

# **NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL ENHANCED BUS QUALITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

**2022-2027**

**AND**

# **NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL ENHANCED BUS QUALITY PARTNERSHIP SCHEME**

## **1 Introduction**

On 7th June 2021 North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) issued its formal statement of intent to proceed with an Enhanced Partnership (EP). The EP is intended to deliver the vision and ambition set out in the NELC Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) 2022 – 2027.

The EP Scheme for buses was made in accordance with section 138G(1) of the Transport Act 2000 on 17 December 2021, for implementation on 1st April 2022.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has issued a letter to NELC, “BSIP: Indicative funding allocation for NELC “, dated 4th April 2022, setting out the priorities, conditions, and further Guidance, for confirmation of this funding. This second version of the EP Plan and Scheme has been developed accordingly.

This Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Plan (EP Plan) should be read in conjunction with the North East Lincolnshire BSIP.

## **2 BSIP Objectives and Enhanced Partnership Approach**

Fundamental to the proposals in this EP Plan and EP Scheme, is our overall vision of retaining and increasing patronage and modal share of public transport, through enhancing the attractiveness, relevance, and public awareness of the local bus system offer.

As developed for the BSIP, the measures support the following seven defined objectives:

- Reliable and effective public transport;
- An integrated transport system;
- Simple payment and ticketing;
- Safety, inclusivity, and accessibility;
- Easy door to door journeys;
- Excellent customer service;
- Modernisation, decarbonisation and zero emission vehicles.

The challenge of attracting passengers back to bus, especially where car travel is relatively easy and perceived to be inexpensive and convenient such as in North East Lincolnshire, should not be underestimated, and this will be the focus of much of the initial activity of the Partnership.

Through detailed discussions with the Partnership Stakeholders, bus operators and the neighbouring partnerships, we have identified a series of specific measures designed to

improve the bus network provision in North East Lincolnshire and encourage greater use of the network.

These measures are detailed in the BSIP and form the basis for this EP Plan and EP Scheme. They demonstrate a commitment and ambition to enhance the bus service network in North East Lincolnshire, while remaining realistic and achievable for this principally urban and industrial, while relatively small, area, given a commitment to joint-working, funding, and implementation.

The proposed measures have been categorised into short, medium, and longer-term timeframes, dependent on their agreed priority, deliverability, and the availability of funding. They are described in section 4 of the EP Plan and are shown, by timeframe, in Appendix B to the EP Scheme.

Throughout this Document, codes such as “(M013)” refer to Measures as identified in the BSIP.

**Table 1: Objectives and Approach (subject to external Government funding)**

BSIP objective	EP approach
Reliable and effective public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) (M011) Uplift core urban corridor frequencies to 6 buses per hour.</li> <li>b) (M012) Standardise cross-boundary service frequencies.</li> <li>c) (M013) Improvements to evening service headways on Town / Local services.</li> <li>d) (M014) Improvements to Sunday service headways on Town / Local services, to 30-minute.</li> <li>e) (M015) Investigations into Early Inclusion of Housing / Commercial Developments</li> <li>f) (M021) Bus Priority Study and Punctuality Improvement Plan.</li> <li>g) (M026) Bus-only highway infrastructure: Europarc (Grimsby end) Bus Bridge.</li> <li>h) (M022) Acceleration of Traffic Signal Priority (TSP) programme.</li> <li>i) (M024) Information and Disruption Messaging Officer.</li> <li>j) (M025) A Disruption Messaging system.</li> <li>k) (M023) Enhanced Parking enforcement.</li> </ul>
An integrated transport system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) (M051) High-quality bus station</li> <li>b) (M052) Optimise connections in Grimsby between low-frequency bus services and each other</li> <li>c) (M053) Connections with rail services</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d) (M054) Improve Cross-Boundary Links to hospitals</li> <li>e) (M055) Feasibility study and implementation for Park and Ride</li> <li>f) (M056) Innovative Services – P &amp; R and tourist routes</li> <li>g) (M036) Explore a more targeted PlusBus offer</li> </ul>
Simple payment and ticketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) (M032) Develop discounted fare products for Students / Apprentices / Youths</li> <li>b) (M031) Fare Stage Rationalisation</li> <li>c) (M034) Introduce fare capping across NEL</li> <li>d) (M033) Introduce a ticket 'Carnet' for NEL</li> <li>e) (M035) Step up the rate and extent of promotional fares</li> <li>f) (M074) Enhancement of Contactless Payment</li> </ul>
Safety, inclusivity, accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) (M111) Raised kerb access</li> <li>b) (M112) Survey + remedial works for footways etc around main stops</li> <li>c) (M114) Bus shelter improvements – upgrades, replacements, additions &amp; CCTV at selected bus stops</li> <li>d) (M115) Booked passenger assistance</li> <li>e) (M083) Staffed lost property facilities</li> <li>f) (M116) Acquisition and deployment of 'mobile' CCTV units</li> <li>g) (M113) Enhanced cleaning regime for shelters</li> <li>h) (M092) Extending Phone-n-Ride's range to encompass to/from work journeys</li> <li>i) (M093) DRT efficiency &amp; Best Practice study</li> <li>j) (M091) Expanded support for socially / economically necessary journeys</li> <li>k) (M101) Commuter travel plans</li> <li>l) (M102) Green Travel Plans officer</li> <li>m) (M054) Deliver economically and socially necessary service to Hospitals (particularly Castle Hill)</li> </ul>
Easy and safe door to door journeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) (M061) Real Time Bus Information - Countdown displays at main stops - renew / extend scope</li> <li>b) (M062) Limited (to 2) &amp; fixed annual dates for timetable changes</li> <li>c) (M063) Refreshed / locally targeted Branding / Marketing</li> </ul>

