increase the scope for home-to-school travel to be accommodated on conventional bus networks, thereby reducing the need for bespoke transport provision.

8.9. Public Health

- 8.9.1. By enhancing bus provision in Cheshire East, with well-planned reform, this provides an affordable transport choice for young people that enables greater connectivity to additional learning and job/training opportunities.
- 8.9.2. Cheshire East is a prosperous place, but there are pockets of deprivation in communities related to income, health and life chances.

Improved bus services will enable a greater proportion of residents to access important services such as health care facilities. This will therefore help to address the Corporate Plan target to reduce health inequalities across the borough.

- 8.9.3. There is also a desire to support communities by reducing loneliness. Improved bus connectivity will enable residents of all backgrounds to move around the borough more freely and engage with activities to improve mental and physical health.
- 8.9.4. The EP Plan and Scheme also consider the impact of transport on issues affecting public health, most notably Air Quality and the contribution of Public Transport to health and wellbeing.

8.10. Climate Change

- 8.10.1. Cheshire East Council has committed to be carbon neutral by 2025 and to influence carbon reduction across the borough. The Corporate Plan outlines a desire to improve the speed and efficiency of public transport and encourage more residents to make fewer car journeys. The EP Plan and EP Scheme hopes to strengthen the existing bus provision, delivering consistent and efficient services that can better compete with the private car.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Richard Hibbert, Head of Transport Strategy Richard.hibbert@cheshireeast.gov.uk 07866 157324
Appendices:	Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership - Draft Plan Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership – Draft Scheme
Background Papers:	Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/pdf/public-transport/bsip/cheshire-east-bsip-2021.pdf Highways and Transportation Committee Report – 21 st September 2021 Highways and Transportation Committee Report – 3 rd March 2022.

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Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan

April 2022 (Version 2)

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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 2021¹. 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 Strategy² (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

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.

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.

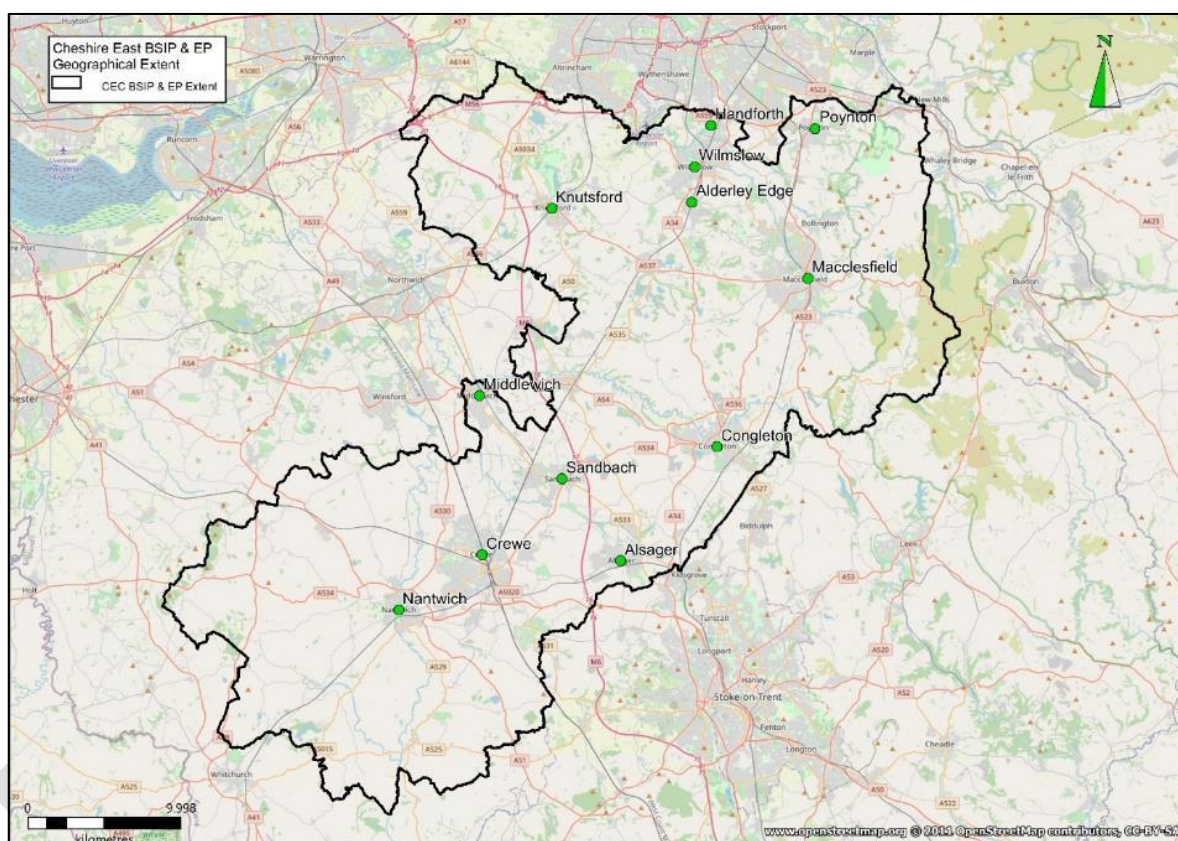


Figure 1-1: Extent of Cheshire East EP Plan and Scheme(s)

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 of 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.

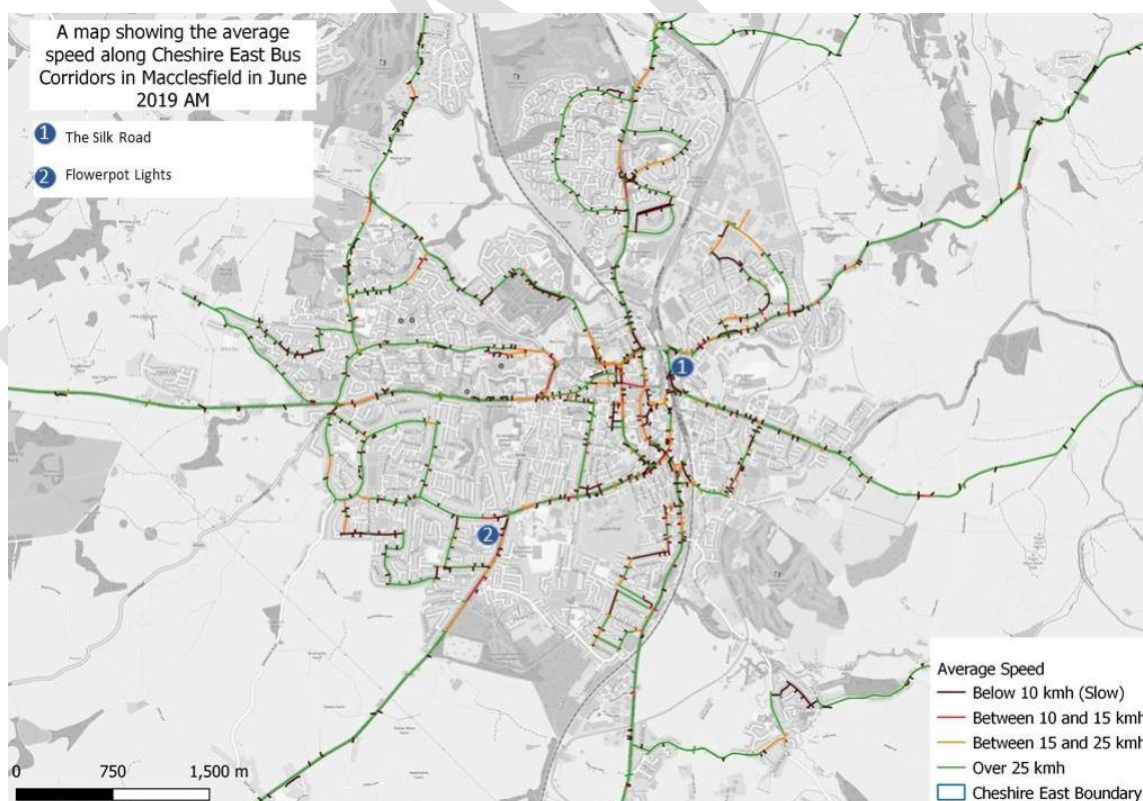
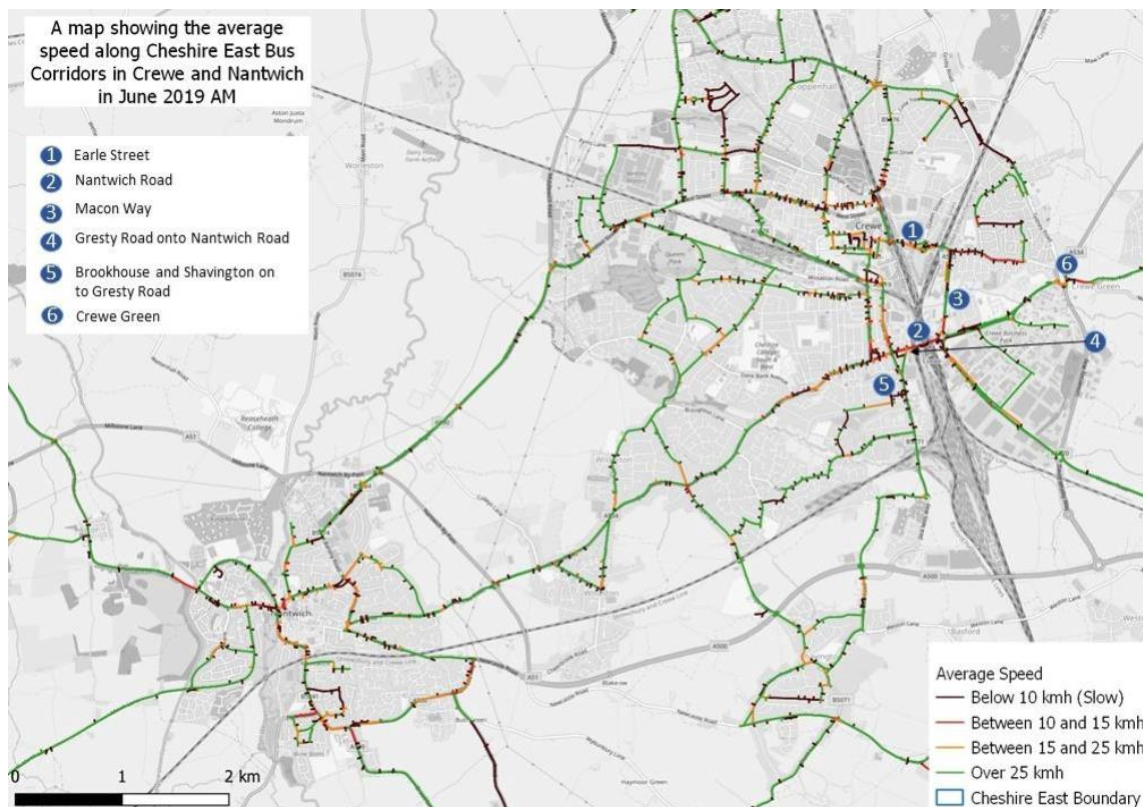
The Cheshire East local bus network comprises a mix of commercially operated and financially assisted services. The Cheshire East Borough Council is responsible for the coordination of these socially necessary routes, combined with the preparation and delivery for supporting information provision.

