

WEST BERKSHIRE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN AND SCHEME (EP Plan and EP Scheme)



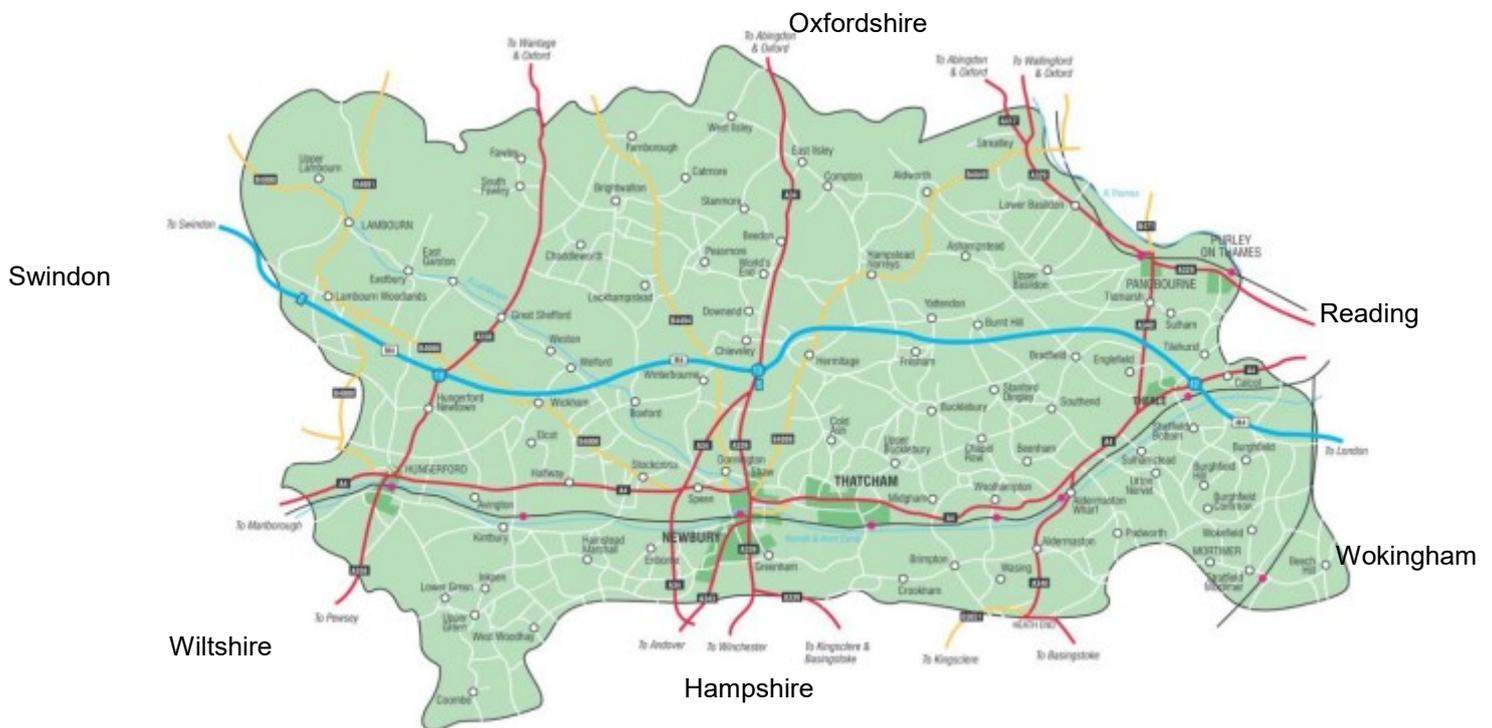
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Part A: Enhanced Partnership Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Berkshire Council published its first [Bus Services Improvement Plan \(BSIP\)](#) in October 2021, in accordance with the National Bus Strategy [Bus Back Better](#). The BSIP sets out the ambitious plans of the Council and bus operators to improve bus operation in the district, and increase bus patronage.
- 1.2 This West Berkshire Enhanced Partnership (EP) is made in accordance with section 138G (1) of the Transport Act 2000. An EP Plan [Plan] and EP Scheme [Scheme] will cover all relevant local bus operations in West Berkshire. A Plan and a Scheme are co-dependent, although additional Schemes could be introduced.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Plan is to implement the improvements detailed in the BSIP via the Scheme(s). It will place binding commitments on both the Council and bus operators in West Berkshire. Enforcement action can be taken by the Traffic Commissioner if any bus operator fails to abide by its commitments. Under section 138C (11) of the Transport Act 2000, this excludes operation of services using section 22 permits, although such operations are encouraged to comply with the requirements as far as possible.
- 1.4 Like the BSIP, the Plan, and the initial Scheme, covers the whole of the West Berkshire District Council area.



- 1.5 The following tables outline the BSIP objectives, how the EP seeks to implement these, and the anticipated benefits. They take account of the current state of the network, other factors that affect the market, passenger views, and the need to rebuild following the pandemic. The interventions required, and the outcomes ultimately delivered will be hugely dependent upon additional external funding, such as the £3 billion Government funding to support the National Bus Strategy. Targets that will measure the Scheme, are included in the BSIP.

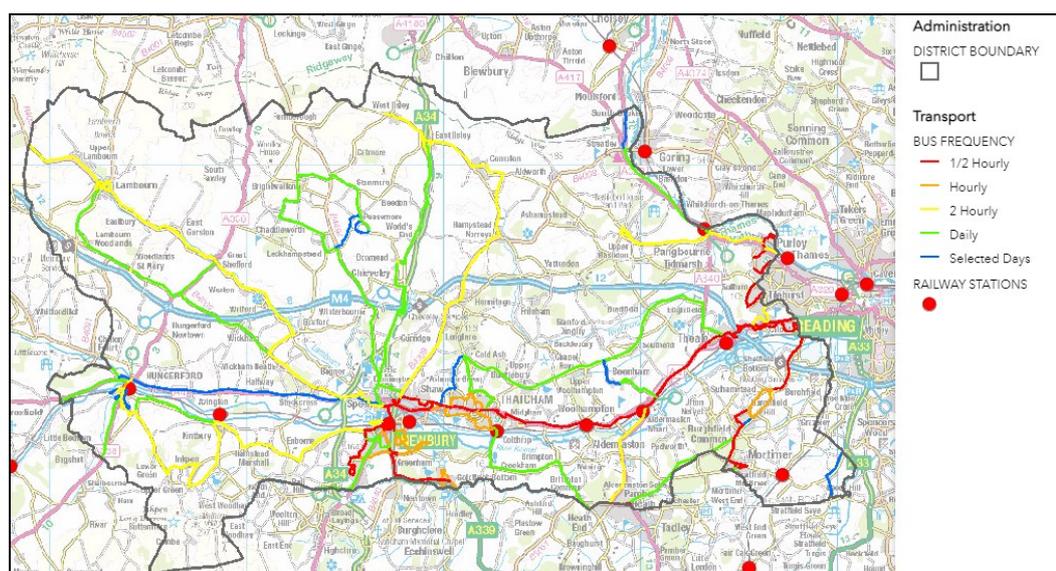
BSIP Objectives	EP Approach
1. Improved bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Base bus network to be October 2021 position. ➤ Improve service frequencies and journey times. ➤ Additional evening and weekend services. ➤ Examine new links, including Demand-Responsive solutions. ➤ Examine facilities that can be implemented.
2. Buses prioritised in traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain current bus gates. ➤ Mitigate the impact of roadworks and road closures. ➤ Address bottlenecks impacting services. ➤ Identify the opportunity for bus priority measures.
3. Passenger comfort and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Buses have working next-stop audio-visual announcements, on-board CCTV, Wi-Fi and USB charging. ➤ Level boarding possible at all urban stops, and the most well-used rural stops. ➤ Pursue provision of bus shelters at more locations, subject to adoption by Town and Parish Councils. ➤ Continue to provide a bus station in Newbury, and seek improvements to passenger facilities. ➤ Increase the number of bus stops with lighting, especially in remote areas.
4. Affordability of bus travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tap-on, tap-off technology used for multi-operator fare-capping. ➤ Multi-operator ticketing covers all services in any location. ➤ Comprehensive range of period tickets. ➤ Fares for contracted services reviewed, and zonal fares introduced. ➤ The cost and definition of young people's travel harmonised across services. ➤ Continued acceptance of cash, whilst utilising new payments methods.

BSIP Objectives	EP Approach
5. Improved image of bus travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Simple passenger charter covering all bus services. ➤ Whilst allowing individual identities, promote an overarching bus branding. ➤ Easily accessible bus information through a comprehensive Travel Guide, accurate at stop timetables, and enhanced Real Time Information. ➤ Marketing to increase use, including encouraging modal shift from the car. ➤ West Berkshire towns, villages and countryside promoted as accessible by bus.
6. Integration with other modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better connectivity between bus and rail. ➤ Newbury bus station incorporates coach bays, and nearby bicycle racks and taxi ranks. ➤ Community transport and not-for-profit solutions seen as integral to the transport network. ➤ Car travel accepted for some journeys, with car clubs and parking used to complement rather than compete with public transport.
7. Environmental improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Vehicles operate with improved environmental efficiency. ➤ Zero-emission technology promoted and supported for buses

BSIP Objective	Improvements sought through EP Scheme					
	Journey Time	Reliability	Passenger Growth	Customer Satisfaction	Environmental Improvements	Access to Services
1. Improved bus services	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2. Buses prioritised in traffic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3. Passenger comfort and safety			✓	✓		✓
4. Affordability of bus travel	(✓)	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Improved image of bus travel			✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Integration with other modes			✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Environmental improvements			(✓)	(✓)	✓	

2. Network overview

- 2.1 Bus services in West Berkshire are currently operated by four companies (or their subsidiaries) and four section 22 community bus permit providers.
- 2.2 Services operated without any direct subsidy (with the exception of temporary grants to offset the effects of the pandemic) make up around 36% of the bus routes, 78% of bus journeys, over 85% of passenger trips, and over 80% of bus mileage. In addition to these services there are a few registered commercial local school services, predominantly in the Eastern Area. Vodafone also has buses for the use of its employees, provided by Reading Buses, but which are not open to the general public.
- 2.3 All Reading Buses services operate from early morning to late evening, and seven days each week, with service 26 operating 24-hours. These, together with Stagecoach's The Link from Newbury to Basingstoke, form the commercial backbone in West Berkshire thanks to the more densely populated areas which they serve. The Jet Black 1 operates later than other (non-Reading Buses) services, but only throughout the evening between Theale and Reading. Patronage on Reading Buses' services had increased by almost 40% prior to the pandemic.
- 2.4 Consideration was being given to the additional local services between Newbury and Thatcham becoming supported services prior to the pandemic, despite the best efforts of Reading Buses and Newbury & District to develop the 1a and 1c as commercial operations to supplement the core Jet Black 1 service. The reasons for this are believed to be manifold - the relatively short distances involved (Thatcham is only 3 miles from Newbury), the lack of bus priority and heavy car dominance between the towns, the cost of using the bus and the relatively low frequencies of the 1a and 1c.
- 2.5 With the exception of Reading Buses, all services operate, at best, Mondays to Saturdays between 7am and 7pm. Services in the Newbury / Thatcham area tend to operate hourly, with those extending into the North Wessex Downs being two-hourly at best, and largely timed around school movements. This can be seen on the Council's [online map](#).



- 2.6 Some West Berkshire villages no longer have any bus or rail service, following gradual decline over the last few decades. These villages include Aldworth, Ashampstead, Englefield, Fawley, Frilsham, Stanford Dingley, Tidmarsh, Winterbourne and Yattendon,

all within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); and Padworth, Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet in the East Kennet Valley. There is no bus service to Mortimer Station.

- 2.7 The 75 is the only demand responsive service in the district, operating on Fridays. West Berkshire Council have previously subsidised demand-responsive transport (DRT), being an early-adopter in 2000. However ambitions have outweighed results, and the services have ceased in the intervening years. We are keen to explore this type of solution further with advances in technology and higher expectations of instant solutions in recent years. Bids for the DfT's Rural Mobility Fund, for DRT serving the lost links mentioned in the previous paragraph, were unsuccessful in 2020.
- 2.8 With limited resources, many bus services are inter-worked with the same vehicles, thus potentially building delays throughout the day. Services based in Newbury have been retimed from September 2021 to try and address this.
- 2.9 On schooldays most morning peak buses continue through Newbury to serve St Bartholomew's and Park House secondary schools, and Newbury College two miles south of the centre. This does require a number of codes and footnotes in timetables which we strive to present as clearly as possible. This is difficult because each service operates a slightly different route to reduce congestion outside each of the educational establishments.
- 2.10 Many services operate into neighbouring local authority areas of Oxfordshire, Reading, Wokingham, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Swindon. Most operate as a result of subsidies paid by those local authorities. Services into Reading tend to be commercial. Requirements of the initial Scheme will not impose onerous requirements on bus services whose impact in West Berkshire is relatively minor unless this accords with neighbouring authority ambitions.
- 2.11 In recent years, and in particular since 2016, the Council has found that it has had to start operating a number of services itself using accessible minibuses, as the cost of provision from bus operators would have meant that these services were unaffordable.

3. Factors affecting the local bus market

The area

- 3.1 West Berkshire is very much characterised by beautiful countryside and villages, with 74% of the district falling within the North Wessex Downs AONB. This is reflected in the dispersed and low density population pattern in West Berkshire.
- 3.2 The West Berkshire population was estimated at 158,500 in 2020. ONS figures suggest that almost 31% of the population is over 55, including 17% at pensionable age, with this number rising. 43% live in Newbury and Thatcham; 18% in the Eastern Area; and 7.5% in Burghfield and Mortimer. The population density is approximately two people per hectare.
- 3.3 High levels of personal wealth, coupled with high levels of car ownership and car use overall exacerbate the difficulties in sustaining local bus services, particularly in rural areas. Notwithstanding the District's general prosperity, there are a number of small pockets of deprivation. [Census](#) data highlights that whilst only 12% of households in West Berkshire have no access to a car, compared to the national average of 26%, this rises in some parts of Newbury / Thatcham to more than 30%.

- 3.4 The pandemic has established the widespread practice of working from home for those who are able to do so, having an adverse effect on passenger numbers at peak times. A high percentage of the workforce in West Berkshire are employed in the Information and Communication sector, including at Vodafone in Newbury, and these workers seem readily able to work from home. Therefore, together with a rising population age, and homes spread widely across the district, commercial bus operation is difficult.
- 3.5 With retail, employment and education focussed predominantly in the urban areas, and larger rural settlements, bus services tend to radiate from either Newbury or Reading. Positive retail and residential planning have contributed towards Newbury, the administrative and main retail town in the district, remaining relatively robust in recent years. The Park Way retail and residential development opened towards the end of 2011 in the town centre, although anchor stores John Lewis and Debenhams have recently closed. Similarly the Market Street 'urban village' development to the south of the Town Centre is well under way. A [Newbury Town Centre Masterplan](#) has also been commissioned and consulted on. However, the rise in online and telephone shopping has also reduced travel demand.

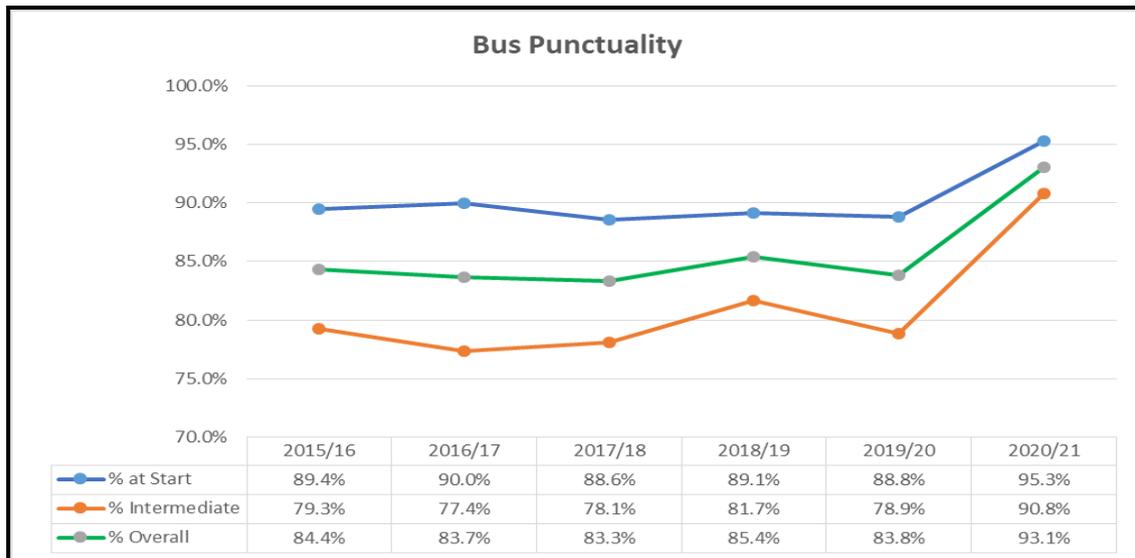
Congestion

- 3.6 The Council keeps a log of congestion hotspots which have a disproportionate effect on bus services which are discussed regularly both internally and with bus operators. Some of these can be predictable, and particularly affect the peaks. Others are intermittent, for example caused by inconsiderate parking or issues on the M4 motorway. The nature of the road network in West Berkshire can make it difficult to introduce solutions that promote reliable bus services without causing worse problems elsewhere. A list of the current hotspots is shown in the BSIP.
- 3.7 Bus priority measures are limited in West Berkshire, and have historically been managed with bus gates, located at four sites, enabling more direct routes for bus services, and preventing through car traffic.



Bus gate at Park Way Bridge, Newbury © Google

- 3.8 Bus punctuality in West Berkshire since 2015 has been better than average when compared to other non-metropolitan areas in England over recent years. It has remained fairly consistent at around 83% to 84% until rising during the pandemic as a result of less traffic and fewer passengers.



Key: % shown are classed as 'On time', defined as between 1 minute early and 5 minutes 59 seconds late).

Air Quality and Climate Change

3.9 There are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in West Berkshire. Both are due to road traffic and exceed the Annual Mean NO₂ objective. Newbury AQMA also exceeds the one-hour NO₂ objective:

- A339/A343 (“Burger King”) Roundabout and the adjoining Greenham Road in Newbury
- A4 (Chapel Street) in Thatcham

3.10 West Berkshire’s 2020 [Air Quality Annual Status Report](#) recognises key elements in the LTP that can contribute towards improving air quality in the district by making the bus more attractive and reducing car usage. These are more frequent and reliable bus services with modern low or zero emission buses. In July 2019, the Council unanimously declared a climate emergency and sought to reach a net carbon neutral position by 2030. In particular, the Council acknowledged the importance of sustainable transport.

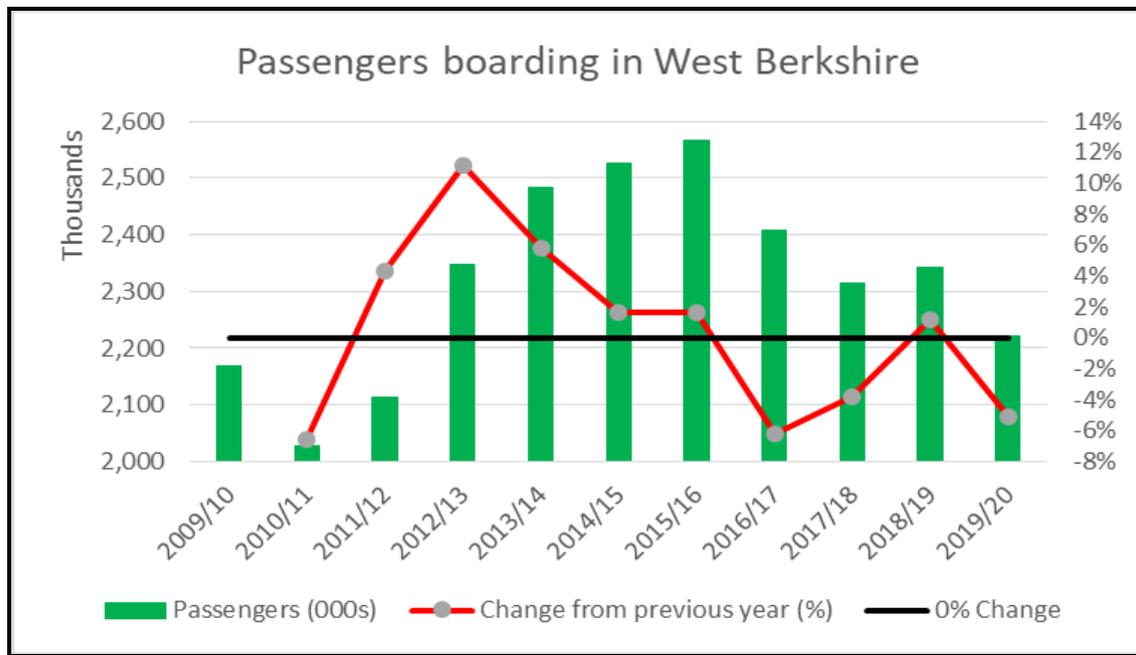
Car parking provision

3.11 The Council is responsible for 2,737 spaces in 24 off-street car parks (in Newbury, Thatcham, Hungerford, Lambourn, Theale and Pangbourne), and 307 spaces in 11 on-street parking areas (in Newbury, Thatcham and Hungerford). It also manages 16 resident parking zones covering 98 roads. There is limited other paid-for parking with the main exception being the 550 space Parkway Shopping Centre car park in Newbury. Free parking is available at supermarkets in Newbury, Thatcham, Hungerford and Calcot, and other out-of-town retail areas including Newbury Retail Park and IKEA in Calcot. Parking charges vary to suit the purpose at each car park.

3.12 Parking charges, similar to bus fares, have remained at the same rates for a few years. Some short-term parking is available and cheaper than the bus, however generally it is priced more expensively than a single person’s return bus fare. A new Parking Strategy will consider the balance between the need for parking and the implications for developing bus travel in the district.

4. Passenger views

4.1 The number of passengers boarding local bus services is relatively positive, with drops in recent years attributable to reductions in bus services, and most recently the pandemic. Even so, the number of trips in 2019/20 was still almost 10% higher than in 2010/11, compared to a national drop of [12% \(or 16% outside London\)](#). Passenger numbers dropped to 827,782 in 2020/21, some 60% below the previous year (not shown in the graph).



4.2 In August 2021, the Council conducted a [survey](#) to identify current satisfaction with a range of issues, as well as gain insight into what people would like in order to use bus services, or use them more often. 712 submissions were validated as full responses, far exceeding those from previous consultations.

4.3 A third of respondents use the bus at least weekly, although 24% never use them, with 45% of users travelling at least as often as, or more so than, before the pandemic, although this is not borne out by operator data. Two thirds of users catch the bus in the morning, dropping to 40% in the afternoons. A further 36% travel at differing times. The bus is most used for shopping (71%), appointments (54%), seeing friends (49%) and days out (39%). The relatively low figures for work (21%) and education (9%) are likely caused by changing working habits during the pandemic, and the very low response rate amongst under 18s (1.5%).

4.4 One question asked why people do not use the bus, or do not use it more regularly, the highest results were:

- 68% - buses are not frequent enough / do not run when I need them
- 60% - easier / more convenient by car
- 48% - buses do not go (directly) where they want to go
- 43% - quicker by car
- 25% - journeys take too long by bus

4.5 Two questions asked what would encourage more use, and any suggestions for improvements. Unsurprisingly, the same issues were common to both. The most

popular call for a new route was between Lambourn and Hungerford, which stopped in 2016.

Issue identified	Encourage More Use	Suggested Improvements
More frequent services	47%	-
More regular service	-	32%
Being on a bus route	18%	-
More destinations	16%	22%
Cheaper services	11%	5%
Later / evening buses	8%	8%
Know the times of buses	7%	4%
Better bus / rail connections	-	4%
Weekend services	4%	4%
Pandemic over	4%	-
More direct routes	4%	4%

- 4.6 A surprising number of current users wanted buses to rail stations for onward travel (61%), with favoured stations being Newbury (56%), Hungerford (22%), Thatcham (21%), Theale (16%), and Mortimer (11%).
- 4.7 On the subject of a day ticket valid on all buses, 62% thought this would be a good idea. Although most did not give an opinion on the cost of such a ticket, 17% did not want to pay more than £4, with a further 14% willing to pay up to £7, and 3% believing it should cost even more.
- 4.8 A further question, aimed specifically at current bus users, asked about satisfaction with a range of factors. The net satisfaction ranged from 72% positive for drivers' customer care skills, to 18% negative for current bus timetables, although this was the only factor that had a negative net satisfaction.

Attribute of Current Bus Services	Net Satisfaction
Drivers' customer care skills	72.2
Cleanliness of the buses	65.9
Comfort on the buses	60.1
Time keeping / reliability of the buses	58.3
Time on bus to complete journey	53.0
In journey information (e.g. next stop announcements)	44.2
Choice of ways to buy ticket	43.7
Facilities at your usual bus stops	34.1
Provision of bus information (printed / online / at stop / apps)	32.9
Choice of ticket types available	32.8
Environmental friendliness of the buses (fuel type)	31.3
Cost of bus fare	24.7
Current bus routes	21.8
Response to road closures / works	20.6
Current bus timetables (times / days of operation / frequency)	-18.0

Note: Net satisfaction is the difference between those that were satisfied or very satisfied, and those that were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

- 4.9 From this, it is clear that the current times of buses, including how often they run, is the biggest issue. This is not unexpected due to the rural nature of the district and its low population densities, especially outside of the towns.
- 4.10 One of the misgivings we have with the survey results, is that we had a poor response rate from younger people. Those aged up to 24 only accounted for 4.1% of the

responses, and those aged 25 to 34, a further 5.4%. In contrast, those aged 66 and over made up over 43% of the responses. A couple of positives though, is that two-thirds of respondents would recommend bus use, and 20% would like to join a user group focussing on bus travel.

- 4.11 Each year, the Council will consult on its BSIP. It will use this consultation to assess how well users believe the Plan and Scheme(s) are working. This consultation is wider than just users, and can be responded to by any interested party. From the initial BSIP survey, 128 individuals agreed that they would like to join a user group focusing on bus travel and public transport, and their opinions will be canvassed directly.

5. **Strategic Context**

- 5.1 The [Council Strategy](#) contributes towards the [West Berkshire Vision 2036](#), setting out the Council's priorities for improvement. It contains six priorities, all of which benefit from effective public transport. Supporting this Strategy are the [Local Transport Plan](#) (LTP), which covers the period to 2026; and the [Environment Strategy](#), introduced in 2020, and which runs until 2030.

- 5.2 In 2014, a [Passenger Transport Strategy](#) was produced as part of the LTP, with three aims:

- To increase the market share for public transport services by making those services a more attractive choice for existing and potential customers;
- To build upon prior initiatives and tally with future development proposals, so as to better integrate the provision of passenger transport services, and;
- To help achieve an accessible and safe public transport network.

- 5.3 The Environment Strategy builds on the [UK's 2050 net zero target for greenhouse gas emissions](#), and the Council's decision to declare a Climate emergency in July 2019. It commits the Council to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030. It also supports the national [Transport Decarbonisation](#) plan.

- 5.4 This BSIP and EP support all of these documents, and follow from the [National Bus Strategy](#), which was launched in March 2021. It is also complementary to other Council strategies, including the [Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan](#), the [Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy](#), and the AQMAs.

6. **Review and governance**

EP Plan and Scheme length, review and revocation

- 6.1 The Plan and Scheme will commence on 1 April 2022 and have no end date. The Plan will be reviewed at least every five years. Following any change made to the Plan as a result of any variation, the next review may take place up to five years after such change. The Scheme(s) will be reviewed at least every three years. Following any change made to a Scheme, the next review may take place up to three years after such change.
- 6.2 A Scheme can only exist if a Plan is in place. If, for any reason, the Plan is revoked, it would automatically mean that the Scheme would cease. Equally, if all Schemes ceased, the Plan would be revoked.

- 6.3 If for some reason it becomes necessary for the Plan or a Scheme to be revoked, the same process will be used as for a variation to a Plan under paragraph 6.16. If at any point in the future the Plan area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this Plan will cease to apply from the commencement date of the Franchising Scheme.

Governance

- 6.4 An Enhanced Partnership Forum [Forum] will be used to oversee and direct the work of the Plan, Scheme(s), and the BSIP. It will be chaired by the Council's manager for transport or delegate, and will consist of officers from the Council, bus operators, representatives of users and non-users, and neighbouring local authorities. The number of attendees may be capped if the meetings become unwieldy. It will meet approximately every three to four months throughout the year. Meetings may be in person or using video technology.

Voting

- 6.5 Operators of bus services that are not exempt will be the only parties able to vote on decisions. They will have five votes.
- 6.6 Based on patronage in the preceding quarter prior to the meeting:
- 6.6.1 One vote will be allocated for any operator with at least 30% of the total patronage;
 - 6.6.2 If any operator has at least 50% of the total patronage, they will be allocated an additional vote.
 - 6.6.3 If patronage for the preceding quarter is deemed not sufficiently complete by the Forum Chair, votes will be based upon the previous quarter for which it is complete.
- 6.7 Any remaining votes should be allocated based upon agreement between the operators present, irrespective of previous patronage.
- 6.8 If there is more than one subsidiary of a parent company within the Enhanced Partnership Plan area, as defined by section 1159 of the Companies Act 2006, those subsidiaries and their parent company are treated as a single bus operator for voting purposes.
- 6.9 A quarter is defined as 1 January to 31 March, 1 April to 30 June, 1 July to 30 September, or 1 October to 31 December.
- 6.10 Voters at each meeting must be declared at the start of the meeting, or they will be allocated by the Forum Chair. Those not present will be unable to vote.

Variations to the EP Plan or EP Scheme(s)

- 6.11 Consideration will be given to potential variations to the Plan or any Scheme. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives of the Plan. Such requests can be made by any party, and should be submitted in the first instance via email to the Council at transport@westberks.gov.uk

and be titled Proposed Variations to the Enhanced Partnership Plan (or Scheme as appropriate). Requests will be circulated by the Council to the bus operators and considered at the next Enhanced Partnership Forum, providing that is at least 14 days after the request is submitted, to enable participants to consider the proposed variation in advance.

- 6.12 Voting on the proposal will take place in accordance with paragraphs 6.5 to 6.10.
- 6.13 Any variation rejected, other than on the grounds of paragraph 6.18, may be resubmitted. No rejected variation will be considered again until at least six months after the request is rejected.
- 6.14 All variation requests, and the decisions made will be published on the Council's dedicated webpage: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/enhancedpartnership>.

Changes to the EP Plan or creation of a new EP Scheme

- 6.15 The Plan may be changed, or a new Scheme created in the following circumstances:
 - 6.15.1 Following review of the Plan or Scheme in accordance with paragraph 6.1.
 - 6.15.2 Following consideration of a request to vary the Plan or create a new Scheme, which receives a unanimous vote at the Forum.
- 6.16 Any proposed change to the Plan or new Scheme will be subject to both the Council approval process, and to following the formal variation process under section 138K of the Transport Act 2000.

Changes to existing EP Scheme(s)

- 6.17 An existing Scheme may be varied in the following circumstances under section 138E of the Transport Act 2000:
 - 6.17.1 Following review of the Scheme in accordance with paragraph 6.1. This will trigger submission of a proposed variation.
 - 6.17.2 Following consideration of a request to vary the Scheme, which receives a unanimous vote at the Forum.
 - 6.17.3 In circumstances where the variation to the Scheme will not affect all operators, following a unanimous vote of all operators affected.
- 6.18 Any proposed change must meet the criteria set out in sections 138K (4) and 138K (5) of the Transport Act 2000.
- 6.19 If a unanimous vote under paragraphs 6.17.2 or 6.17.3 is received, the Scheme will be varied providing that there is no adverse impact on the Council, and with no mechanism for objections. If the Forum Chair deems that the variation could have an adverse impact on the Council, it will be subject to the Council approval process before introduction.

Competition Statement

- 6.20 West Berkshire Council has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of the Plan and Scheme, launched on 1 April 2022, on competition, for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. It believes it will not or is unlikely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition.
- 6.21 The implementation of a Plan and associated Scheme is aimed at delivering improvements to bus services for passengers in a deregulated environment. The EP will not impact on competition as operators remain free to amend and introduce new services in the area, provided that the standards that apply to operators are met. The Competition and Markets Authority has also been consulted on the proposals as required by section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.

Part B: Enhanced Partnership Scheme

7. Context

- 7.1 The Scheme has been jointly developed by West Berkshire Council and those operators that provide local bus services in the Scheme area. It sets out obligations and requirements on both the Local Authority and operators of local services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of the associated Plan.
- 7.2 The Scheme will support the improvement of local bus services operating in West Berkshire.

Exempted Services

- 7.3 All registered local bus services are included except as stated in paragraph 1.3, or exempted below.
- 7.4 The following services are exempt from all the requirements of the Scheme:
- Long-distance coach services that are required to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner because they have boarding and alighting stops that are less than 15 miles apart, but where the primary purpose of the service is not to meet local travel needs.
 - Services operated because of the historical interest of the vehicle.
 - Services which are defined as an excursion or tour under section 137 (1) of the Transport Act 1985.
- 7.5 The following services are exempt from some of the requirements of the Scheme:
- Services operated primarily for the purposes of travel to or from an educational establishment.
 - Services operated primarily for the purposes of travel to or from a sporting event.
 - Cross-boundary services where less than 10% of the registered mileage of journeys entering West Berkshire is within the area.

8. Facilities, Measures and Requirements

- 8.1 Facilities, measures and requirements are detailed in Annex A.
- 8.2 All obligations on the local authority with respect to facilities and measures apply to West Berkshire Council. The Council will liaise with Town and Parish Councils with regards to bus shelters as they are responsible for ownership and maintenance of these.
- 8.3 All obligations on local bus operators are detailed under Operator Standards of Service, and apply to any registered local bus service, provided that it is not exempted from obligations under the Plan or Scheme, unless otherwise stated in the list of requirements.

Definitions

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BODS	Bus Operator Data Service
BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Plan
Council	West Berkshire District Council
DfT	Department for Transport
DRT	Demand Responsive Transport
EP	Enhanced Partnership
Euro IV	}
Euro V	} European standards on vehicle emissions
Euro VI	}
Forum	EP Forum
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Plan	EP Plan
RTPI	Real Time Passenger Information
Scheme	EP Scheme
Section 22	The Transport Act 1985 allows not-for-profit organisations to operate without the need for a full public service vehicle operator's licence. They are not subject to many of the normal licensing or legislative requirements.

WEST BERKSHIRE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

ANNEX A – OBLIGATIONS ON COUNCIL AND BUS OPERATORS

All of the following apply to registered local bus services that are not excluded or exempt. If a registered local bus service is exempt from only parts of the scheme, those services are only included if specifically mentioned in the following tables.

OBJECTIVE	1. Improved bus services			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Existing services	Any local bus service operating will continue to operate at a similar frequency or better than that operated at the commencement of the Scheme subject to demand, and to commercial operation or sufficient funding being available.	From commencement of the Scheme for a period of at least 10 years.	Council funding for supported bus services will not be reduced in the absence of consultation. The Council will follow available procurement routes to maintain appropriate service provision, subject to sufficient funding being available.	From commencement of the Scheme for a period of at least 10 years.
Service frequencies	The Council will seek to facilitate enhanced service frequencies as set out in the current Bus Service Improvement Plan.	As soon as practicable subject to sufficient funding being available.	The Council will follow available procurement routes to improve service frequencies, including negotiation with bus operators regarding enhancements that can be operated commercially.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.
Hours of operation	The Council will seek to facilitate wider hours of operation as set out in the current Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.	The Council will follow available procurement routes to improve hours of operation, including negotiation with bus operators regarding enhancements that can be operated commercially.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.
New services	The Council will seek to facilitate new services as set out in the current Bus Service Improvement Plan, or where new developments occur.	Subject to sufficient funding being available, including developer contributions.	The Council will follow available procurement routes to introduce new services, including negotiation with bus operators regarding enhancements that can be operated commercially.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.

OBJECTIVE	1. Improved bus services			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
		Developer contributions are subject to arrangements on timescales outside of the Scheme.		
Demand-responsive transport	The Council will seek to facilitate demand-responsive services as set out in the current Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.	The Council will follow available procurement routes to introduce demand-responsive services, including negotiation with bus operators regarding enhancements that can be operated commercially.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE		TIMESCALE	
Services	Any commercial local bus service operating will continue to operate at the same frequency to that operated at the commencement of the Scheme, or can be amended if it will improve the overall bus offer, subject to the following proviso.		From commencement of the Scheme.	
	Commercial services or journeys can be reduced or withdrawn if the operator is able to demonstrate to the Council that (a) the need no longer exists; (b) it is no longer commercially viable; or (c) or for any other appropriate reason providing justification is given to the Council.		Three months' notice to be given to the Council to allow time for alternatives to be considered, and for publicity and marketing to be amended.	
	Operators will submit information to the Council on the total scheduled distance, in miles or kilometres, covered by each service within West Berkshire, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan. For any cross-boundary service, they will also provide the percentage of total distance that is within West Berkshire for qualifying journeys. Data will be provided for a specified period to be agreed with operators.		If section 6.16 is required to enable the Council to calculate qualifying objections.	
	Operators will submit information to the Council on how and when a local service is used by passengers for each service within West Berkshire, in a format specified by the Council, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan. For any cross-boundary service, they will also provide the percentages of the totals for passengers boarding within West Berkshire for qualifying journeys. Data will be provided for a calendar month specified by the Council.		Within one month of request. This will not be asked for more than twice during each April to March period.	

OBJECTIVE	1. Improved bus services	
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE	TIMESCALE
	Operators will submit monthly or four-weekly statistics to the Council regarding the total number of passengers boarding each service, with sufficient detail for annual and quarterly statistics to be calculated per service. This includes those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.	Before the next monthly / four-weekly period finishes.
	Any new registration, variation or cancellation of a registered local bus service, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan, will be submitted to the Council in advance of the proposed change.	In line with Traffic Commissioner timescales.
	Operators will submit all live data to BODS as required by the DfT, including those services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.	In accordance with DfT requirements.
	Operators will submit monthly or four-weekly statistics to the Council regarding % of journeys operated and their reliability, in line with former National Indicator 178a and current DfT statistics Table BUS0902, with sufficient detail for annual and quarterly statistics to be calculated.	Before the next monthly / four-weekly period finishes.
	Operators will submit information to the Council on the time taken for journeys, or parts of journeys, covered by each service within West Berkshire. For any cross-boundary service, they will also provide the percentage of total time taken that is within West Berkshire for qualifying journeys. Data will be provided for a calendar month specified by the Council.	Within one month of request. This will not be asked for more than twice during each April to March period.
Service frequencies	Operators will be proactive in looking to enhance frequencies of bus services operated. They will work with the Council to determine if this can be done commercially, or to determine what level of funding would be required to achieve this. If enhancements cannot be done commercially, enhancements will only be made if additional funding is available.	From commencement of the Scheme.
	Operators will work with the Council to ensure that all buses on each corridor are spaced evenly unless demand dictates otherwise.	Applies to any new or amended local bus service registration.
Demand-responsive services	Should the Council be in a position to procure or operate demand-responsive services, operators will ensure that connections are maintained at agreed interchange points subject to legal obligations on operators.	When demand-responsive services are available.