	d) (M064) Special promotions of selected routes
Excellent customer service	a) (M081) a Bus Passenger Charter b) (M083) Improvement of lost property reporting and contact points c) (M082) Bespoke, Enhanced regular passenger surveys
Modernisation, decarbonisation and zero emission vehicles	a) (M073) Electric Buses b) (M071) Retrofit on-bus Comfort & Amenity Features c) (M072) Next Stop announcements

NELC has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of the EP Plan and Scheme on competition and believes it will not, or is unlikely to, have a significantly adverse effect on competition, for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. Some 99.5% of vehicle mileage in the Plan Area is delivered by Stagecoach East Midlands.

As required by section 138F of the Transport Act 2000 ('the 2000 Act'), the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) will be consulted on the proposals to ensure that the competition test at Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the 2000 Act has been met.

### **Document Structure**

Part 1 of this document contains the NELC Enhanced Partnership Plan (the EP Plan).

Part 2 of this document contains the NELC Enhanced Partnership Scheme (the EP Scheme).

## PART 1

### THE NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE ENHANCED BUS QUALITY PARTNERSHIP PLAN

This North East Lincolnshire Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan for Buses is made by North East Lincolnshire Council (NELC) in accordance with Section 138G(1) of the Transport Act 2000. It is directly and solely derived from the North East Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), as first published in October 2021, and is the key enabler of that Plan.

#### 1 Enhanced Partnership Plan Geographical Area and Time Period

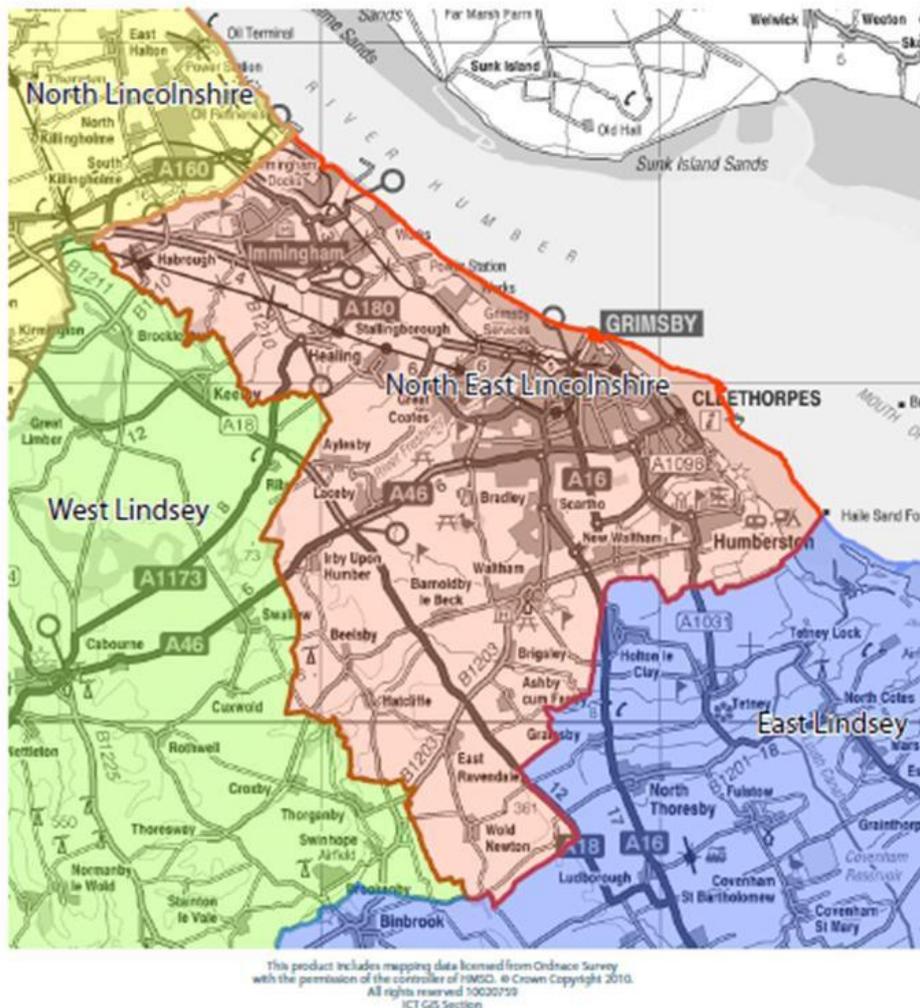


Figure 1: Enhanced Partnership area

The Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Plan (EP Plan) will cover the whole of the administrative area of NELC, as shown in the map above.

The plan is for a period of five years covering the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2027. It will be reviewed no less frequently than annually, no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March of each year.

## 2 Passenger Experiences and Priorities

Bus services are a vital public service playing a major role in the way many people go about their daily lives. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, each week around 120,000 journeys were made by bus in North East Lincolnshire, principally to / from and within the Grimsby – Cleethorpes conurbation, making it the most frequently used form of public transport in the borough. Buses take people to work, school, college, hospital, shops, leisure opportunities, and a range of other essential services supporting the wider economy across the area and reducing social isolation for residents. They also play a role in supporting sustainable tourism, principally around beach and holiday amenities. Without them, the area’s roads would be more congested, the economy weaker and the air quality worse.

People who use buses in our area think highly of the services provided; overall bus passenger satisfaction in North East Lincolnshire was ranked within the upper half of all the council areas surveyed by Transport Focus in their latest (Autumn 2019) national study, while satisfaction with value for money was ranked fourth. However, despite this, overall bus patronage has been declining in North East Lincolnshire for a number of years, as it has in most other places across the country.

In 2021, as part of the development of this BSIP, NELC and SYSTRA partnered to run a survey on bus usage in the area. The purpose of this survey was to dig deeper into patronage within NELC bus services pre-pandemic, at present, and into the future.

Through the planning stages of the BSIP survey, it was clear that targeting the ‘non-bus users’ and/or ‘lapsed bus users’ was integral to a full picture of the region in term of consultation. The survey was launched on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021, with a 3-week live period, closing on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

A total of 452 responses were gained, 366 of which completed the full survey.

Its findings explored the main barriers to bus usage and growth, identified as follows:

- Before the pandemic (pre-March 2020), 20.7% participants used the bus services within North East Lincolnshire.
- Of that 20.7%, 37% used the bus service 4 to 7 days per week, with 30% using bus services 2 to 3 days per week.
- The key trip motivator of the survey participants was ‘Shopping for groceries and essentials’ and shopping for other items’ with a combined share of 32%.
- The second most popular reason for travelling was to see family and friends (14%).
- Travel to voluntary or paid work was relatively low as a trip motivator, at just 8% of our survey respondents.
- 67% of respondents expect their bus use to remain ‘about the same’ as all UK COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.
- When asked what improvements could be made to the bus service to help people use the bus more often, the initiatives selected most often from those suggested in the survey, were ‘Discounts for Young People’ (83% of respondents), followed by ‘Improved access such as raised kerbs’ (76%).

- Participants also expressed their desire for ‘More integrated and innovative bus services’, alongside ‘Reduced frequency of bus route changes’ and ‘Different payment options’ (71%, 70% and 70% respectively).
- However, when presented with the option to rank which initiatives were **most important to the respondent personally**, the highest ranking 3 initiatives were respectively:
  - Lower cost fares
  - More bus routes
  - More buses (increased frequency)

This aligns with a number of ‘open question’ responses, suggesting new routes.

- The lowest ranked initiatives ranked as ‘helpful to people’ personally included:
  - Multi-operator bus tickets
  - Different payment options
  - More integrated and innovative services such as flexible bookable services
- Respondents were also asked an open question regarding improvements to their bus services, key themes are identified below.
  - Alteration of bus times to suit hospital, factory, and school workers
  - Reinstatement of bus stations in the town centre and improved bus shelters, common mention of antisocial, inebriated behaviour at existing stops
  - Improved live bus information and timetable presence
  - Widened service hours, particularly into the evenings and weekends
  - Improve services to rural settlements

The top 10 bus improvements from our survey are listed below.

### What improvements could be made to the bus service to help you use the bus more often?

Lower cost fares  
 More bus routes  
 Increased Frequencies  
 More weekend buses  
 More evening buses  
 Better waiting facilities e.g. improved lighting and shelters  
 Improved reliability  
 More modern buses with WIFI and stop announcements  
 Quicker journey times and more bus priority measures (bus lanes etc.)  
 Better / clearer / more reliable information

It remains challenging to predict the future for local bus services as recovery from the COVID pandemic continues. In response to our survey, 1 in 6 people told us that they may use buses less often in future than they did before the pandemic, a finding which is broadly in keeping with a nationwide survey undertaken by SYSTRA.

## 3 Summary of Existing Bus Network

### 3.1 Overview of network and commercial environment

Within North East Lincolnshire, the principal bus operator is Stagecoach, with a network of local bus services in Grimsby and Cleethorpes, and some longer interurban services, two of which cross the boundary into the Lincolnshire County Council area. Mondays to Saturdays, between 07.00 and 19.00, the local services operate at 10- to 30-minute intervals according to route, while the interurban services are every hour or two hours. In the evenings and on Sundays, hourly intervals predominate. Two minor cross-boundary services are operated by Hunts and Grayscroft, each just once per week, and are more like day excursion services for visitors to North East Lincolnshire.

While a very few inter-urban and rural bus routes from Grimsby provide links with Lincolnshire and Hull<sup>1</sup>, the great majority of the network connects the two main town centres, Grimsby, and Cleethorpes, with each other and with settlements and travel attractors (retail, healthcare, employment, etc.) entirely within this, primarily urban, area. A single operator provides all local, and all but two *per week* of the cross-boundary, journeys. By contrast, Lincolnshire is a large rural county with many widely dispersed towns and villages. Hence, it is clear that a single Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme for the entire NELC area only, with collaboration and consensus with Lincolnshire regarding key cross-boundary services, is by far the most suitable option.

### 3.2 Current Bus Offer to Passengers

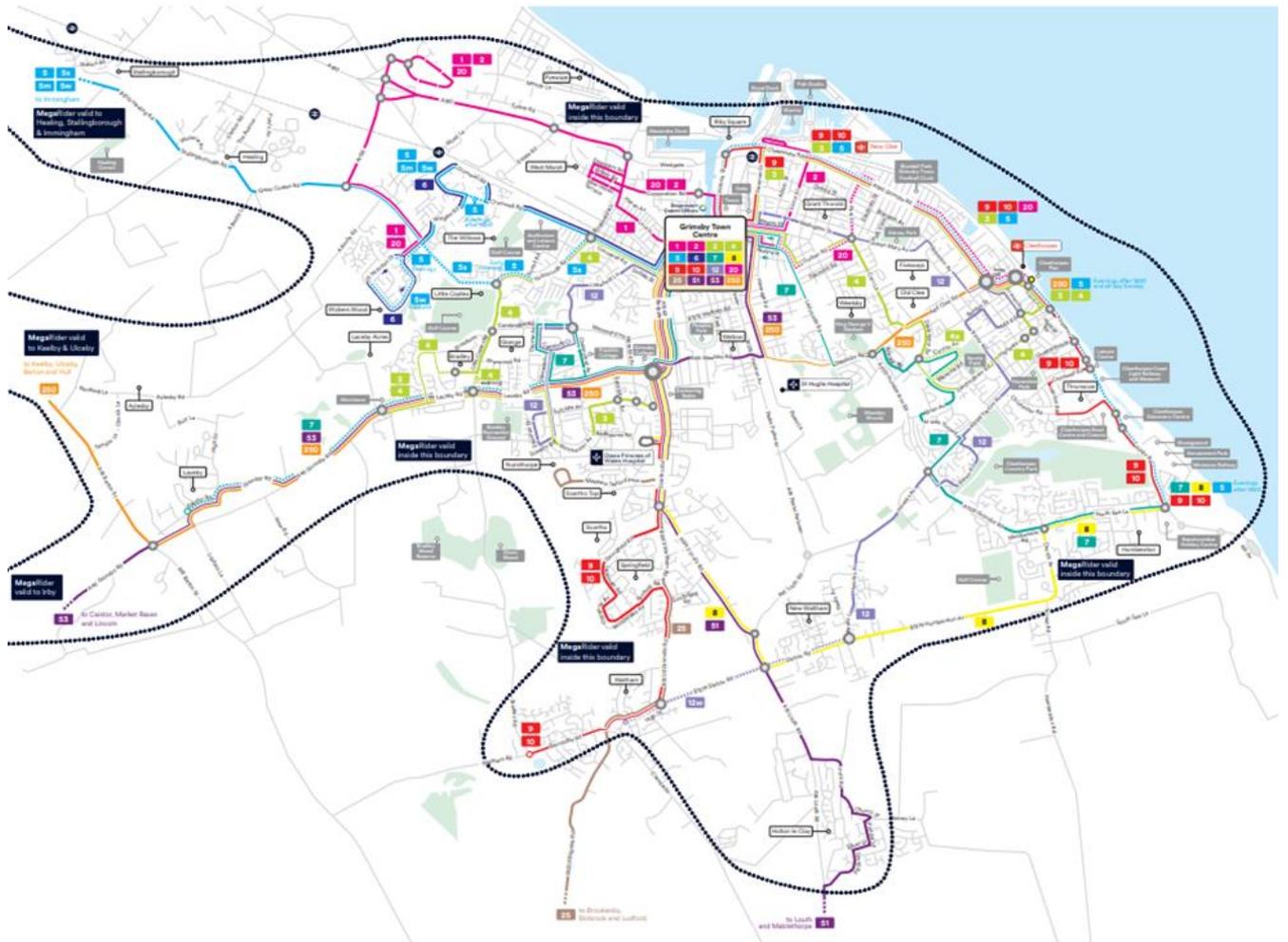
NELC and the regional Stagecoach management team enjoy a regular working relationship through an existing Bus Quality Partnership. Almost all conventional / scheduled bus services across the borough are operated on a commercial basis with no direct financial support from the local councils; these comprise approximately 97% of all such passenger journeys. On these services the companies set the routes, timetables, and fares so as to meet financial, and any wider, business objectives. Hence, services can and do evolve over time with timetables and routing altering to take account of changing demand and market conditions; although a review by Stagecoach in 2014 concluded that the network and frequencies that had been in place with little change for many years, should continue unchanged. However, notwithstanding the impacts of Covid-19, underlying growth in populations and economic activity have continued, alongside recent and ongoing regeneration – so, while the existing routes may well still be fit for their purposes, there is appetite for targeted frequency increases, and in some locations for longer service hours, such as for shift workers.

The network map below is the latest (2021) published by Stagecoach; this is complete with the exceptions of the summer seasonal service 17 between Cleethorpes and Thorpe Park; the three times daily service (50) to Saltfleet; and also the once-weekly Hunts and Grayscroft

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<sup>1</sup> This service does clip the eastern fringe of North Lincolnshire, but there is otherwise no direct service across that boundary.

services. There are also cross boundary bus services which operate between Grimsby and Louth (51 service), Grimsby and Lincoln (53 service) and Grimsby and Hull (250 service).



In addition to the commercial routes there are also other bus services for which NELC currently covers costs or provides a subsidy. These services do not earn sufficient revenue through fares to cover their own costs, and it is the funding provided by the NELC which enables them to operate. There are four main types of Council supported services:

- Complete conventional routes where the Council specifies where the bus should go, and the key parameters for the timetable to be operated – but not the fares to be charged. These are currently restricted to routes (1, 2, 20) serving the Europarc, an out-of-town industrial complex with considerable early / late shift working.
- Additional or extended journeys to serve a major training centre, just beyond the main network, at start and finish times (5M, serving the CATCH training centre near Immingham); these journeys / variants do not generate enough through fares income to cover their additional costs.
- Phone-n-Ride which operates on a more flexible basis with the destination and times of operation based around passenger demand or particular needs, in

response to advance booking, rather than to specific routes or timetables. Its operating hours are limited to 06.30 to 18.30 (not Sundays).

- Dial-a-Ride (DAR) is a charity, closer to a volunteer-operated taxi service. The service is primarily for disabled and elderly passengers. The Council does not fund DAR as such, but DAR claims concessionary fares from NELC.

This collection of supported services has evolved in response to adjustments to Stagecoach's network since deregulation and privatisation over 30+ years, and between them they carried approximately 3%<sup>2</sup> of all bus passenger journeys in the Borough in 2019. With the obvious exception of Dial-a-ride, all three contracts were most recently won by Stagecoach. Whilst some of these services have been altered to take account of changes in demand, others have remained essentially the same for a long time.

### 3.3 NEL Bus network dimensions and performance

The bus network in Grimsby and North East Lincolnshire totals around 100 km<sup>3</sup> of routes – around 35km each for 'core' (see below), and other, Town routes; and additional 10km each for services to Europarc, Immingham, and the LTA boundaries - using over 75 vehicles (from Stagecoach, Hunts and Grayscroft).

Core urban corridors (radiating from Grimsby town centre) with  $\geq 4$  buses per hour ('daytime') are:

- (E) 'Coast' via Cleethorpes Pier to North Sea Lane end.
- (E) 'Inland' via Carr Lane & Sandringham Road to Cleethorpes Pier
- (S) Nuns Corner – Springfield – Waltham
- (S/W) Nuns Corner – Nunsthorpe – Laceby Acres (hypermarket)
- (W/SW) Cromwell Rd (E.) – Little Coates – Laceby Acres (hypermarket)
- (W/SW) Cromwell Rd (E. and W. ) – Wybers Wood

### 3.4 Other Factors that Affect the Use of Local Bus Services

Bus travel is a derived demand – passengers rarely travel “just for fun”, but usually to access other services and activities. In North East Lincolnshire, the aim is to place buses at the forefront of much wider initiatives which will underpin our future success. Therefore three wider themes have been identified, within which the EP will be embedded so that all residents and visitors to the area have the option of an attractive bus service alternative to the private car. These three themes are:

- **Economic regeneration** – including access to a wide range of employment and training opportunities for non-car owners;

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<sup>2</sup> Method: From Operator-supplied information on numbers of passengers by route and by month, calendar year 2019 selected; from totals for all services operating in NEL, 50% was deducted from the totals for each of the cross-boundary routes to obtain a 'NEL-only' journeys estimate; of these, the totals for routes 1, 2, 20, 5M, and 'PR' together, comprise just over 3%.

<sup>3</sup> Approximations by measurements of route segments on scale map; excludes 'special' (fewer than 3 per day) journeys.

- **Revitalise High Streets** – ensuring that high streets are accessible for all, with or without a car; and
- **The rejuvenation of English seaside resorts** – providing access to and around tourist attractions, particularly in Cleethorpes.

The measures set out in the EP Scheme will serve not only to respond to what our residents and stakeholders told us was important (largely articulated in earlier sections of this Chapter), but also to position the bus as a key part of sustainable recovery and regeneration along the coast and throughout North East Lincolnshire. By aligning the EP Plan and Scheme with these wider initiatives, this means that NELC and partners can exploit synergies between parallel policy strands, and double-up on investment opportunities compounding the value of the outcomes.

### 3.5 Small and Medium-sized Operators (SMOs)

In general, it is important that the needs of small and medium sized operators (SMOs) are considered as part of the development of an EP plan and scheme; and Authorities should conduct a thorough assessment of which operators in the EP area(s) they consider to be SMOs.

#### **Summary of SMO Assessment**

The small percentage of annual vehicle mileage in North East Lincolnshire not operated by Stagecoach East Midlands, is split, roughly equally, between two smaller operators, namely Hunts Coaches and Grayscroft. Neither of these local operators have more than 40 vehicles in their fleets or are parts of larger groups; it may reasonably be concluded, therefore, that neither have more than 250 employees, the recommended ‘ceiling’ for assessing this.