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.



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

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/km²), than the North West (497/km²) or England (430/km²) average, owing in part to its rural make-up. A number of the borough's more rural areas have fewer than 100 inhabitants per km² 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.

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.

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.

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

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

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 deliverability of a multi-operator and / or multi-modal ticketing scheme in Cheshire East	Action plan for retrofitting 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	<p>Improve operating hours of existing services between 06:00-19:00.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Improvements in frequency of weekday and daytime services to town centre locations including Crewe and Macclesfield.</p>	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	<p>Operators to improve web/app- based real time information vs timetabled information.</p> <p>Reduce day-to-day variation in service provision.</p>	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	<p>Secure financial support for bus service frequency enhancements, expansion of operating times and network growth</p> <p>Secure financial support for the pilot delivery of 2 DRT trial areas</p>	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 quality corridors / super-bus routes.
	Measurement	<p>Comparison of bus timetables and operating information of services</p> <p>Change in % of population within 400m of 40 min JT to key service centre.</p>	<p>List of interventions</p> <p>Bus punctuality data</p> <p>Operator feedback</p> <p>Customer survey feedback</p>	<p>Fare price comparison, particularly in Crewe and Macclesfield.</p> <p>Competitiveness of fares against parking charges</p>	<p>Reliability/punctuality data from operators</p> <p>Customer survey feedback</p>	<p>Bus passenger/customer survey feedback</p> <p>No. of bus stop improvements delivered</p>	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	<p>Improve the frequency of existing network (identify minimum standards and different measures for the different types of services - town, rural and core inter-urban)</p> <p>Improve the connectivity of the network with additional services to key locations and further consideration of operating hours/days</p>	<p>Further delivery of punctuality improvements and priority measures</p> <p>Additional service frequencies</p>	CEC to work with neighbouring authorities / regional / national bodies to develop multi-modal ticketing scheme across transport modes	<p>Development of an integrated website or app, collating all real-time information for bus services within CEC.</p> <p>Identify a programme of key hub stops, with information totems (i.e. at key visitor attractions, interchanges, principal towns/service centres, hospitals)</p>	<p>Improve connectivity to job opportunities for principal towns and key service centres in CE and cross-border.</p> <p>To better connect bus network to key railway stations (Crewe, Sandbach, Macclesfield, Wilmslow and in the future HS2 hub at Crewe).</p>	<p>Further support the transition to low- and zero-emission in total bus fleet.</p> <p>Encourage mode shift to bus from private car</p>
	Deliverable	<p>Secure financial support for frequency enhancements to deliver minimum standards, expansion of operating times and network growth</p> <p>Secure financial support for the delivery of further 2 DRT trial areas, dependent on funding</p>	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.	<p>Deliver infrastructure improvements to bus/rail interchanges</p> <p>Support network growth to key employment and service centres.</p>	Deliver programme to retrofit/renew buses operating in CEC area to Euro VI and/or zero-emission and deliver a number of new bus technologies to support quality corridors / super-bus routes.
	Measurement	<p>Change in % of population within 400m of 40 min JT to key service centre.</p> <p>Analysis of key employment areas and levels of bus service provision.</p> <p>Measuring retention/growth of services (pax growth and bus kms), no. commercial and supported services</p>	<p>Bus punctuality data and bus journey times vs car journey times</p> <p>Operator feedback</p> <p>Customer survey feedback</p>	<p>Fare price comparison and availability of multi-modal ticketing.</p> <p>Competitiveness of fares against parking charges</p>	<p>Provision of app/web-based information</p> <p>Delivery of key hub stops</p> <p>Customer survey feedback</p>	<p>Bus passenger/customer survey feedback</p> <p>Competitiveness of bus fares against parking charges.</p> <p>Number of cross border routes at 1 bph frequency or greater.</p> <p>Number of services and interchange times between bus services and rail services.</p>	<p>Increase the number of low- and zero-emission buses in total bus fleet.</p> <p>Bus pax and JtW data</p>

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 compare 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.*

4.2.2 Bus Service Reliability

For the purposes of monitoring of bus services reliability, 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.

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.

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.

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.

Cheshire East Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme

April 2022 (Version 3)

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 services which has one or more stopping places within the geographical area of the EP Plan or Scheme, and it is not an exempted service.

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, 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.

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. These interventions have been categorised as those to be delivered with Local Transport Authority funding and those that could be delivered subject to successful Department for Transport (DfT) BSIP funding.

Interventions	Local Authority funding	BSIP Funding Dependent
Facilities		
Boroughwide Bus Shelter Renewal Programme (3.2.1)	10 per annum	25 per annum
Boroughwide Bus Stop Renewal Programme (3.2.2)	5 per annum	150 per annum
Boroughwide Information Totems (3.2.3)	0 per annum	60 specific locations
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.	Identify, prioritise and maintain a list of priority measures. Deliver top prioritised interventions and signal trials
Action Plan and Delivery Programme for retrofitting bus fleet to Euro VI standards (3.3.4)	Develop an action plan	Deliver programme to retrofit buses to Euro VI
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	Develop and coordinate an integrated website or app
Identify locations, routes or corridors for the delivery of two demonstration Quality Corridor (or corridors) or 'Superbus' routes. (3.3.6)	-	Delivery to two demonstration Quality Corridor or superbus routes

Interventions	Local Authority funding	BSIP Funding Dependent
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.	Commit to participating in a working group for the development of multi-operator ticketing schemes
Simplification of fares (3.4.2)	Work with bus operators to develop a feasibility study to identify fare simplification mechanisms.	-
Integration with other modes (3.4.3)	-	Work with Bus Operators to develop plans for increased bus service coordination and integration. Commit to participating in a working group for the development of multi-modal ticketing schemes.

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).

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed on the following ambitions outlined within the EP Plan:

- identify, within a rolling proactive programme, the next most appropriate 25 shelters per annum to be renewed or refreshed.
- Develop a specification for enhanced standards for facilities management and maintenance in partnership with local Bus Operators operating qualifying services within the EP Scheme area.

Existing bus shelters to be improved, as detailed in Schedule [Insert Schedule in Annex B], and will incorporate:

- Appropriate size and siting (location);
- Information displays (paper-based);
- Bus Stop Flag;
- 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.

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed on the following ambitions outlined within the EP Plan:

- Boroughwide Bus Stop Renewal Programme (150 bus stops per annum).
- 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.
- Work to 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).

Subject to a successful DfT funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed on the following ambitions outlined within the EP Plan:

- Focus on the delivery of information ‘totems’ at key stops, hubs and interchanges to encourage greater information on all modal movements (bus, rail and active mode links).
- Cheshire East Borough Council will install Bus Totems including real-time passenger information across the EP Scheme Area. The initial list of locations is at Annex [annex].
- Cheshire East Borough Council will maintain new screens in a fit for purpose state and replace screens when they stop working.
- In addition to initial list of locations ([Annex]), the programme for subsequent installations will use the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Bespoke Variation arrangements to introduce further locations.

