

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 21 November 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme

Purpose: To consider the East Sussex Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 and**
 - (2) Agree that East Sussex County Council proceed with the formation the EP.**
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1 Background Information

1.1 On 15 March 2021 the Government launched "[Bus Back Better](#)", a new bus strategy for England (outside London). It aims to rejuvenate local bus services, making them attractive for passengers, cheaper, easier to understand and use, faster and more dependable, and greener. It acknowledges the decades-long decline in bus patronage nationally and points to towns and cities which have bucked the trend, increasing passenger numbers with coordinated services and investment. Greater use of buses, and more buses being zero emission, will contribute to Government's central objectives: carbon net zero and levelling up.

1.2 The government strategy placed new requirements on local transport authorities (LTAs) to develop Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) and set up Enhanced Partnerships (EPs) with local bus operators, with actions on networks and services, fares and ticketing, passenger facilities, and highway bus priority measures.

1.3 At the [Lead Member for Transport and Environment meeting of 18 July 2022](#) approval was given to delegate to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport the authority to finalise the EP Plan and Scheme following further technical work and feedback from the Department for Transport (DfT). The EP Plan and Scheme were finalised incorporating outputs from the technical work and DfT feedback.

1.4 On 7 September 2022 the DfT confirmed East Sussex's [BSIP](#) funding of £41.4m. The DfT indicated that funding would be released in fiscal years as per the BSIP Financial Summary Table and only after the Council have a made EP Plan and Scheme.

1.5 The statutory process required to 'make' the East Sussex EP Plan and Scheme began on 23 September 2022 with the commencement of the operator objection period. The operator objection period ended on 21 October 2022 with no objections having been received. All operators were contacted as part of this procedure. A full list of operators can be found in Table C1 and C2 in appendix 3.

1.6 The next step of the statutory process was the key stakeholder engagement period. This commenced immediately after the objection period had closed on 21 October 2022 and will run to the 18 November 2022. A summary of any feedback received from key stakeholders will be presented to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. Below is a list of the key stakeholders:

- all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;
- organisations that represent local passengers;

- other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals;
- the Traffic Commissioner for the south east;
- the chief officer of police for each area to which the plan relates;
- Transport Focus;
- the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 East Sussex County Council's mission as a local transport authority is to ensure that East Sussex residents and visitors enjoy the highest possible quality bus services that provide a frequent and comprehensive choice, reduce congestion, and make a positive contribution to better air quality and decarbonisation. This mission is supported by the authority's bus operators who will play a key role in its delivery. Equality implications will be assessed as plans develop to enable maximum benefits for people sharing specific protected characteristics.

2.2 The East Sussex BSIP is an extremely ambitious plan that seeks to stimulate and drive significant improvements to bus services across the local authority area and the wider region. The BSIP intends to deliver as many of the ambitious proposals as possible, provide value for money and:

- Recover bus usage from the Covid-19 pandemic, taking account of consequential changes in travel patterns
- Increase bus usage significantly in the next few years and to eventually deliver a transformational change in bus usage.
- Deliver a step change in bus provision to both current and new bus users.
- Deliver lower and simpler fares.
- Deliver more, higher quality (more accurate and richer) passenger information.

2.3 The Lead Member for Transport and Environment is therefore recommended to:

- (1) Approve the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme, as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2; and
- (2) agree that the County Council proceed with the formation of the EP.

RUPERT CLUBB

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All members

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan