


## Leicestershire Enhanced Bus Partnership Board

### Minutes of meeting held on 7th November 2024 at 10am via MS Teams

Present			
Name	Organisation	Name	Organisation
David Taylor (DT)	Chair / Independent Consultant	Lee Quincy (LQ)	LCC
Toby France (TF)	Arriva	Emma Odabas (EO)	LCC
Ross Hitchcock (RH)	trentbarton (Wellglade)	Andrew Jeffrey (AJ)	LCC
David Brookes (DB)	Centrebus	Hina Gadhia (HG)	LCC
Patrick Stringer (PS)	Stagecoach	Sarah Chetwyn (SC)	LCC
David Conway (DC)	NCT	Bijel Mistry	Leicester City Council
		Liz Hopwell	Charnwood BC
Apologies			
Barry Allitt	CT4N		

	Item	Lead
1	<p><b>Welcome and introductions</b></p> <p>AJ opened the meeting in place of DT while connection issues were being resolved.</p>	AJ
2	<p><b>Actions from previous Board and Forum meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EP Board 29th July 2024</li> <li>EP Forum 26th September 2024</li> </ul> <div style="text-align: right; margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <p><b>Actions from previous meetings</b></p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="width: 30%;"> <div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; background-color: #d9ead3;"> <p>EP Board 29th July 2024 <b>LCC to share design version of BSIP24 - COMPLETED</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; background-color: #d9ead3;"> <p>EP Board 29th July 2024 <b>LCC to share schedule of network review roadshows – COMPLETED FOR MELTON AND ONGOING FOR NEXT PHASES</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid green; padding: 5px; background-color: #d9ead3;"> <p>EP Board 29th July 2024 <b>LCC to share final agreed Leicestershire Buses logo - COMPLETED</b></p> </div> </div> <div style="width: 30%; text-align: center;"> <div style="border: 2px solid orange; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 20px; background-color: #fce4d6;"> <p><b>LCC to circulate BSIP funding trackers – IN PROGRESS</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 2px solid orange; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px; background-color: #fce4d6;"> <p><b>Operators to email ideas for promotions – IN PROGRESS / T&amp;F</b></p> </div> </div> <div style="width: 30%;"> <div style="border: 2px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; background-color: #d9edf7;"> <p>EP Forum 26th September 2024 <b>LCC to confirm details of eligible services for free fares promotion with operators and circulate comms pack - COMPLETED</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 2px solid orange; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin-bottom: 10px; background-color: #fce4d6;"> <p>EP Forum 26th September 2024 <b>LCC to schedule Branding T&amp;F meeting – IN PROGRESS</b></p> </div> <div style="border: 2px solid blue; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #d9edf7;"> <p>EP Forum 26th September 2024 <b>All to feedback to LCC about EP content on CHYM – IN PROGRESS</b></p> </div> </div> </div> <p>AJ updated on completed items and ongoing work as shown above. Members <b>agreed</b> the respective minutes as a true record. DT noted that the updated EP Plan incorporating the governance changes agreed by the Board at its meeting on 29th July is being progressed so that the revised document can be published on CHYM in due course.</p>	AJ / DT