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 xx 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.

3.3.2 Managing Roadworks in the EP Scheme area

Within xx 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 xx 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 feasibility study will identify short term and long-term Bus Priority Facilities and 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.

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed on the following ambitions outlined within the EP Plan for Phase 2 and Phase 3:

- **Phase 2** – Identify, prioritise and maintain a list of where bus priority measures are needed. Deliver top 20 prioritised interventions and signal trials.
- **Phase 3** – Deliver top 20 prioritised interventions and signal trials.

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 xx 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**.

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed on the following ambitions outlined within the EP Plan for Phase 2 and Phase 3:

- **Phase 2** – Deliver programme to retro fit buses operating in CEC area to Euro VI standard and deliver a number of new bus technologies to support quality corridors / super bus routes.
- **Phase 3** – Continue to deliver programme and increase the number of low and zero emission buses in the total bus fleet.

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 xx months of the Commencement Date**).

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed to improve paper-based information provision across the borough, as outlined within the EP Plan.

(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**.

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed to the following ambitions:

- Develop and coordinate an integrated website or app, collating all real-time information and standardised public transport information for bus services within Cheshire East.

Cheshire East Borough Council will work with the local Bus Industry to coordinate standardised public transport information, in “electronic” format, 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,
- Journey planning,
- Bus services fare information and mobile ticket purchasing functionality,
- News and events information, and
- Access to real time information

Coordinated information will be maintained and reviewed annually throughout the EP Scheme. Subject to DfT BSIP funding, the new website or app will be launched and reviewed annually thereafter.

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 **commission a bus priority feasibility study** (within xx 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 with Operators as part of the development of this feasibility study.

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed to the following ambitions:

- Cheshire East Borough Council will work closely with operators at this point to identify locations, routes or corridors for the delivery of two demonstration Quality Corridor (or corridors) or ‘Superbus’ routes.

These routes will benefit from the introduction of increased frequencies and headways, new low emission buses and be supported with improved bus priority at key junctions, new bus stop infrastructure and improved at-stop information.

There will also be a commitment to review bus fares on these corridors to supporting increasing ridership. The aim of these corridors is to demonstrate the full potential of a ‘step-change’ in the upgrade to the quality of all aspects of bus provision to users in Cheshire East.

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 xx 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.

Subject to successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council will commit to participating in a working group with Bus Operators for the development of multi-operator ticketing schemes, as outlined within the EP Plan.

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, 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 xx months of the Commencement Date).

Subject to successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council, in collaboration with Bus Operators, will commit to the following ambitions as outlined within the EP Plan,

- Work to establish the best mechanisms for simplification of fares and coordinated ticketing across the borough, across operators and across modes.
- CEC and Operators to work together as part of the Enhanced Partnership to identify Operator-led fare simplification across the borough.
- 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

Bus service coordination and integration with other modes is wholly subject to receiving BSIP funding from the Department for Transport. Within 'The Plan', Cheshire East Borough Council has identified the following ambition for Phase 1, which aim to offer increased bus service coordination and integration:

Cheshire East Borough Council will work alongside Bus Operators to outline plans 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).

Subject to successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Council will lead a working group for the development of multi-modal ticketing schemes, as outlined within the EP Plan.

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.

These interventions have been categorised as those not dependent on funding and those that could be delivered subject to successful Department for Transport (DfT) BSIP funding.

Interventions	Non BSIP Funding Dependent	BSIP Funding Dependent
Vehicle Standards		
Emission Standards (4.1.1)	Work with CEC to develop an action plan for retrofitting bus fleet to Euro VI standards	Retro fit buses and increase number of low and zero emission buses
Technology (4.1.2)	With CEC set minimum standards for new and existing vehicle technology.	Roll-out minimum standards to all vehicles.
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.	Commit to participating in a working group for the development of multi-modal ticketing schemes
Simplification of fares (4.4.2)	Work with CEC to develop options for fare simplification mechanisms.	-
Integration with other modes (4.4.3)	-	Work with CEC to develop plans for increased bus service coordination and integration. Commit to participating in a working group for the development of multi-modal ticketing schemes.
Enhanced Frequency		
Network Stabilisation (4.5.1)	Ensure changes to existing commercial networks are minimised and potential mitigations are discussed with CEC before notifications are made on changes.	Frequency and headway improvements to Crewe and Macclesfield town networks.
Quality Improvements (4.5.2)	-	Enhance pre-covid bus networks across Congleton, Wilmslow, Nantwich and Sandbach towns.

Interventions	Non BSIP Funding Dependent	BSIP Funding Dependent
Network Growth (4.5.3)	-	Further enhancements at Crewe, Macclesfield, Congleton, Wilmslow, Nantwich, Sandbach, Knutsford,
Public transport information provision		
Paper based information (4.6.1)	Enhance the dissemination of paper-based public transport information	Work with CEC to improve paper-based information provision
Electronic-based information provisions (4.6.2)	Operators to maintain or improve their corporate web/app based real time information and timetabled information.	Work with CEC on development and coordination of an integrated website or app
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	Work with CEC to deliver two demonstration Quality Corridor or 'Superbus' routes.

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 xx 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.

Subject to successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Bus Operators are expected to commit to the following ambitions as outlined within the EP Plan.

- Deliver programme to retro fit buses operating in CEC area to Euro VI standard and deliver a number of new bus technologies to support quality corridors / super bus routes.
- Increase the number of low and zero emission buses in the total bus fleet.

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.

Subject to successful DfT funding, new vehicles as part of demonstration or superbuss corridors will be required to comply with further quality vehicle standards as outlined in section 4.7 below.

4.2 Timetable Changes (Network Stability)

Bus Operators will commit to **4 timetable changes** throughout the year within the whole EP Scheme area (within xx months of the Commencement Date).

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 xx 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.

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 xx 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.

Subject to successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, 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 will submit to the Council monthly sales returns for all ticketing schemes in which they 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 xx months of the Commencement Date)].

Subject to successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Bus Operators are expected to commit to the following ambitions as outlined within the EP Plan,

- Work to establish the best mechanisms for simplification of fares and coordinated ticketing across the borough, across operators and across modes.
- CEC and Operators to work together as part of the Enhanced Partnership to identify Operator-led fare simplification across the borough.
- 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.

All operators applying the price changes are eligible to object, a 28-day operator objection mechanism will be utilised to allow this. Changes can only be implemented if there are no operator objections at the end of the objection period. 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 service coordination and integration with other modes is wholly subject to receiving BSIP funding from the Department for Transport. Within 'The Plan', Cheshire East Borough Council has identified the following ambitions for Phase 1, which aim to offer increased bus service coordination and integration:

- Bus Operators are expected to work alongside Cheshire East Borough Council to outline plans 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).

Subject to successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, 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.

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.

Frequency enhancements within the EP Scheme area are entirely subject to receiving appropriate BSIP funding from the Department for Transport. Within 'The Plan', Cheshire East Borough Council has identified the following phasing of ambitions:

4.5.1 Phase 1: Network Stabilisation

Specifically consider bus service frequencies and headway improvements, and temporal enhancements to our principal Crewe and Macclesfield town networks. This is a commitment, beyond stabilising the network, that we will work with our local operators on how to develop the local bus networks in our principal towns. Working with operators to deliver increased service frequencies to:

- Our Macclesfield town services to every 15 minutes to Weston Estate, Upton Priory and Moss Rose
- Our Crewe town services to every 15 minutes to serve Wistaston, Sydney and Elm Drive
- An existing service between Macclesfield to Bollington to every 15 minutes
- An existing service between Crewe and Nantwich to every 15 minutes, with a 30-minute frequency between Crewe and Hanley
- An existing service to every 15 minutes to serve Leighton Hospital, Brookhouse Estate, Shavington and Crewe
- The route between Crewe and Chester, from its current 60 minutes to every 30 minutes (Monday to Saturday)
- An evening link between Northwich – Winsford – Crewe – Shavington (Monday to Saturday).

4.5.2 Phase 2: Quality Improvement

Deliver enhancements to pre-covid bus networks across our Congleton, Wilmslow, Nantwich and Sandbach towns, by improving (AM and PM) peak and inter-peak timetables, and how we can better connect smaller communities to key attractors (i.e. health and education establishments). This will include working with operators to deliver:

- New or improved pre-AM Peak, inter-peak and post-PM peak service frequencies to Bromley Estate, Mossley and Buglawton, and
- New pre-AM Peak service frequencies to Newcastle.

4.5.3 Phase 3: Network Growth

This will bring further enhancements across Crewe, Macclesfield, Congleton, Wilmslow, Nantwich and Sandbach, by improving (AM and PM) peak and inter-peak timetables, and inter-urban services to better connect key service centres and smaller communities to main attractors (i.e. hospitals and health centres, employment and education establishments).