OBJECTIVE	2. Buses prioritised in traffic			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Bus gates	Newbury – Park Way Bridge, Wharf Road, over River Kennet.	Existing infrastructure which will not be removed whilst still required and not considered unsafe.	Maintenance, management and enforcement of the current measures, which are a combination of CCTV, rising bollards and “sump-busters”. The Council will consider extending use of discretionary powers granted in the Traffic Management Act 2004 to enforce these measures.	Existing. To be considered as part of Parking Strategy.
	Thatcham – Between Urquhart Road at Borderers Gardens and Braemore Close.			
	Calcot – Between Pollards Way at Ledbury Drive and The Chase at Calbourne Drive.			
	Calcot – Between Underwood Road and Carters Rise.			
	Calcot – Sainsbury’s, allowing buses to exit stop to gain access to Pincents Lane.			
	Further bus gates will be investigated, for example as part of new developments.			
Roadworks and road closures	Notification to the public on bus stop closures and service diversions where this affects subsidised services. Provision of temporary bus stops.	Existing.	Co-ordination of works (except for emergency closures) on the public highway to minimise disruption to all road users, including notification to bus operators.	Existing.
			Mitigate the impacts on bus services by seeking to recover any additional costs incurred.	
Bottlenecks on the network	Solutions will be implemented that reduce the impacts on bus services of congestion hotspots.	Subject to available funding, and approval and resources of the Council.	The Council maintains a list of congestion hotspots that impact on reliable bus operation. These are discussed regularly between Transport and Highways teams to identify resolution.	Existing. Subject to available funding.
			Some hotspots may require feasibility studies to identify suitable solutions.	

OBJECTIVE	2. Buses prioritised in traffic			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Bus priority	Bus priority measures identified in the Bus Service Improvement Plan will be implemented.	Subject to available funding, and approval and resources of the Council.	Bus priority measures are likely to require feasibility studies to identify suitable solutions.	Subject to available funding.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE			TIMESCALE
Roadworks and road closures	Operators will seek to mitigate the effects of roadworks and road closures on their commercial services, and services that are operated without direct subsidy from West Berkshire Council. This may include dealing with bus stop closures, providing temporary bus stops and diversions, subject to this not adversely impacting on the financial viability of the service. Advance notice of these measures must be relayed to passengers.			Existing.
Bottlenecks on the network	Operators will notify the Council regarding bottlenecks on the network, including where these would only impact those services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.			Existing.
Bus priority	Operators will notify the Council of potential locations for bus priority works, including where these would only impact those services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.			Existing.

OBJECTIVE	3. Passenger comfort and safety			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Boarding	Level boarding is already provided at many stops in West Berkshire. It will be expanded to more stops.	Existing infrastructure will not be removed whilst still required and not considered unsafe.	The Council maintains an asset register of facilities available at bus stops. Council funding for bus stop infrastructure will not be reduced until all suitable stops have level boarding.	Existing. From commencement of the Scheme for a period of at least 10 years.
	Additional stops will be provided with level boarding (a) as other highway works take place in the location of the bus stop; (b) at more popular stops; or (c) following requests from users.	Subject to available funding, including developer contributions, and feasibility.		
Bus stops	Over 1,000 bus stops or shelters with various combinations of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poles • Flags • Timetable cases • Hardstanding • Level boarding (Kassel Kerbs) • RTPi displays. 	Existing.	Maintenance, repair and replacement of bus stops.	Existing.
	Lighting at more bus stops.	Subject to available funding, including developer contributions.		
Bus shelters	Bus shelters are owned / organised by Town and Parish Councils and are therefore outside the direct responsibility of the Scheme.	Existing.	Maintenance and cleaning of bus shelters is the responsibility of the Town and Parish Councils and therefore outside the direct responsibility of the Scheme.	Existing.
	The Council will encourage installation of further bus shelters which may include grants for installation and maintenance of new shelters.	Subject to available funding.		

OBJECTIVE	3. Passenger comfort and safety			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Bus station	A bus station in central Newbury with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least eight departure bays or stops in the immediate vicinity. • At least five waiting bays for vehicles that are required to take layover time. • Bus service departure information. • Passenger waiting infrastructure. • CCTV to monitor vehicle and passenger safety. 	Existing.	A guide for safe and appropriate use of the bus station, which all operators (including those not part of the Scheme) must sign up to, and which allows the Council to enforce the rules. Cleaning and maintenance of the bus station, including the passenger infrastructure, funded in part by charges for using the facility.	Existing.
	Improvements to cater more easily for increased vehicle and passenger movements, including better passenger facilities.	Subject to available funding.		
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE		TIMESCALE	
Vehicles	Any vehicle used must meet the following standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better. • CCTV installed to provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security. • Free Wi-Fi. • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into a real time information system. • Heating and cooling for customer comfort. • USB charging available. • Audio visual announcement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements. ○ Next stop visual announcements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements and visual displays on the vehicle. • Low floor to enable level boarding. 		Any registered new vehicle used from commencement of the Scheme. All vehicles used by 31 March 2030. All vehicles used on services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan by 1 April 2033.	
	Operators will submit information to the Council on the vehicles typically used within West Berkshire, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan. This will include the age of the vehicles, emissions and types of fuel or power. Data will be provided as a snapshot within a defined time period specified by the Council.		Within one month of request. This will not be asked for more than twice during each April to March period.	

OBJECTIVE	3. Passenger comfort and safety	
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE	TIMESCALE
Boarding	Operators to notify the Council of any difficulties accessing level boarding at bus stops.	Existing.
Bus station	Operators, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan, will comply with the rules for using Newbury Bus Station.	Existing.

OBJECTIVE	4. Affordability of bus travel			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Bus fares	The Council sets the fares charged on services that it contracts.	Existing.	The Council will review fares charged on these services. Subject to the outcome of this review, a simplified fare structure may be implemented.	By September 2022.
Young people			The Council will work with operators to harmonise the terms under which reduced fares are offered to young people.	Not defined.
Payments	Payments on Council-contracted services will be able to be made by cash, contactless bank card, or phone app.	Existing.	The Council will work with operators to encourage a range of payment options, including cash for as long as this is used.	Not defined.
Ticketing	A range of tickets are in place which allow travel on most buses outside of the Eastern Area (as defined in the Bus Service Improvement Plan) or those heading east from Hungerford or Lambourn. These allow for daily, weekly, 10-trip, and monthly travel.	Existing.	Revenue for these tickets remains with the operator who sells them.	Existing.
	The Council will review the price and scope of these tickets in line with its review of fares charged on its contracted services.	By September 2022.	The Council will set the price of these tickets taking account of normal commercial ticket prices. Any new tickets introduced will be priced no lower than operator-set commercial ticket prices, and no ticket price will be permanently reduced to make it cheaper than a commercial equivalent. Short-term price reductions may be agreed with participating operators as part of a promotional or marketing campaign.	By September 2022.
	All bus services operated within the area of these tickets must participate in the ticketing scheme.	By September 2023.		
	Services operated in the Eastern Area will allow joint ticketing between operators travelling along similar routes, or between similar places.	By September 2023.	The Council will assist the introduction of multi-operator ticketing in the Eastern Area.	By September 2023.