It is therefore concluded that, for the purposes of the EP, both Hunts Coaches and Grayscroft are defined as SMOs.

The principal concern of the DfT Guidance, as applied to SMOs in the context of EPs, is that SMOs are likely to be “disadvantaged in their ability to engage in aspects of developing the scheme to deliver BSIP outcomes but excluding such operators may reduce the overall effectiveness of BSIP delivery”.

However; in the case of NEL, these operators have, for many years, operated one return journey per week into NEL (Grimsby), from respective areas across rural Lincolnshire – with no aspiration to exceed two per week. They each contribute around 1 in 4,500 of the operated bus-km in NEL; and while their services are of benefit to residents of their Lincolnshire hinterlands, and NEL will continue to encourage such services; they provide no useful function for NEL residents, and their exclusion from the EP Scheme will make no difference at all to delivery of the BSIP.

For these reasons, both of their services are Exempted under NEL’s definition – though as a courtesy NEL will keep them informed of developments affecting their services.

## 4 Congestion in North East Lincolnshire

The Highway Strategy within NELC's Local Transport Plan (2016) has flagged (in section 3.7) that 19 of the 66 junctions are "highly over capacity" (Ratio of Flow to Capacity exceeds 1.0) at some time of the day, therefore drivers are likely to experience regular congestion and slower journey times; while improved reliability was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in terms of number of times chosen by respondents to our survey. Therefore, NELC worked in conjunction with Stagecoach to identify pinch-points where improvements could yield benefits for the operator and passengers.

The characteristics of the local area road network are such that, though general congestion does impact the bus services, despite the widespread implementation of traffic signal priority installations, it does not do so disproportionately. Although comprehensive data on actual bus journey speeds is not to hand, this will be collated and monitored over the EP period; meanwhile, overall satisfaction with the bus network is at 90%, whilst 72% rate its punctuality performance positively. Further to this, 89% of users are satisfied with bus punctuality (Transport Focus data, 2019).

## 5 Complementary Policies

An overall policy within the current BSIP, is to review and improve alignment of broader but complementary policies, such as land use / development control (the Local Plan), decarbonisation, etc., with National Bus Strategy objectives, as appropriate for the area in our BSIP / EP.

One key example - Parking strategy, including pricing, and delivering strategy which encourages bus use, is a key issue in North East Lincolnshire. Both partners endorse the need to encourage bus travel as an alternative mode of transport, but at the same time recognise that accessing key destinations from the more rural parts of North East Lincolnshire will always be challenging without driving, and therefore a purely anti-car strategy is not feasible. The Council is not in control of all land used for car parking, making practical measures difficult to deliver without implementing untargeted measures such as congestion charging or workplace parking levies.

The EP will therefore explore opportunities to balance car and bus use for accessing our town centres, incrementally adjusting overall parking policies and charges in step with improvement to the bus service offer. This will include investigating park and ride opportunities and ensuring that NELC tackles any illegal or problematic parking which disrupts the flow of buses in our towns. Meanwhile, any increase in the Council's parking charges will enable, and thereby bring about, matching increases in private parking charges.

## 6 Objectives and Outcomes

### 6.1 Objectives

The EP has been developed to achieve the objectives of the BSIP, by the delivery of measures identified in the BSIP. In the same way, the BSIP is driven by existing NELC strategy and policy, principally the Local Transport Plan (2016-2032) and the Bus and Information Strategy, each of which are guided by the NELC overarching strategies for housing, commerce, education, health, industry, and the environment.

The Local Transport Plan identified these key Challenges:

- (A) Enable sustainable growth through effective transport provision.
- (B) Improve journey times and reliability by reducing congestion.
- (C) Support regeneration and employment by connecting people to education, training, and jobs.
- (D) Enable disadvantaged groups or people living in disadvantaged areas to connect with employment, health, social and leisure opportunities.
- (E) Provide safe access and reduce the risk of loss, death, or injury due to transport collisions or crime.
- (F) Improve the health of individuals by encouraging and enabling more physically active travel.
- (G) Improve the journey experience on the local transport network.
- (H) Ensure transport contributes to environmental excellence, improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The objectives of the BSIP and EP Plan are intended to align with these Challenges and articulate how bus services can help to deliver them. The EP Plan objectives are

- Reliable and effective public transport;
- An integrated transport system;
- Simple payment and ticketing;
- Safety, inclusivity, and accessibility;
- Easy door to door journeys;
- Excellent customer service;
- Modernisation, decarbonisation and zero emission vehicles.

## 6.2 Outcomes

### IN FUTURE, BUS SERVICES IN NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE WILL ASPIRE TO PROVIDE:

- Green, sustainable travel options for all who live, work in, and visit North East Lincolnshire, offering an attractive alternative to the car for journeys which cannot be made by walking and cycling;
- Full integration into wider Council initiatives aimed at regenerating North East Lincolnshire, helping to revitalise High Streets as the area recovers from the pandemic, and supporting the rejuvenation of our seaside resort and tourist facilities;
- Responsiveness to the aspirations of existing and potential users as clearly expressed through our comprehensive survey;

- Extended hours of operation, more flexible services and ticketing, improved information, selected new services to key destinations, and enhancements to the fleet, bus stops and other key facilities.