This will include working with operators to deliver:

- Additional temporal enhancements across the remainder of our Crewe and Macclesfield services every 15 minutes from 06:30 to 21:00 (as a minimum) Monday to Friday, at a minimum of every 30 minutes between 07:00 and 21:00 on Saturdays, and a minimum of hourly on Sundays,
- Bringing our Congleton town services to every 15 minutes from 06:30 to 21:00 (as a minimum) Monday to Friday, at a minimum of every 30 minutes between 07:00 and 21:00 on Saturdays, and a minimum of hourly on Sundays,
- Improved service frequency links to Leighton and Macclesfield Hospitals and assess enhancements to existing and new services for improved health service access to locations which lie outside of the borough.

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 xx months of the Commencement Date).

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Cheshire East Borough Council is further committed to improve paper-based information provision across the borough, as outlined within the EP Plan.

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**.

Subject to a successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Bus Operators are further committed to supporting Cheshire East Council in the following ambitions:

- Develop and coordinate an integrated website or app, collating all real-time information and standardised public transport information for bus services within Cheshire East.

Bus Operators will work with Cheshire East Borough Council to coordinate standardised public transport information, in “electronic” format , 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,
- Journey planning,
- Bus Services Fare information,
- Mobile ticket purchasing functionality,
- News and events information, and
- Access to real time information

Coordinated information will be maintained and reviewed annually throughout the EP Scheme. Subject to DfT BSIP funding, the new website or app will be launched by [date: e.g. end of the second year of the EP Scheme] and reviewed annually thereafter.

4.7 Demonstration Quality Corridor(s) or Superbus Routes

Within xx 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.

Subject to successful DfT BSIP funding allocation, Bus Operators are expected to commit to work closely with Cheshire East Council on the delivery of two demonstration Quality Corridor or 'Superbus' routes.

These routes will benefit from the introduction of increased frequencies and headways, new low emission buses and be supported with improved bus priority at key junctions, new bus stop infrastructure and improved at-stop information. Any new vehicles will be subject to standards outlined in section 4.1.2, as well as the following requirements:

- Audio visual announcements, where manufacturer permits:
 - Next stop audio announcements on both decks, including through an induction hearing loop at every wheelchair space and priority seats.
 - Next stop visual announcements on both decks.
 - Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers on both decks to route diversions through audio announcements on the vehicle.
 - Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers on both decks to route diversions through visual displays on the vehicle.
- A display showing onward connection details by bus, where applicable, from open data sources.
- Option to pay for tickets through contactless ticketing.

There will also be a commitment to review bus fares on these corridors to supporting increasing ridership. The aim of these corridors is to demonstrate the full potential of a 'step-change' in the upgrade to the quality of all aspects of bus provision to users in 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.

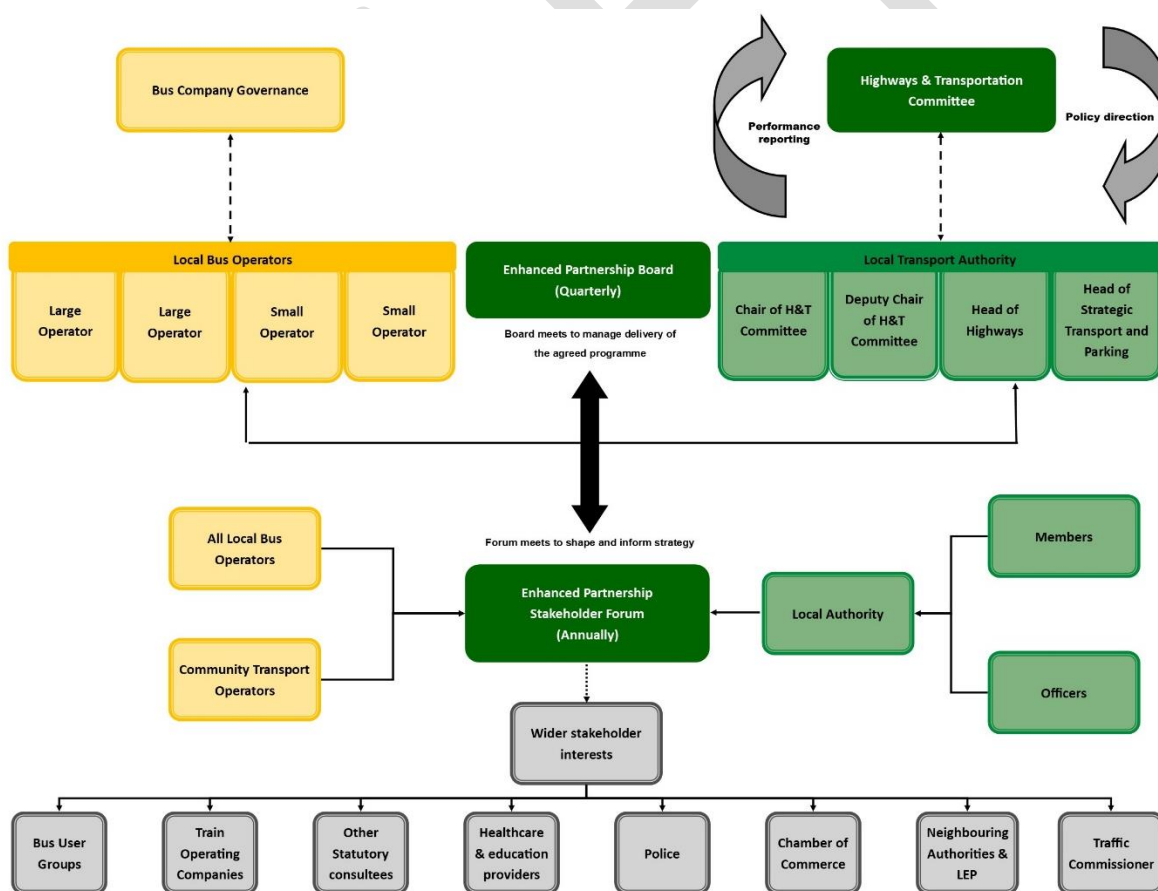


Figure 5.1: EP Forum & Board Governance Structure

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 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:

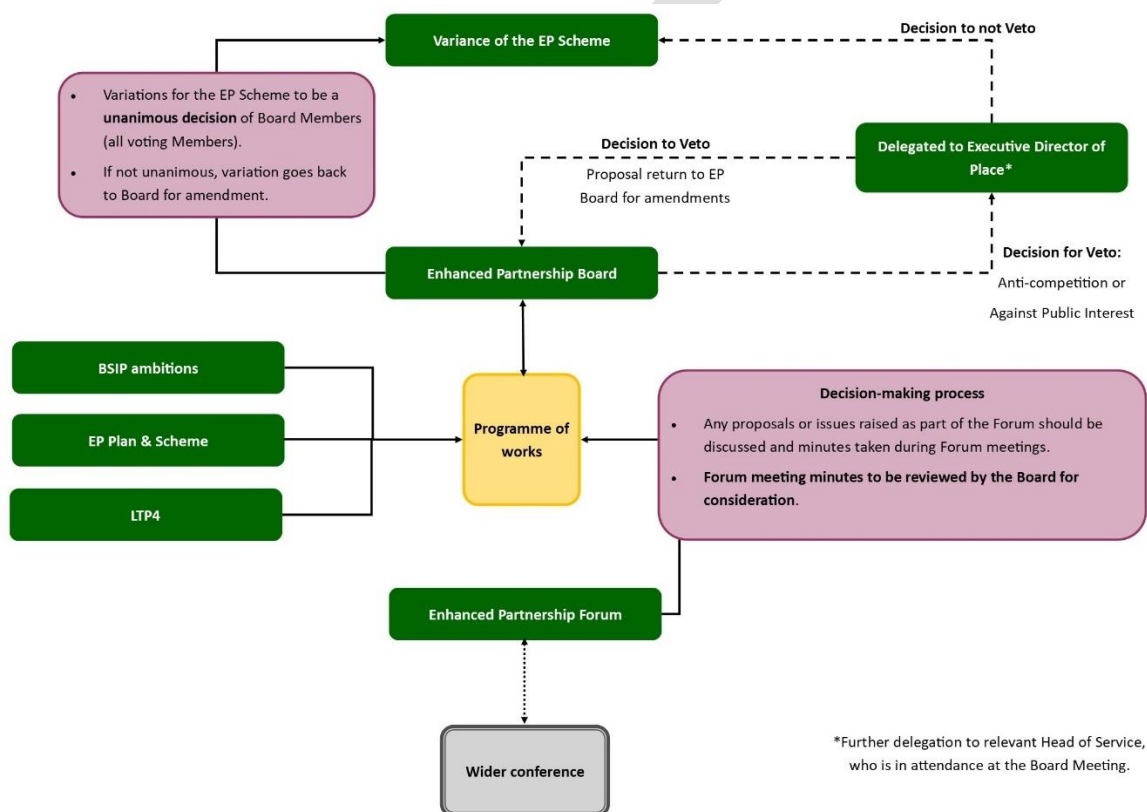
- all decisions must be within the Cheshire East Council's agreed Policies
- decision-making will be by consensus not by vote
- the Chair will ask the Councillor representatives for their view first before asking the LTA Officer
- if agreement between Councillors and Officers cannot be reached, then 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 taken by the Council and 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 cancelling a bus service registration, the Council will take into account 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 [\[email address\]](#) 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 [\[email address\]](#).