<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Feedback from Free Fare Super Saturdays fares promotion</b></p> <p>The promotion has bedded down well but with some snagging which had generated customer complaints to LCC about being incorrectly charged for travel on qualifying journeys. These have been raised with individual operators including in cases where a refund is appropriate. The main issues experienced have been in relation to poor awareness of the scheme and eligibility criteria by individual staff in driver as well as some supervisor and customer services teams. Overall the number of reported issues is low with minimal escalation to local or LCC elected members who, in the few such cases, have been briefed appropriately on the issue and mitigations. Social media activity has also been largely positive albeit constituting a higher reputational risk to LCC than to operators from any negative posts (e.g. a comment that driver refusals constitute misleading advertising).</p> <p>Weekly updates are also being provided to all operators to refresh key messages and ensure consistent understanding by staff. LCC asked that staff notices and other relevant communications prior to Saturday, 9th November, should advise that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Journeys to and from Leicester city are included in the promotion where the requirement that customers board <u>or</u> alight in Leicestershire is clearly met – some challenges have been made on the belief that travel had to be entirely within the county</li> <li>• The promotion is entirely funded by LCC – this addresses a perception by drivers that free travel is a revenue risk for operators</li> <li>• Customers should be allowed free travel in cases of doubt – this reflects guidance provided by some operators on the negative impression created by unnecessary challenge or poor driver-customer interaction.</li> </ul> <p>TF: These messages are being included in Arriva communications as well as a weekly scheduled social media post on Fridays to staff working on the following day.</p> <p>PS: The reported issues on Stagecoach services concern one particular depot where the local management has been following up to ensure all staff are aware of the promotion.</p> <p>DB: Some teething problems had been experienced at first but have settled down.</p> <p>RH: Have kept the messaging simple so it's clear to staff and customers using the routes included in the offer that travel is free in Leicestershire</p> <p>EO: Based on similar experience during the Easter fares scheme, can LCC assist by providing assets for depots such as an LCC boundary map or list of settlements in the county?</p> <p>HG: An expandable boundary map has been added to Choose How You Move to help residents check that their journeys meet the criteria.</p> <p>TF: The issue is that drivers have to be aware of multiple zonal and boundary variations. The approach taken to Free Fare days has been to simplify this by programming the LCC information as fare stages in the ticket machine. Going forward, if the promotion is successful, Arriva would be keen to see a co-ordinated activity across both councils as in Derby City and Derbyshire.</p> <p>BM: Leicester City would be happy to support this approach to future schemes subject to funding and capacity.</p> <p>TF: Can we start to have discussions now on what a future ticketing scheme might look like and align with parallel conversations at the Leicester EP Board?</p>	<p>AJ</p>
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	<p>EO: Yes, that is sensible and gives a platform for our EP to take forward through the Fares Task &amp; Finish group.</p> <p><b>ACTION: LCC to arrange T&amp;F meeting following on from Leicester EP Board discussion on 20th November</b></p>	
4	<p><b>Passenger Transport Network reviews update</b></p> <p>LCC will be evaluating bids for the Melton review shortly. Planning for Phase 2 of the review (Charnwood) is ongoing with operator involvement. ITP have completed the data collection from operators for all 5 phases and LCC is now reviewing this in accordance with the timeline. However, it is likely that timings and implementation dates of the later phases may need to be adjusted at short notice to work around the pre-election restrictions for the LCC elections in May 2025.</p> <p>TF: It would be helpful if changes are timed to align with school dates to minimise disruption to students. Also, Arriva's and other operator experience with the East of England Traffic Commissioner (who is also the Senior Traffic Commissioner) is that short notice registrations will be refused so the full 70 days' notice will be needed.</p> <p>EO: LCC has an internal working group to ensure that school changes are integrated with wider public transport planning. The expectation on registrations is that this would be done on a bulk basis per round to minimise short notice applications but this is dependent on the bids received from operators and whether more work is needed to agree the final tenders.</p> <p><b>ACTION: LCC to contact the Traffic Commissioner's office to identify any specific requirements of the TC in relation to registrations.</b></p> <p>LH: Can LCC confirm the venues for the Charnwood roadshows?</p> <p>EO: Options and venues being explored include the marketplace, John Storer House, a targeted event for staff and students at the University as well as an event in Syston. Experience from Melton was that visitors valued take-away information (timetables, posters, leaflets) that doesn't have to be specifically tied to the locality or review.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Operators to provide LCC with hard copy information on confirmation of event dates by LCC.</b></p> <p>TF: Was there much elected member engagement with the roadshow as Arriva has received a request from a county councillor to change a commercial service in Melton?</p> <p>EO: It's not believed these are linked but members have been kept informed of the engagement pathway. The roadshow generated a number of follow-up meeting requests from parish councils which shows they have valued the opportunity to be involved.</p>	EO / HG
5	<p><b>Task &amp; Finish Groups update</b></p> <p>LCC is looking to arrange the next round of group meetings before the EP Forum in early 2025. The Branding T&amp;F will be asked to review and recommend guidelines which LCC is drafting for the Leicestershire Buses brand. The Fares T&amp;F will review the outcome of the Free Fare Super Saturdays promotion and to discuss the recent Budget announcement on the increase to the £2 fare cap including how the EP should respond and communicate the change to residents; one possible outcome is that the cap might prompt a migration to cheaper operator day or other flexible travel products. The DfT</p>	AJ

has since written to LTAs asking for confirmation of continued participation in the fare cap scheme by both authorities and operators not already involved.

DC: NCT is communicating the increase on its website so that there is some public information available as well as the availability of a cheaper day ticket for there and back journeys but is not yet committed to participating in the scheme. The effect will vary by operators and the type of services they run so mainly or wholly urban networks are more likely to have cheaper products than longer distance services where the benefit of the cap is more obvious.

PS: The 50% increase came as surprise to many in the industry so, while it would be Stagecoach’s intention to continue participating, this will ultimately depend on the revised funding mechanism and what that will look like when the allocations are translated into reimbursement amounts.

TF: DfT can only increase fares under £3 in line with inflation, however this causes a restriction on operators because costs don’t always rise in parallel so there’s a risk of service withdrawals if operators cannot charge a commercial fare that reflects that.

**ACTION: LCC to include the fare cap as a priority item at the next Fares T&F group meeting when arranged.**

**6 Service change dates 2024-26**

AJ



**Service change dates**

Change date description	Month(s)	Actual dates in 2024/25
First day after Autumn half-term break	October	28 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Start of school Spring term	January	6 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Start of school Summer term	March / April	28th April 2025
First day after Spring half-term break	May / June	2nd June 2025
Start of school Summer holiday	July	14th July 2025
Start of school Autumn term	August	26th August 2025
First day after Autumn half-term break	October	27th October 2025
Start of school Spring term	January	5th January 2026

LCC and Leicester City officers have identified dates going forward to January 2026 and that 4 of these align with each other in accordance with the current arrangements.

DT: The City’s BSIP quotes 9th July rather than 14th as proposed – can this be checked? Otherwise are there any objections to the proposed dates?

DC: Only to point out that the Leicestershire term dates are unique and that some cross-border services such as NCT service 1 and the trentbarton Skylink services may not be possible to fully comply.

**ACTION: LCC to review / adjust the exempted services list as necessary and add to CHYM.**

	Board members <b>agreed</b> the service change dates.	
<b>7</b>	<p><b>Operator issues</b></p> <p>RH sought clarification on:</p> <p>(i) Progress with pinch point work including the impact of illegal parking on Loughborough town centre routes and if further restrictions can be considered.</p> <p>EO: LCC is looking at a range on interventions including quick wins like this as well as how to leverage Local Transport Plan funding through a new multimodal action infrastructure planning for larger schemes.</p> <p>(ii) Improving communication about road works and other disruptions to bus services to avoid delays in identifying suitable mitigations and keeping customers fully informed. The A435 overnight closures have been difficult to manage especially at major shift changeover times at EMA because of information gaps and resultant pressure on deciding how to maintain impacted services.</p> <p>EO / HG: We are happy to take this away so that operators can be engaged earlier and more effectively such as through reinstating the regular network management meetings that took place pre-pandemic.</p> <p><b>ACTION: LCC to review communications processes with works promoters / lead agencies and also internal LCC teams</b></p>	All
<b>8</b>	<p><b>AOB / Questions</b></p> <p>None.</p>	
<b>9</b>	<p><b>DoNMs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PTUG – 23rd January 2025</li> <li>• EP Forum – 6th February 2025</li> <li>• EP Board – 20th March 2025 – in person at Arriva Midlands Thurmaston</li> </ul>	