OBJECTIVE	4. Affordability of bus travel			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Fare capping	n/a	n/a	The Council will work with operators to introduce multi-operator fare capping.	Following the introduction of a national mechanism, and subject to funding.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE			TIMESCALE
Bus fares	For bus services not contracted by the Council, bus fares are set by either the operator or the contracting party. Operators will submit information to the Council on the fares charged to and from stops within West Berkshire, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan. Data will make clear all of the different fares that may apply to different users. Prior notification will not need to be given for promotional fares but would be appreciated.			At commencement of the Scheme, and then at least two weeks before any change in fares is applied.
Young people	Where bus fares are outside of the Council's direct control, operators will work with the Council to harmonise the terms under which reduced fares are offered to young people.			Not defined.
Payments	Where payment mechanisms are outside of the Council's direct control, operators will work with the Council to retain a variety of payment options, including cash for as long as this is used.			Not defined.
Ticketing	All vehicles must use an Electronic Ticket Machine capable of reading English National Concessionary Travel Scheme cards, and accepting contactless payments using a credit or debit card.			Any services from commencement of the Scheme. All services otherwise exempt under the third criteria of section 7.5 (cross-boundary) of the Plan by 1 April 2026.
	Operators will, in cooperation with other operators as necessary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow tickets from other services that either travel along similar routes, or between similar places to be used on their services; and/or • Take part in a multi-operator ticketing scheme. Any fare which is more than 15% different from the equivalent fare on the service used may be excluded from this arrangement, or otherwise a premium may be charged, at the discretion of the operator on whose service the ticket is sought to be used.			By September 2023.

OBJECTIVE	4. Affordability of bus travel	
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE	TIMESCALE
	Operators will submit information to the Council on the types of tickets used by passengers, and by particular types of passenger within West Berkshire in a format agreed between the Council and the operator, and in such a way as to maintain commercial sensitivity as far as practicable. This will include those services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.	Within one month of request. This will only be requested to support specific projects.
Fare capping	All operators will use tap-on, tap-off technology to enable passenger fare capping to take place, and will co-operate in a multi-operator fare capping scheme.	Subject to available funding and any clarity on national arrangements.

OBJECTIVE	5. Improved image of bus travel			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Identity	The Council use the <i>Connect</i> branding to highlight connectivity in the bus network. It is used in publicity, ticket products, and on Council-operated section 22 vehicles.	Existing.	The Council retain ownership of this overall brand, but will review it to ensure it meets its desired aims.	Ongoing.
Passenger charter	A simple standard passenger charter will be produced to inform passengers of their rights and expectations and any recourse for failure to meet these. It will be available on the Council website.	By October 2022.	n/a	n/a
Passenger awareness	Under sections 139 and 140 of the Transport Act 2000, and therefore outside the scope of the Scheme, the Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a Travel Guide giving information on all local bus services. It will be updated following significant changes to the bus network. • Ensure bus stops provide information on services and departure times. 	Existing.	Under section 140 of the Transport Act 2000, and therefore outside the scope of the Scheme, the Council may recover reasonable costs from operators where such information is not provided by the operators.	Existing.
	RTPI screens are in place at eleven locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calcot: Beansheaf Stores, Charrington Road (x1), Swanholm Gardens (x1), Sainsbury's (x1) • Newbury: Park Way (x2), The Wharf Bus Station (x1) • Thatcham: Broadway (x2) • Theale: The Crown (x1) • Tilehurst: Overdown Road / Tring Road (x1) • West Berkshire Hospital (x1) 	Existing. Where it is not cost-effective to maintain an existing screen, or where multiple screens exist, a screen may be removed.	The Council will follow available procurement routes for new infrastructure and maintenance of existing infrastructure, subject to sufficient funding being available.	Subject to available funding.

OBJECTIVE	5. Improved image of bus travel			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
	Installation of RTPi screens at key stops in line with Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to available funding.		
Marketing	Marketing of bus services will be improved to make people aware of what is available and encourage use, using a variety of different initiatives and techniques.	Subject to available funding.	We will seek to measure the effectiveness of different marketing strategies and campaigns.	Subject to available funding.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE		TIMESCALE	
Passenger charter	Operators will make available a passenger charter, which will inform passengers of their rights and expectations and any recourse for failure to meet these.		By October 2022.	
Passenger awareness	Operators will manage RTPi systems.		Existing.	
Marketing	Operators will support the Council in marketing initiatives which aim to encourage greater bus use. They will provide information to the Council in a timely manner that helps to measure the success of such initiatives.		Following marketing campaigns.	

OBJECTIVE	6. Integration with other modes			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Community transport	The Council will continue to provide the same overall level of revenue grant funding to support community transport operations. It will also seek to provide capital funding to enable groups to replace essential assets.	From commencement of the Scheme for a period of at least 10 years.	The Council will monitor use of community transport activities. The Council will promote community transport for those unable to use public transport.	Existing.
Rail	The Council will look at improved links between buses and trains in line with the Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to available funding.	The Council will work with rail companies to ensure better information and coordination when feasible for interchange between buses and trains.	Subject to available funding.
Other modes	The Council will support integration between buses and other modes of transport in line with the Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to available funding.	The Council will develop and publish a Parking Strategy that will take account of environmental considerations.	By March 2024.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE			TIMESCALE
Other transport modes	Bus operators will work with the Council to encourage seamless public transport journeys, including through ticketing.			Subject to available funding.

OBJECTIVE	7. Environmental Improvements			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Engine emissions	All future Council bus contracts will be provided using environmentally-friendly vehicles.	Subject to available funding.	The Council will include options for improved engine emission standards in all future tenders.	Subject to available funding.
	The Council will introduce, or facilitate the introduction of, a fuelling station for zero-emission vehicles.	Subject to available funding.	The Council will support operators in upgrading fleets to reduce environmental impacts.	Subject to available funding.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE			TIMESCALE
Engine emissions	Operators will use environmentally-friendly vehicles.			Engine emissions of all vehicles will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro IV or higher from commencement of the Scheme. • Euro V or higher by 31 March 2025, subject to available funding. • Euro VI or higher by 31 March 2030, subject to available funding.