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	A534 Crewe Road bus lane (between the Crewe Green Road junction and the junction with Nantwich Road and Weston 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

Bus stop description	Existing infrastructure	Proposed treatment
A6 Newtown, Disley	Existing stop	New 2 bay cantilever shelter with solar power to be provided with Flag, large landscape timetable frame.
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.

Appendix B

Schedule of Measures

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Appendix C 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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Working for a brighter future together

Highways and Transport Committee

Date of Meeting: 13th April 2022

Report Title: Highways and Transport 2022-23 Programmes

Report of: John David – Interim Director of Infrastructure and Highways

Report Reference No: HT/22/21- 22

Ward(s) Affected: All Cheshire East Wards

Corporate Plan Priorities			
	Open	An open and enabling organisation	
	Fair	A council which empowers and cares about people	
	Green	A thriving and sustainable place	X

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1.** This report informs committee members of the capital and revenue budgets available for the highway service for 2022/23 and the allocation of those budgets to the various programmes of work. The programmes of work contribute to the Council's aim to be a thriving and sustainable place and in particular to the priority of having a transport network that is safe and promotes active travel.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1.** This report explains the allocation of highway revenue and capital funding to deliver day to day maintenance activities and improvement programmes on the public highway, to ensure that the Council can fulfil its statutory responsibilities as a Highway and Transport authority, as well as contributing to the Council's Corporate Plan and Local Transport Plan objectives and priorities.
- 2.2.** The report outlines the challenging funding position in terms of both capital expenditure (being dependent on Department of Transport (DfT))

grants) and revenue expenditure (due to the Council's position in respect of its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)).

- 2.3. This report follows on from a previous report presented to the Highways and Transport committee on 16 November 2021. This demonstrated to members how budget allocations and programmes had been set for 2021-22 and invited the committee to comment. The feedback has been considered by the highways team as part of the business planning process and preparation of the detailed budget allocations and programme for 2022-23 presented in this report.
- 2.4. Due to the responsive nature of the service to many variable external factors, the budgets presented do not operate as fixed budgets, but are the basis on which the contractor's business plan has been set for the start of the financial year in April 2022. Future committee reports through the year will provide progress updates on the delivery of the programmes, including any emerging pressures due to network demands which might call for amendments of some programmes.
- 2.5. Any comments members may have on these budget allocations are welcomed and will be taken into account, both during the year and in preparation for future years' budgets, whilst working within the overall available revenue budget envelope and whilst ensuring all statutory responsibilities as Highway and Transport Authority are being fulfilled.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The Committee is recommended to note the apportionment of revenue and capital funding to the key elements of highway services shown in Tables 2 to 4 below and comment on the apportionment to the service programmes.
- 3.2. Recommend to Council to approve a supplementary capital estimate for the Pothole Fund grant of £5.799m, set out in paragraph 6.6.2.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. The budgets for the capital and revenue programmes represent the optimal apportionment between programmes to best achieve the Council's priorities, whilst fulfilling the Council's responsibilities as the Highway and Transport Authority as far as reasonably practicable within available budgets.
- 4.2. The allocation of the Pothole Fund grant was received from the DfT after the Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved by Full Council on 24th February 2022, therefore a supplementary capital estimate of £5.799m requires further approval by Full Council.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1.** In developing the final allocation of available budgets various funding allocation variations are considered across the highway assets as part of the business planning process, taking account of asset condition, risk and investment need.
- 5.2.** In the main this is an information paper for Committee Members to note the funding available to the highway service and how it plans to utilise these to fulfil the Council's responsibilities as the Highway and Transport Authority and contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan and Local Transport Plan objectives and priorities. As such the 'do nothing' option would lead to the Members being less well informed.
- 5.3.** Options appraisal in relation to government Pothole Fund:

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing re. Pothole Fund	Loss of investment in road repairs and improvements in 22/23 and return of grant. Affects the ability of Council to fulfil statutory duties as a local highway and transport authority and meet corporate plan and LTP objectives.	Potential reduction in government funding for highways in long term. Increase in enquiries and claims resulting from worsening road condition.

6. Background

6.1. Policy Context - National

- 6.1.1** The Council is a Local Highway and Transport Authority, and in this context, it has a number of statutory duties to perform that have an impact on the maintenance of the public highway and the provision of transport in the borough. These include:
- Highways Act 1980 – duty to maintain highway maintainable at public expense
 - Traffic Management 2004
 - New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991
 - Well Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice
- 6.1.2** The Council's Highways are valued at £6.6bn, and it receives capital grants from central government to invest in structural maintenance of that asset. The value of this grant has diminished significantly in real terms in recent years and was reduced by 21% in 2021/22 from the previous year, resulting in an increased rate of decline in the

condition of the Council's highway network. This is a common position across highway authorities nationally.

- 6.1.3 The national picture was highlighted by the Local Government Association's transport spokesperson. In response to the overall reduction in capital funding allocated to councils for local road maintenance in 2021/22 by the Department for Transport of £400 million (22 per cent) they said "Councils are working hard to keep our roads safe and resilient, repairing potholes as quickly as they can. However, it would already take £10 billion and more than a decade to clear the current local roads repair backlog".
- 6.1.4 It is important that in using the limited resources available that the duties contained in the Highways Act and Traffic Management Act, particularly in maintaining a safe network, are given priority.
- 6.1.5 Some of the Council's funding is obtained because of the Incentive element of central government capital funding. This is awarded to local highway authorities who can demonstrate good practice in how they invest in the highway asset and provides high value for money in terms of asset life. The Council is in the highest category (Band 3) on this measure and receives the maximum incentive funding, £1.45m in 2022/23.

6.2. Policy Context - Local

- 6.2.1 The Council's Highways and Transport programmes are developed to ensure that the Council's duties as a local highway authority are delivered and to contribute to the Corporate Plan outcomes and Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives.
- 6.2.2 The Corporate Plan has a priority of providing a transport network that is safe and promotes active travel.
- 6.2.3 The Council has a suite of highway policies that help to inform delivery of the highway service and prioritise how revenue and capital money is spent. A programme of reviews of these policies will come to this committee for consideration over forthcoming meetings.
- 6.2.4 The Council's Local Transport Plan 2019 – 2024 is used to demonstrate how government funding will be used to maintain the public highway network and meet local transport needs. The DfT has indicated that updated national guidance on Local Transport Plans and associated funding will be published later this year, emphasising their role in contributing to the Government's decarbonisation strategy.
- 6.2.5 The Council's financial position as outlined in its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) means that the annual funding of the highways service remains very challenging.
- 6.2.6 As a demonstration of the challenges faced by the highways service;
 - In 2015-16 the highways revenue budget was £11.214m.

- During the intervening period through to 2021-22 inflation rose by 14%. If that inflation index had been applied to the 2015/16 figure, then the 2021/22 revenue budget would have been £12.784m.
- Therefore factoring in the reduction in government grants over the same time period the real terms cut since then is (£12.784-£10.425) = £2.359m. This equates to a cut of approximately 18%.

6.3. Available Revenue Budget for 2022/23

- 6.3.1. Revenue funding is allocated from the Council's general fund as part of its budget setting process.
- 6.3.2. Following the budget consultation process which considered proposals for the various service activities, there is a net revenue budget available for the highway service of £10.427m as shown in the table below:

Revenue Service Allocations	Budget (£000)
Highway Service Delivery - Client	2,010
Fees and charges for third parties	-2,570
Highway Service Delivery - Ringway Jacobs	10,987
Highway Service Revenue Budget	£ 10,427

- 6.3.3. The highway service net budget includes income from fees and charges to third parties for their use of the highway. For 2022/23 this is estimated to be £2.570m.
- 6.3.4. A paper entitled Highways and Transport 2022-23 Programme Preparation was presented to the Highways and Transport committee on 16 November 2021. This demonstrated to members how budget allocations and programmes had been set for 2021-22 and invited the committee to comment. These have been considered by the highways team as part of the business planning process and preparation of the budget allocations and programme for 2022-23.

6.4. Available Capital Budget for 2022/23

- 6.4.1. Capital budgets provide funding for significant repairs and improvements to the network. They are impacted by the size of grant from central government in the form of two annual block grants: The Structural Maintenance Block (SMB) and the Integrated Transport Block (ITB). The government has now also confirmed that it will provide Pothole Funding on an annual basis for the next 3 years. Total DfT funding of £15.551m is shown Table 1 below.
- 6.4.2. In 2022/23 the council has approved local funding of a further £7.867m as shown in Table 1 below. This budget is expected to be

funded from borrowing and will be added to the programme for managing and maintaining highways.

