

Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme for Buses

December 2021

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0. Definitions

- 0.1 In this Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme document, the following capitalised terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them below:

Term	Meaning
1985 Act	Transport Act 1985
2000 Act	Transport Act 2000
2017 Act	Bus Services Act 2017
Bus Operators (or Operators)	All providers of Qualifying Bus Services
The Council	The County of Herefordshire District Council
Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation	A formal variation of the relevant Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s) as a result of the mechanism set out in section 4, which will then constitute a formal variation of the relevant scheme for the purposes of s.138E(1) of the 2000 Act.
Facilities	Those facilities referred to in Part B which shall be deemed such for the purposes of s.138D(1) of the 2000 Act.
Herefordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (or Herefordshire BSIP, or BSIP)	The Bus Service Improvement Plan published by the Council.
Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership Board (or Board or EP Board)	The committee of Herefordshire Bus Operator representatives and Council representatives responsible for considering recommendations and making decisions including specific Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations using the mechanism in section 4.
Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership (or Enhanced Partnership or EP)	The Enhanced Partnership covering the geographic extent of the administrative boundary of the county of Herefordshire shown for identification purposes only at Figure 4-1

Term	Meaning
Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership Reference Group	The committee of identified stakeholders, providing external insight and challenge on priorities included with any EP Plan or Scheme, and making recommendations to the Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership Board.
Measures	Those measures referred to in Part B which shall be deemed as such for the purposes of s.138D(2) of the 2000 Act.
Non-qualifying Bus Service	Services excluded from classification as Qualifying Bus Services.
Qualifying Bus Service	<p>A registered local bus service with one or more stopping places within the geographical area of the Enhanced Partnership, with the exception of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any schools or works registered local bus service not eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant • Any cross-boundary registered local bus service with less than 10% of its registered mileage within the Enhanced Partnership area • Any services operated under section 22 of the 1985 Act • Any registered local bus service which is an excursion or tour • Any other registered local bus service that the Operators and Council decide should be excluded from all or specific requirements of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme. <p>For the avoidance of doubt, a list of Qualifying Bus Services will be published at the start of each Council financial year.</p>
Requirements	Those requirements placed upon Bus Operators identified as such within Part B, which shall be deemed as such for the purposes of s.138C 2017 Act.

Part A Enhanced Partnership Plan

The Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership for Buses is made in accordance with Section 138G(1) of the Transport Act 2000 by The County of Herefordshire District Council.

The Plan comes into effect on 1 April 2022 and will remain valid until revoked.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Situated in the south west of the West Midlands region bordering Wales, Herefordshire has beautiful unspoilt countryside with remote valleys and rivers and a distinctive heritage. The River Wye winds through the county, flowing east from the Welsh border through Hereford city before turning south to flow through the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Malvern Hills border the east of the county, while the south west is dominated by the western reaches of the Black Mountains.
- 1.2 Whilst the landscape and setting make for an idyllic place to live, there are significant challenges for the operation of effective and viable bus services. Small overall population dispersed across the area limits the demand for bus travel. Furthermore, high car ownership results from necessity. Even so, bus services are vitally important for those who do not have access to a car, particularly older and young people, and those that want to move away from a reliance on private vehicles. Buses will play an important role in actions to address the Council's declared climate emergency.
- 1.3 The Council, together with its bus operators, wishes to improve public transport connectivity and access to facilities and services, as well as offering a viable alternative to car use. This aim is reflected in the Herefordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) published in October 2021.
- 1.4 Drawing on the BSIP, this document fulfils the statutory requirements set out by the Bus Services Act 2017 of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan for Herefordshire. Initially, this will facilitate the introduction of an EP Scheme aimed at supporting and developing bus services across Herefordshire, with the aim of starting to achieve the objectives set out in the BSIP
- 1.5 In accordance with statutory requirements for an EP Plan, this document includes:
 - Overview and map of the geographical area covered

