# Warwickshire's Vision for Bus Travel

Public Consultation on the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme 1.

**4th January – 1st February 2022**

**Public information document**



# Overview

## Bus Service Improvement Plan

Between July and September 2021, Warwickshire County Council (WCC) asked stakeholders for their views on the improvements that need to be made to local bus services in Warwickshire. These helped to shape a Warwickshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which was published in November 2021.

Bus Service Improvement Plans are a key part of the government’s National Bus Strategy for England (‘Bus Back Better’) published in March 2021, which sets out a vision for future bus service improvement across the country. Warwickshire’s BSIP was developed collaboratively by WCC and local bus operators. Its vision for Warwickshire bus services is:

*“Bus services in Warwickshire will better meet the aspirations of local communities by becoming more frequent, more reliable, and better integrated with other travel options. New ticket options, marketing campaigns, promotional fares and supportive local policies will help to drive growth in local bus patronage. Along with emerging technologies and clearer information about bus schedules, all components will help to reduce and simplify the cost of bus travel while sustaining a comprehensive network of bus services across the county.”*

The BSIP sets out the desired improvements to the bus network which, subject to funding, will encourage more use of bus services. WCC’s bid to central Government is for approximately £153 million from the £3bn funding made available to local authorities over a three-year period (2022-2025). The Department for Transport (DfT) will assess the BSIP when deciding how much funding they will allocate to Warwickshire.

Please see the supporting information for a copy of the BSIP.

## The Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme for Warwickshire

To deliver the objectives of the BSIP, WCC and bus operators have jointly prepared an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme. The EP Plan sets out the overall vision and objectives to improve bus services, and the EP Scheme gives details on the actions we plan to take. This is the first Scheme of this type and we expect further Schemes to follow later, subject to additional funding.

Our objectives are to:

1. Provide more frequent buses.

ii. Enable bus services to become faster and more reliable.

iii. Offer ticketing solutions and fares which are cheaper for the user.

iv. Provide a more comprehensive network.

v. Make the bus network easier to understand.

vi. Make the bus network easier to use.

vii. Provide a network which is better integrated.

A Warwickshire Enhanced Partnership Board has been set up to review and monitor the delivery of the Warwickshire EP Plan and Scheme. The Board is chaired by the Chief Executive of Bus Users UK and includes representatives from WCC, bus operators, train operating companies and the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

A Stakeholder Reference Group has been established to provide external insight and constructive challenge to the EP Board. In addition, a cross-party members group has been established to provide input and guidance to the EP Board.

Please see the supporting information for a copy of the EP Plan.

## The Enhanced Partnership – First Scheme

The mechanism for delivering specific measures is through an EP Scheme, which sets out the legally binding commitments of both WCC and the bus operators. These will contribute towards at least one of the EP Plan objectives.

The DfT have advised local authorities that to meet their deadline of 31 March 2022, the first EP schemes should be based on ‘business as usual’ measures. These are the ones which can be delivered without any funding from the National Bus Strategy.

Based on this, the first Warwickshire EP Scheme includes the following measures:

* Implementing a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service.
* Setting ground rules for information provision.
* Developing a marketing campaign to encourage people to use the bus network.
* Investigating how bus reliability can be improved through enforcing parking restrictions and greater partnership working.
* Repositioning the bus as a priority transport mode in new housing developments and utilising income from developers in the most appropriate way.
* Maintaining the bus network until a network review is undertaken.
* Implementing a bus passenger charter.
* Undertaking feasibility studies into schemes to encourage users to reduce private car use and increase their use of bus services, such as Red Routes, Workplace Parking Levy and Road User Charging.

Please see the supporting information for more detail on the first EP Scheme.

Additional measures, to be outlined in further Schemes, will be dependent on WCC receiving funding from the DfT. These could include more aspirational and expansive actions (e.g., bus priority measures, all-electric buses, real-time information, on board audio and visual announcements, improved journey planning features and fare reduction promotions). These will be subject to future consultation once the proposals are further developed in partnership with bus operators.

# Consultation Information

## Why we are consulting?

This consultation is an opportunity to comment on the EP Plan and the first EP Scheme. We want to understand whether you think that the EP Plan and Scheme are an appropriate approach to achieving the vision outlined in the BSIP.

**Further Information**

The information provided here summarises the proposals. Further information, including a copy of the full EP Plan and first EP Scheme, is available at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask), along with the following supporting documents:

* The full EP Plan and first Scheme
* The Warwickshire BSIP
* The Warwickshire BSIP Engagement Response Report
* WCC Equality Impact Assessment for the Warwickshire EP Plan and first Scheme

## How to take part

* Where possible please submit feedback online via the survey available at [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask)
* If you would like a paper copy of the consultation or need it in an alternative format, please contact us by phone on 01926 412395 or by email: contactcommunitiesgrp@warwickshire.gov.uk.
* If you need an Easy Read version of the consultation, please also contact us by phone on 01926 412395 or email: contactcommunitiesgrp@warwickshire.gov.uk.
* All responses must be received by 11:59pm on **1 February 2022**.

## What will happen after the consultation?

Once the consultation closes, we will carefully consider all feedback received and prepare a consultation report. This report will summarise the key themes and consider whether the final EP Plan and EP Scheme can be adopted with or without modifications.

The documents will be considered by Cabinet on Thursday 10 March 2022 to formally agree the County Council entering an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators by 1 April 2022 to deliver the measures in the first EP Scheme. Future EP Schemes are currently under development and, subject to funding being available, will be the subject of similar consultation in future.

The report to County Council Cabinet will be made available at [https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk](https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/) approximately 5 working days before the meeting.