6.4.3. The total capital funding available for 2022/23 is therefore shown in the table below:

Funding	Government - Department for Transport (£000)	Council Investment (£000)	Total Budget (£000)
Local Transport Plan - Integrated Transport Block grant	2,003		2,003
Local Transport Plan - Strategic Maintenance Block grant	5,799		5,799
Local Transport Plan - Incentive Fund	1,450		1,450
Pothole Fund	5,799		5,799
Traffic Signal Maintenance Fund	500		500
Highway Pothole/Challenge Fund (MTFS)		3,242	3,242
Managing and Maintaining Highways Investment		4,000	4,000
Traffic Signs and Bollards - LED Replacement		625	625
2022/23 Budget Totals (£000)	15,551	7,867	23,418

Table 1 – Capital Funding sources for Highway in 2022/23

6.5. Revenue Service Provision

6.5.1 This table summarises the allocation of revenue budget for highway programmes in 2022/23 and reflects current priorities. These numbers may be subject to some slight amendments subject to final completion of the business planning process.

Highway Asset	Description	Council Revenue Budget Allocation (£000)	
		2021-22	2022-23
Coordinating Roadworks and other Activities on the highway	Managing Council, utility and developer works on the highway.	£587	£556
Handling enquiries from the public	Answering enquiries from the public, councillors and MPs / Providing information on highway activities	£180	£179
Inspection of the highway	Highway inspections / updating digital records / boundary enquiries	£465	£502
Bridges and Structures	Inspection / routine small maintenance works	£250	£257
Drainage system cleaning and repairs	Gully emptying and drainage system cleansing	£972	£1,099
Pothole Repairs	Repair of carriageway potholes	£1,296	£2,184
Other Road Repairs (including road edge failures, damaged paving etc)	Footway repairs and other non-carriageway repairs	£568	£588
Responding to Emergencies	Responding to urgent defects and emergency issues on the network	£508	£683
Road Markings Renewals	Replacement of worn and damaged road markings (to be included in capital programme in 2022/23)	£12	£0
Hedge and Trees	Responding to urgent tree works / hedge cutting	£342	£674
Grass Cutting and Weed treatment	Cutting of grass verges and weed treatment	£818	£794
Fencing & Wall Repairs	Repair of drystone walls and fences (to be included in capital programme in 2022/23)	£13	£0

Highway Asset	Description	Council Revenue Budget Allocation (£000)	
		2021-22	2022-23
Road Signs Cleaning and Repairs	Cleansing, straightening and repair of road signs (to be included in capital programme in 2022/23)	£13	£0
Winter Service (including gritting and snow clearance)	Gritting of roads and provision of grit bins	£2,027	£1,981
Street Lighting	Repair of streetlight and cable faults / structural and electrical testing	£560	£568
Traffic Signals	Repair of traffic signals and electronic signs	£312	£312
Traffic and Road Safety (including education to schools)	Design of road safety schemes/provision of road safety education to schools	£242	£305
Managing Flood Risk	Addressing statutory duties as the Lead Local Flood Authority including planning applications and flooding issues.	£271	£305
Overall Revenue Allocation (£000)		£9,436	£10,987

Table 2 Allocation of Revenue Budget across Routine/Reactive Core Highway Service programmes

The increase from the 2021/2022 budget figure of £9.436m to £11.236m in 2022/23 in the table above is because of the forecast estimated increase in income from fees and charges to third parties, in relation to their use of the highway network. Also, the repayment of the Salix loan which was used to convert all streetlights to LED is now complete, so the annual revenue used to make that repayment (approx. £1.2m) has been returned to the highways base budget.

6.6. Capital programme

6.6.1 Annual Block Grants

- 6.6.1.1. The table below summarises the allocations of capital budget to highway and transport programmes in 2022/23. As with the revenue allocation and programmes, member views have been considered in preparing the allocation across strategic programmes.
- 6.6.1.2. As described in 6.4.1 capital funding comes from two central government block grants; the Structural Maintenance Block (SMB) intended for capital maintenance of highways and structures and the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) for other capital transport programmes. The table indicates the allocation of the grant for each programme:
- 6.6.1.3. As in previous years, members have received the detailed work programmes (i.e. locations) planned across the borough prior to them being published on the Council's web site.

Integrated Transport and Highways Maintenance - Core Budget Allocations	Projects and Programmes	How are the Projects and Programmes Determined?	LTP Block Grants Funding Allocations (£000)	
			2021-22	2022-23
Infrastructure & Transport Policy and Scheme Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Studies • Transport Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crewe Transport Access Study - Macclesfield Transport Access Study • Infrastructure scheme feasibility and development work • Levelling Up fund bid - match funding 	Application of criteria to best deliver Council policy	525	525

Integrated Transport and Highways Maintenance - Core Budget Allocations	Projects and Programmes	How are the Projects and Programmes Determined?	LTP Block Grants Funding Allocations (£000)	
			2021-22	2022-23
Local Highway Measures	• Ward Member highway improvement budget	Member determined based on ward priorities	350	350
	• Minor Works Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traffic management measures - Traffic Regulations Orders - Pedestrian access improvements - Vehicles passing bays etc 	Officer determined based on assessment and prioritisation to deliver policy objectives	347	290
Sustainable Transport Enhancement Programme (STEP)	• Active travel investment • Public transport investment • Sustainable Modes of Transport to Schools (SMOTs) • Public Rights of Way and Countryside Access Improvements • Boulderstones Bridge Match funding contribution	Schemes are prioritised against the objectives of the Local Transport Plan, Sustainable Modes of Transport to Schools (SMOTS) objectives etc to deliver on policy	895	895

Integrated Transport and Highways Maintenance - Core Budget Allocations	Projects and Programmes	How are the Projects and Programmes Determined?	LTP Block Grants Funding Allocations (£000)	
			2021-22	2022-23
Road Safety Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Safety Schemes – cluster analysis to target killed/seriously injured traffic collision sites • Minor Safety Schemes - proactive programme to developing issues raised by Police • Vulnerable road user Schemes – cluster analysis focusing on sites VRU injury collision sites • Road safety camera site related works 	Application of analysis of police Stats19 road traffic injury collision data to determine work programme that helps reduce number of killed and seriously injured on the roads in the borough.	320	245
Programme Management	• Highway Client team programme management	Amount of work delivered by the highway client team that is chargeable to capital in accordance with local government financial rules.	200	200

Integrated Transport and Highways Maintenance - Core Budget Allocations	Projects and Programmes	How are the Projects and Programmes Determined?	LTP Block Grants Funding Allocations (£000)	
			2021-22	2022-23
Highway Asset Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carriageway Repairs • Footway Repairs • Drainage Improvements • Bridges & Structures • Street Lighting • Traffic Signals • Road markings • Road Signs • Safety Barriers 	Evidence led asset management approach using established scoring matrices to prioritise works.	6,615	6,747
		Overall LTP Allocation	9,252	9,252

Table 3 Allocation of Department for Transport Local Transport Plan annual block grants across highway programmes

6.6.2 Pothole Fund

- 6.6.2.1 The table below summarises the funding provided by central government to help the council address road condition in 2022/23 and how the highway service is using it to repair roads in the Borough.
- 6.6.2.2 Until this year the Pothole Fund was not an annual grant and varied in value when provided. In the government's recent announcement on funding for local highway authorities, it has committed to providing the Pothole Fund annually alongside the Local Transport Plan ITB and SMB grants until 2025.

DfT Pothole Fund	Programme	How is the Programme Determined?	DfT Pothole Fund Allocation (£000)	
			2021/22	2022/23
Highway Asset Investment	• Road repairs	Evidence led asset management approach using established scoring matrices to prioritise works.	5,799	5,799
Overall Allocation			5,799	5,799

Table 4 Allocation of Department for Transport Pothole Fund in 2022/23

6.6.3 Additional Council Capital Investment

6.6.3.1 The capital programme for the £7.242m Council investment funded activities below summarises the allocations:

Council Capital Investment - Budget Allocation	Programmes	How are the Projects and Programmes Determined?	LTP Block Grants Funding Allocations (£000)	
			2021-22	2022-23
Highway Asset Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage Improvements • Bridges & Structures • Street Lighting • Road Marking Replacement • Road Repairs • Footway Improvements • EV Charging On Street Funding bid 	<p>Highway Asset management led approach using established Council asset led scoring matrices to prioritise works.</p> <p>Council match funding</p>	<p>1,200</p> <p>1,400</p> <p>400</p>	<p>1,100</p> <p>1,000</p> <p>400</p> <p>100</p> <p>4,000</p> <p>542</p> <p>100</p>
		Overall Council Allocation	3,000	7,242

Table 5 Allocation of Additional Council Capital Investment across key highway programmes in 2022/23

6.6.4 Notes on funding Tables:

- Sufficient capital funding for the highway network from all sources is essential to provide a safe and well maintained highway network through long term planned investment. The level of capital funding is not sufficient to maintain steady state and we remain in a situation of managed decline. This has an adverse impact on the revenue funded service as this results in higher number of defects requiring a greater proportion of the available revenue budget to deliver reactive repairs to keep the highway safe, but which score lower in terms of value for money.
- Between 2015-2021 the Government provided a six year funding commitment for the Local transport Plan block grants which resulted in the annual grants received remaining unchanged throughout. When construction inflation was applied this resulted in a £1.6million cut in funding in real terms. Inflationary pressures on budgets remains a significant challenge post Covid with supply issues and staff shortages driving up material prices and employment costs.
- The latest announcement from the Department for Transport on Government funding for highways this year commits to the same funding levels received in 2021/22 for the next three years. This perpetuates the 21% cut in the maintenance funding block grant and makes no provision for inflation which is running at significantly higher levels than between 2015-21.