The choice of Outcomes, or of the dimensions for which we set Targets, is informed by the emphases and priorities within this Plan; while the targets themselves represent challenging, but achievable, growth and improvements over the longer forecasting timeframe for this Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme.

It is expected and intended that improvements undertaken under this EP Plan and EP Scheme will beneficially affect neighbouring areas:

Generally, improvements across North East Lincolnshire, such as to bus priority infrastructure, and to quality and amenity of buses and stops / interchanges, will also benefit cross-boundary services, their existing passengers, and those attracted to the services;

Specifically, neighbouring areas will benefit immediately and directly from improvements in frequencies, and more modern buses, on interurban services.

### 6.3 Aims and measures

A series of measures have been selected for the complete EP Plan to fulfil the NELC Policy Aims, and the priorities identified by existing and potential users aligning with them:

- Aim A: Reliable and effective Public Transport
  - Enhanced evening and weekend frequencies:
    - (M011) Uplift core urban corridor frequencies to 6 buses per hour
    - (M012) Standardise cross-boundary service frequencies
    - (M013) Improvements to evening service headways on Town / Local services
    - (M014) Improvements to Sunday service headways on Town / Local services
    - (M015) Investigations into Early Inclusion of Housing / Commercial Developments
  - Some tailoring of the network to improve how certain destinations are served:
    - (M021) Bus Priority Study and Punctuality Improvement Plan
    - (M026) Bus-only highway infrastructure: Europarc (Grimsby end) Bus Bridge
    - (M022) Acceleration of Traffic Signal Priority (TSP) programme
    - (M024) Information and Disruption Messaging Officer
    - (M025) A Disruption Messaging system
    - (M023) Enhanced Parking enforcement
- Aim B: An integrated transport system
  - Improved bus interchange facilities in Grimsby:
    - (M051) High-quality bus station
    - (M052) Optimise connections in Grimsby between low-frequency bus services and each other
    - (M053) Connections with rail services
    - (M054) Improve Cross-Boundary Links to hospitals
    - (M055) Feasibility study and implementation for Park and Ride
    - (M056) Innovative Services – P & R and tourist routes
  - Closer integration of the subsidised demand responsive services with each other, and with the wider commercial network:
    - (M036) Explore a more targeted PlusBus offer
- Aim C: Simple payment and ticketing
  - Clearer and more comprehensive information about services and ticketing products through a wide variety of sources:
    - (M032) Develop discounted fare products for Students / Apprentices / Youths
    - (M031) Fare Stage Rationalisation
    - (M034) Introduce fare capping across NEL
    - (M033) Introduce a ticket 'Carnet' for NEL
    - (M035) Step up the rate and extent of promotional fares
    - (M074) Enhancement of Contactless Payment
- Aim D: Inclusive Travel

- (M111) Raised kerb access
- (M112) Survey + remedial works for footways etc around main stops
- (M114) Bus shelter improvements – upgrades, replacements, additions & CCTV at selected bus stops
- (M115) Booked passenger assistance
- (M083) Staffed lost property facilities
- (M116) Acquisition and deployment of ‘mobile’ CCTV units
- (M113) Enhanced cleaning regime for shelters
- (M092) Extending Phone-n-Ride’s range to encompass to/from work journeys
- (M093) DRT efficiency & Best Practice study
- (M091) Expanded support for socially / economically necessary journeys
- (M101) Commuter travel plans
- (M102) Green Travel Plans officer
- (M054) Deliver economically and socially necessary service to Hospitals (particularly Castle Hill)
  
- Aim E: Easy and safe door to door journeys
  - Some potential to improve the feeling of personal safety whilst using buses:
    - (M061) Real Time Bus Information - Countdown displays at main stops - renew / extend scope
    - (M062) Limited (to 2) & fixed annual dates for timetable changes
    - (M063) Refreshed / locally targeted Branding / Marketing
    - (M064) Special promotions of selected routes
  
- Aim F: Excellent customer service
  - (M081) a Bus Passenger Charter
  - (M083) Improvement of lost property reporting and contact points
  - (M082) Bespoke, Enhanced regular passenger surveys
  
- Aim G: Decarbonisation and zero emission vehicles
  - A need to modernise the fleet and introduce zero emission vehicles:
    - (M073) Electric Buses
    - (M071) Retrofit on-bus Comfort & Amenity Features
    - (M072) Next Stop announcements

## 6.4 Headline Targets

The choice of the dimensions for which we set Targets, is informed by the emphases and priorities within the BSIP; while the targets themselves represent challenging, but achievable, growth and improvements over the longer forecasting timeframe for the BSIP.

Pending the conclusions of feasibility studies from 2022/23, targets - particularly journey times - are necessarily indicative at this stage. While the improvements will have phased introductions, we were confident that, with full funding for and the ambition of the BSIP, passenger numbers could be attracted so as to fully regain immediate pre-Covid-19 levels by 2024/25.

The indicative funding so far announced represents some 12% of the full BSIP bid – 15% of the Capital element and 8% of the Resource element. However, with prioritisation of the higher value (impact) for money options, it can be expected that around 25% to 50% of the ‘full’ improvements may be achievable.