6.7. Next Steps in Business Planning

- 6.7.1 The process of highway service business planning for the next financial year with the Council's contractor began in October 2021 and is now almost complete in readiness for the new financial year in April.
- 6.7.2 In the early stages of the business planning process indicative funding, typically based on the revenue and capital allocations available in the current financial year are used. These are replaced by the actual budgets when agreed and published. This year the council met and agreed it's MTFS on 24th February with central government announcing the details of its road funding paper allocations to local authorities on 28th February.
- 6.7.3 The funding allocations in this report have been used to complete the business planning process with the Council's contractor.

7. Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1. The overall highways capital and revenue budgets have been set following the Council's budget consultation process. This included a report to this committee on 13 January 2022 on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 – 2025/26. As part of the consultation process the committee was

asked to provide comments and feedback to the Corporate Policy Committee on proposals related to the responsibilities of the committee.

- 7.2.** Corporate Policy committee, at its meeting on 10 February, considered the feedback and made recommendations to the Council (considered at its 24 February meeting) on the budget proposals contained in the final Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 – 2025/26.
- 7.3.** Alongside the Council's overall budget consultation process, a 2022-23 Programme Preparation report was presented to the Highways and Transport committee on 16 November 2021. This demonstrated to members how budget allocations and programmes had been set for 2021-22 and invited them to share their views on the coming year's detailed programme and funding. These have been considered by the highway team as part of the business planning process and the preparation of final detailed budget allocations and programme for 2022-23.

8 Implications

8.1 Legal

- 8.1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the intended expenditure under various budget lines.
- 8.1.2 Any financial expenditure should be in compliance with the Budget and Policy Framework, and the Finance Procedure rules as set out in the Constitution Chapter 3 part 3 and part 4.8.1.3

8.2 Finance

- 8.2.1 The financial information in this report reflects the approved MTFS, and the additional Pothole Fund, which was confirmed after the Council meeting. No financial implications therefore arise from this report. The revenue and capital programmes utilise, and will be managed within, the available budgets provided by the Council and central government for 2022/23.
- 8.2.2 The recommended allocations proposed are designed to make best use of the available budgets to maintain and invest in the highway and transport network to meet Council objectives.

8.3 Policy

- 8.3.1 National and local policy context is covered in section 5.

8.4 Equality

- 8.4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken for the delivery of schemes as part of the process to design and deliver them in line with the Council's current policy and practise and takes account of the needs of all residents and users of the public highway.

8.5 Human Resources

- 8.5.1 There are no Human Resource implications

8.6 Risk Management

- 8.6.1 The revenue and capital programmes should be treated as indicative as they are always subject to change because of unknown events such as extreme weather and flooding that must be responded to and recovered from in year. For example, the 2019 floods resulted in £2.5m of funding being reallocated and many programmes were impacted as a result. Such budget adjustments need to be made immediately however, the work and programme consequences would be reported at the next available committee meeting.
- 8.6.2 The highway network is the Council's largest asset. As such it represents a very large financial and reputational risk if it is not maintained and operated in line with engineering best practice.
- 8.6.3 The provision of day to day highway service and delivery of highway and transport projects has inherent risks, and these will vary for each scheme. The project team for the schemes deliver it in full compliance with the Construction Design Management (CDM) 2015 Regulations. These seek to address and minimise risk from the early stage of design through to completion of construction on site and subsequent whole life maintenance requirements.
- 8.6.4 The provision of the highway service and delivery of highway and transport schemes requires good project management which includes the development of a Contract wide and scheme specific risk registers. These are monitored and updated as risks are identified and mitigated to minimise their impact on the safe and efficient delivery of services and schemes. All risks have assigned owners who are responsible for mitigating and managing them.

8.7 Rural Communities

- 8.7.1 The Programme is designed to provide a consistent level of routine and reactive highway service boroughwide and prioritises capital investment in highway maintenance and transport in line with the asset management strategy and Local Transport Plan for the benefit of all residents.

8.8 Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 8.8.1 There are no direct implications for children and young people.

8.9 Public Health

- 8.9.1 Providing a safe highway network that promotes active travel is a key aim of the Council. Road safety activities that reduce traffic speed and volume can prevent injuries as well as a wider impact on health by encouraging active travel.
- 8.9.2 Investment in the highway asset to maintain condition, improve access and invest in active travel and public transport helps encourage

healthier lifestyles and support modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

- 8.9.3 There is a strong evidence base to support improved wellbeing, and physical health through increased physical activity via improved access to green open spaces. The annual work programme helps deliver the council's Local Transport Plan strategy objectives which support the maintenance and improvement of the Public Rights of Way network and facilitate Countryside Access Improvements where appropriate.
- 8.9.4 Targeted developments in areas with higher levels of deprivation also aim to reduce health inequalities. For example, improved transport networks, and sustainable travel impacts on ability to access employment, education, training, increased social connectivity and reducing social isolation, supporting the wider determinants of health.
- 8.9.5 The annual highway capital programme includes funding for works that can help to improve air quality and therefore associated respiratory health improvements.
- 8.9.6 All of the services and works described within this report are delivered through the council's Highway Service Contract with integrated service provider Ringway Jacobs. This contract includes several Social Value outcomes which impact on the wider determinants of health and aim to reduce health inequalities.

8.10 Climate Change

- 8.10.1 The highway service is playing its part in working to help deliver the Council's net zero carbon by 2025. It's key contribution to the work of the Council's Carbon group is twofold. The first is through the fleet implementation plan which is working with key services to introduce low carbon vehicles to replace traditional diesel or petrol powered, cars, vans and HGVs where practicable. The highway service has introduced small electric vans and consideration is being given to this for other vehicles within the fleet. To support this move, electric charging points have been installed in the highway depots. Where diesel/petrol vehicles are still necessary those operated are to the latest environmental standards. The second is the investment into converting all lit highway signs and bollards to low (LED) or no energy (solar) power. The two year programme is underway and due for completion in March 2023.
- 8.10.2 Low carbon considerations are a high priority when planning programmes of work to maintain/improve highway assets. Where possible, materials and products with lower carbon footprint are selected, electric plant and equipment used, and recycling maximised on each site. Collaboration across teams and other services is part of the planning to make best use of a site and resources.

- 8.10.3 Good management of works on the highway through the Council's permit system also plays a key role as it coordinates the requirements of developers, utilities and the council's highway service for works on the highway. This reduces the impact to traffic travelling on the highway, as it keeps congestion down and minimises associated pollution.
- 8.10.4 Road safety enhancements help reduce the number of road traffic collisions and minimise disruption and congestion on the highway associated with such events. Road safety improvements can also encourage drivers to travel at lower and more appropriate speeds for the roads and conditions which can contribute to a reduction in vehicle emissions.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Paul Davies, Contract Operations Manager Paul.davies@cheshireeast.gov.uk 07748 650204
Appendices:	
Background Papers:	Highways and Transport 2022-23 Programme Preparation paper presented to the Highways and Transport Committee on 16 November 2021

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Highways and Transport Committee Work Programme

Ref No	Committee Date	Report title	Purpose of Report	Report Author/ Senior Officer	Consultation and Engagement Process and Timeline	Equality Impact Assessment Required and Published (Y/N)	Part of Budget and Policy Framework (Y/N)	Corporate Plan Priority	Exempt Item and Paragraph Number (Y/N)
HT/41/22-23	16 June 2022	DfT Active Travel Social Prescribing Grant	To approve acceptance of £619,500 from DfT for implementation of an Active Travel Social Prescribing Project in Crewe.	Richard Hibbert/Guy Kilminster/John David	tbc	N	N	A Council which empowers and cares about people/ A thriving and sustainable place	N
HT47/22-23	16 June 2022	Highways & Transport budgets 2022/23	To note allocated budgets for 2022/23 in line with the approved MTFS.	Alex Thompson	N	N	Y	An open and enabling organisation	N
HT52/22-23	16 June 2022	Enhanced Partnership for Buses	To update on DfT's response to the proposals for an Enhanced Partnership Agreement relating to local buses services.	Richard Hibbert/John David	Y	N	Y	A thriving and sustainable place	N

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Highways and Transport Committee Work Programme

HT/56/22-23	21 July 2022	Winter Service End of Season Review	A review of the 2021/22 Highway Winter Service activities and if required any proposed amendments.	Chris Hindle	tbc	Y	tbc	A thriving and sustainable place	N
HT57/22/23	21 July 2022	Greenway Crossing of the River Dane	To approve the preferred solution for the Greenway crossing of the River Dane, Congleton and agree the development of the scheme through the SCAPE framework.	Chris Hindle / Paul Griffiths	N	Y		A thriving and sustainable Place	N

Highways and Transport Committee Work Programme

HT/26/21-22	22 September 2022	Flowerpot Junction Improvement Scheme	<p>Authorise to make Compulsory Purchase Orders and Side Roads Orders for the delivery of the Flowerpot Junction Improvement Scheme.</p> <p>Approve the forward funding of the additional developer contributions in accordance with the capital programme.</p>	Chris Hindle/ John David	Y	Y	Y	A thriving and sustainable Place	Y Part confidential
HT/42/22-23	22 September 2022	Review of Ward Member Budget scheme	To review the effectiveness of the new ward member budget scheme.	Tom Shuttleworth, Paul Davies Matt Davenhill	N/A	N	tbc	A thriving and sustainable Place	N

Highways and Transport Committee Work Programme

HT48/22-22	22 September 2022	First Financial Review of 2022/23	To receive an update on the financial position for 2022/23 To note or approve virements and supplementary estimates as required.	Alex Thompson	N	N	Y	An open and enabling organisation	N
HT49/22-23	24 Nov 2022	Second Financial Review of 2022/23	To receive an update on the financial position for 2022/23 To note or approve virements and supplementary estimates as required.	Alex Thompson	N	N	Y	An open and enabling organisation	N
HT50/22/23	26 Jan 2023	MTFS Budget Consultation	Respond to Budget consultation (Highways & Transport)	Alex Thompson	Y	Y	Y	An open and enabling organisation	N

Highways and Transport Committee Work Programme

HT51/22-23	2 March 2023	Third Financial Review of 2022/23	To receive an update on the financial position for 2022/23 To note or approve virements and supplementary estimates as required.	Alex Thompson	N	N	Y	An open and enabling organisatio n	N
HT/23/22- 23	TBC	Pavement Parking Policy Update	To approve the proposed pavement parking policy for the borough.	Richard Hibbert/John David	tbc	tbc	Y	A thriving and sustainable Place	N

Highways and Transport Committee Work Programme

HT/15/21-22	TBC	HS2 Programme Update	To seek approval for the Local Transport Authority bid for Levelling Up Funding and the preferred solution for the Crewe Hub Project and provide any further updates on the HS2 programme including Phases 2a and 2b line of routes and Crewe Hub station.	Hayley Kirkham/ John David	tbc	tbc	Y	A thriving and sustainable Place	N
HT/43/22-23	TBC	Speed Management Strategy	To approve the Speed management strategy following consultation period.	Matt Davenport / Tom Shuttleworth	Complete	Y	N	A thriving and sustainable Place	N
HT/44/22-23	TBC	Middlewich Eastern Bypass Full Business Case Approval	To approve the full business for the scheme for submission to DfT	Neil Grundy	N/A	TBC	N	A thriving and sustainable Place	N

Highways and Transport Committee Work Programme

HT/45/22-23	TBC	A500 Full Business Case Approval	To approve the full business for the scheme for submission to DfT	Simon Kerr	N/A	TBC	N	A thriving and sustainable Place	N
HT/46/22-23	TBC	Highways and Transport 2022/23 Programme	To note the programme of activities for Highways and Transport services in the forthcoming year.	John David	tbc	tbc	Y	A thriving and sustainable Place	N
HT/53/22-23	TBC	Idling Vehicle Engines	Officers to undertake a feasibility study in relation to whether the Council should adopt powers that would allow Civil Enforcement action on engine idling.	Richard Hibbert/John David	tbc	tbc	tbc	A thriving and sustainable Place	N

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CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Public Rights of Way Sub Committee**
held on Monday, 14th March, 2022 in the Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor L Crane (Chair)
Councillor S Edgar (Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Akers Smith, H Faddes, L Gilbert, R Moreton and D Stockton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Genni Butler, Acting Public Rights of Way Manager
Vicky Fox, Planning and Highways Lawyer
Clare Hibbert, Definitive Map Officer
Andrew Poynton, Planning and Highways Lawyer
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

21 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

22 WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 - PART III, SECTION 53. APPLICATION NO. CN/7/27: APPLICATION FOR THE UPGRADING OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO.15 PECKFORTON TO A RESTRICTED BYWAY.

The Committee considered a report which detailed the investigation to amend the Definitive Map and Statement to upgrade public footpath Peckforton no.15 to a Restricted Byway.

Under Section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Council had a duty to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under

continuous review and make such modifications to the Map and Statement as appear requisite in consequence of the occurrence of certain events:-

One such event under section 53(3)(c)(ii) was where

“(c) the discovery by the authority of evidence which (when considered with all other relevant evidence available to them) shows:-

- (ii) that a highway shown in the map and statement as a highway of a particular description ought to be there shown as a highway of a different description;
The evidence can consist of documentary/historical evidence or user evidence or a mixture of both. All the evidence must be evaluated and weighed, and a conclusion reached whether, on the ‘balance of probabilities’ the rights subsist. Any other issues, such as safety, security, suitability, desirability or the effects on property or the environment, are not relevant to the decision.

Where the evidence in support of the application is user evidence, section 31(1) of the Highways Act 1980 applies. This states; -

“Where a way.....has been actually enjoyed by the public as of right and without interruption for a full period of twenty years, the way is deemed to have been dedicated as a highway unless there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention during that period to dedicate it.”

This requires that the public must have used the way without interruption and as of right; that is without force, secrecy or permission. Section 31(2) states that “the 20 years is to be calculated retrospectively from the date when the right of the public to use the way is brought into question”.

Documentary evidence included County Maps 18th/19th Century, Tollemache Estate Map c.1831, Title Records, Quarter Sessions, Ordnance Survey Records, Bartholomew’s Half Inch to a Mile, Pre Definitive Map Records, Definitive Map Process – National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Land Registry Information and photographs submitted by witnesses.

It was noted that from the application submitted in January 2012 the user evidence forms demonstrated that the dominant users were considered to be cyclists, there had been no equestrian evidence put forward. There had been no direct challenge to cyclists who had used the route until notices advertising a permissive bridleway agreement in 2021 stated ‘no cyclists’.

The affected landowners, Ward Councillor, Parish Council, users groups, statutory undertakers, landowners and agent had been consulted and no objections to the application had been received.

Mr Matthews attended the meeting and spoke and answered questions in respect of access and vehicular use along the proposed route.

The Committee considered the user evidence submitted and the Definitive Map Officer's conclusion. It was considered that the requirements of Section 53(3)(c)(ii) had been met in relation to restricted byway rights and that the Definitive Map and Statement should be modified to show Public Footpath no.15, Peckforton as a Restricted Byway.

The Committee unanimously

RESOLVED: That

- (1) An Order be made under Section 53(3)(c)(ii) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to modify the Definitive Map and Statement by upgrading public footpath Peckforton no.15 to a restricted byway as shown on Plan No. WCA/023;
- (2) Public notice of the making of the Order be given and, in the event of there being no objections within the specified period, or any objections received being withdrawn, the Order be confirmed in exercise of the power conferred on the Council by the said Act;
- (3) In the event of objections to the Order being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry.

23 INFORMATIVE REPORT - HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 S119 PUBLIC PATH DIVERSION ORDER, MOBBERLEY FOOTPATH NO. 46 (PART)

The Committee received an information report which detailed the minor changes to the alignment of a proposed footpath diversion previously approved by the Committee on 12 March 2018. The resultant Order made was to divert part of Mobberley Public Footpath No.46 under section 119 of the Highways Act 1980.

Following an inspection which found that the path installed did not exactly match the route shown on the Order plan a revised diversion route was proposed. The revised diversion would follow a similar trajectory a little over 30 metres away from the route on the previous Order plan and with a width of 2.5 metres. It was noted that the diversion route had been installed and in use on the ground for a number of years and no issues had been raised.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

24 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2022-23

The Committee received a report which detailed the proposed fees and charges for 2022-23 for charged-for services provided by the Public Rights of Way team.

The annual review of fees and charges had been conducted as part of the budget setting process of the Council. The charges for 2022-23 had been increased by inflation and rounded up.

It was noted that the following amendments had been made:

- The previous fee for a referral of a case to the Planning Inspectorate in relation to objections to Public Path Orders had been withdrawn following updated legal advice.
- The discretionary zero cost for charitable organisations who sought temporary closures of Public Rights of Way would be withdrawn, in order to achieve full cost recovery.

The Sub-Committee advised that it would be helpful to signpost charitable organisations to the Communities Team following the withdrawal of the discretionary zero cost, to check whether they would be eligible for any grants.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 2.40 pm

Councillor L Crane (Chair)