Again, in light of the current state of knowledge being prior to the feasibility study outcomes, the targets presented here are re-statements of those reflected in the BSIP, predicated on ‘full funding’; subsequent revisions of the EP Plan will scale these according to projected outputs of implementations to be defined.

Outcome		Actual		Target	
		2018/19	2019/20	2024/25	2029/30
Operational	Proportion of non-frequent bus services (<6 bph) running on time (%)	95		97	98
	Average excess waiting time for frequent bus services (>=6 bph) (minutes)	(Currently not reported)		2.0	1.5
	Reliability (Lost km) (% of Scheduled km)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Passenger Satisfaction (%)	Overall Journey	89	90	92	95
	Journey Time	88	89	90	92
	Punctuality	80	79	82	84
	Value for Money	71	72	77	78
	Bus Driver welcome	82	79	82	85
	Interior Cleanliness / Condition	83	80	83	85
	Availability of Seating / Standing space	87	87	88	88
		<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>		
	Passenger Journeys p.a. (million)	6.2	3.0	6.2	6.8

## 7 Implementation and Monitoring, Alignment, and Review

### 7.1 Implementation and Monitoring

The Enhanced Partnership Board will meet four times per year replacing the existing Voluntary Bus Quality Partnership and receive reports from bus user groups and representatives about progress with providing the Facilities and measures described above. An EP Forum will be set up so as to gather input from passenger groups and other stakeholders such as local businesses and people with protected characteristics and will meet at least twice per year. By this means, regular dialogue – supported by inputs from passenger research as envisaged in the BSIP - will review how well the EP Plan and EP Scheme are working. This Forum will also be tasked with managing and ensuring the passage of such proposals as may require approval at an appropriate level of authority within the Council.

Every six months, where monitoring allows this will include specific reporting against the KPIs set out (in draft) in Chapter 3 of the BSIP, which will flag whether the measures being implemented are delivering on the goals of the Partnership. After debate within the Partnership, the results of this monitoring will be published on NELC's website.

Every 12 months the Partnership will review whether adequate progress is being made against the KPIs, and where necessary adjust these to take account of changing circumstances, broadly:

- Where better progress has been made against KPIs, adjusting these to more ambitious targets if it is considered that the improved progress can be sustained; and
- Recalibrating timescales for KPIs which prove to be more difficult to achieve than envisaged, so that monitoring takes place against more realistic timescales.

Some measures will emerge in greater detail once key studies have been completed – in some circumstances it may therefore be necessary to introduce additional KPIs to reflect these new measures, and the annual review will offer an opportunity to introduce new benchmarks where these prove necessary.

Taking forward our ambitions will require a step-change in activity to support buses within the Council, and on behalf of our operator partners.

It is therefore the intention to appoint an additional (M001) Enhanced Partnership Delivery Officer specifically focused on taking forward our Bus Back Better ambitions.

The EP Plan and Scheme have been developed in conjunction with the principal local bus operator, Stagecoach, who are responsible for 99.95%<sup>4</sup> of local bus kilometres in North East Lincolnshire.

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<sup>4</sup> Non-Stagecoach services traverse 7km between central Grimsby and the NELC boundary near Holton-le-Clay. One return journey per week by each of the two operators, constitutes at most (7 x 2 x 2 x 52) = 1,456 km per year, of the annual total for NEL of 3.3 million km (2019/20).

## 7.2 Duration, Review and Alignment with Local Transport Plan

While a good number and range of measures have been developed over this compressed timescale and approved<sup>5</sup> for full implementation, to the extent that funding granted under the NBS / BSIP permits; certain of the more radical and impactful kinds of measures as recommended under the NBS will require further study and assessment. Examples of this includes feasibility studies for initiatives such as bus priority measures and/or car parking policy. This will allow additional scoping, quantification, costing, and development of their specific details, to the levels necessary for delivery in the course of the EP.

In any event, the BSIP, and the EP Plan itself, will be subject to annual reviews for formal updates, whose effects will be considered by the Partnership for inclusion, through the formal variation procedures as set out in Section 138L of the Transport Act 2000, into this Enhanced Partnership Plan.

Whilst the principal alignment will be with the Local Transport Plan as this articulates NELC's overall transport strategy, linkages to other key strategies have also guided preparation of the BSIP and EP Plan, most notably:

- the Economic Strategy;
- the Air Quality Strategy and associated 2020 Action Plan;
- the Community Safety Action Plan; and
- the Health & Wellbeing Strategic Framework.

The Council's 2016 'Outcomes Framework', as drawn upon for the BSIP and as carried forward into the 2021 Framework, is also an important input, creating a delivery model that facilitates the council in moving towards a 'fully commissioning and enabling organisation'.

This plan outlines the approach to commissioning in order to achieve the outcomes which will deliver the priorities of "stronger economy and stronger communities". The framework has five broad themes, under which sit a range of outcomes which the council considers to be important in achieving its priorities.

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<sup>5</sup> While the first Bus Service Improvement Plan (2021) was approved by NELC Cabinet in October 2021, certain of the Measures may require further approval by NELC Scrutiny &/or Portfolio Holder &/or Cabinet, as scope and impacts are identified and developed. Approval will always be sought at the lowest delegated level.