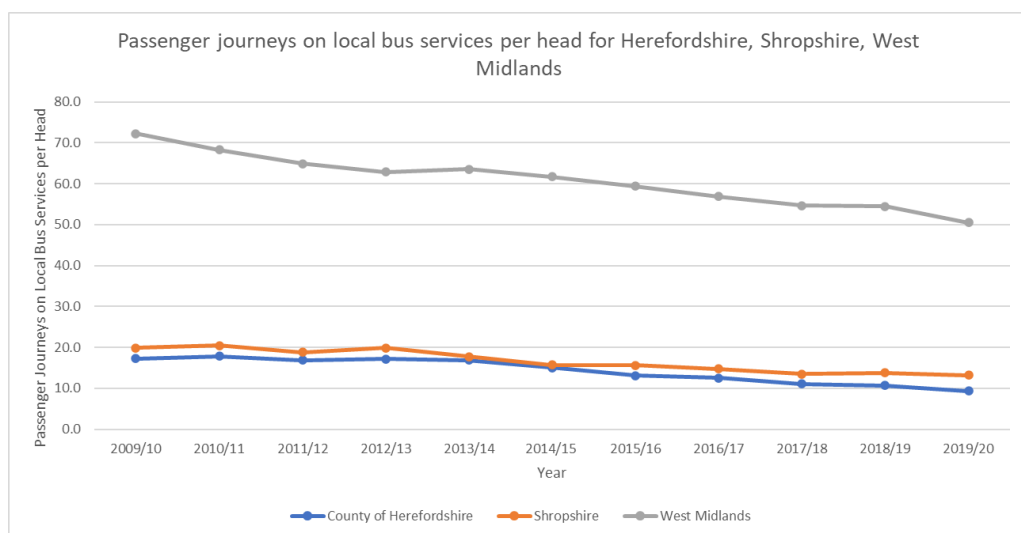
- Factors affecting the local bus market
- Summary of passengers' experiences in using bus services and the priorities of users and non-users for improvements
- Trends in bus journey speeds and the impact of congestion on bus services
- Objectives that are sought for bus service provision
- Interventions needed to achieve the desired outcomes
- Governance arrangements
- Competition test

2. Bus travel in Herefordshire

The network

- 2.1 Just over 2 million passenger journeys were undertaken on local bus services in Herefordshire in 2018/19. The network has seen patronage decline over the past decade. Between 2009/10 and 2018/19, total local bus patronage fell by 35%. Concessionary travel use fell by 29%, suggesting that there has been a more significant fall in fare-paying passengers.
- 2.2 Between 2009/10 and 2019/20 passenger journeys per head of population fell by 46%, more than in neighbouring Shropshire (down 33.6%) and the West Midlands region (down 30.1%).

Figure 2-1 - Passenger journeys on local services per head of population



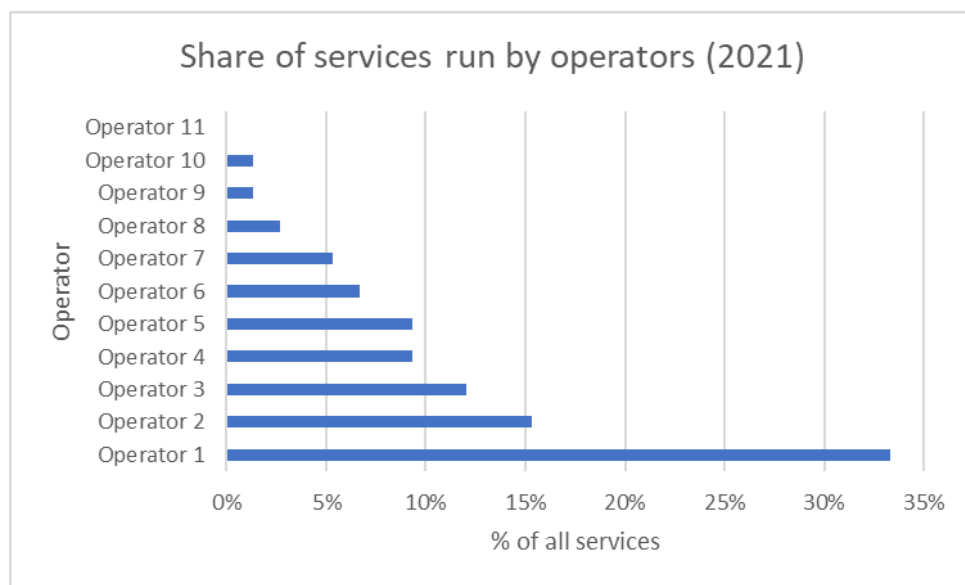
- 2.3 The bus network is focused on Hereford, with services radiating out to the market towns. These operate with varying frequencies, which are at best hourly. From those towns, some services continue into neighbouring areas, running on to Gloucester, Worcester and Ludlow. There are several services that cross into Wales, including the X3 to Cardiff and TrawsCymru T14 service via Hay-on-Wye to Brecon, Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff. There are also links to Llandrindod Wells and Monmouth.
- 2.4 Several other rural bus services link larger villages to Hereford. Across the county there are more occasional services, many only operating on certain days of the week, that provide links from rural hinterlands into the nearest market town or to Hereford.

- 2.5 Within Hereford itself is a network of local city bus services, linking the main residential areas to the city centre. These provide quite a complex pattern of loops and route variations and operate, with most offering a 30-minute frequency. The city network converges on the City Bus Station, whilst other bus services use the County Bus Station.
- 2.6 The bus network is shown in Figure 2-4, with more detailed local maps available at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/78/bus_maps.

Operators

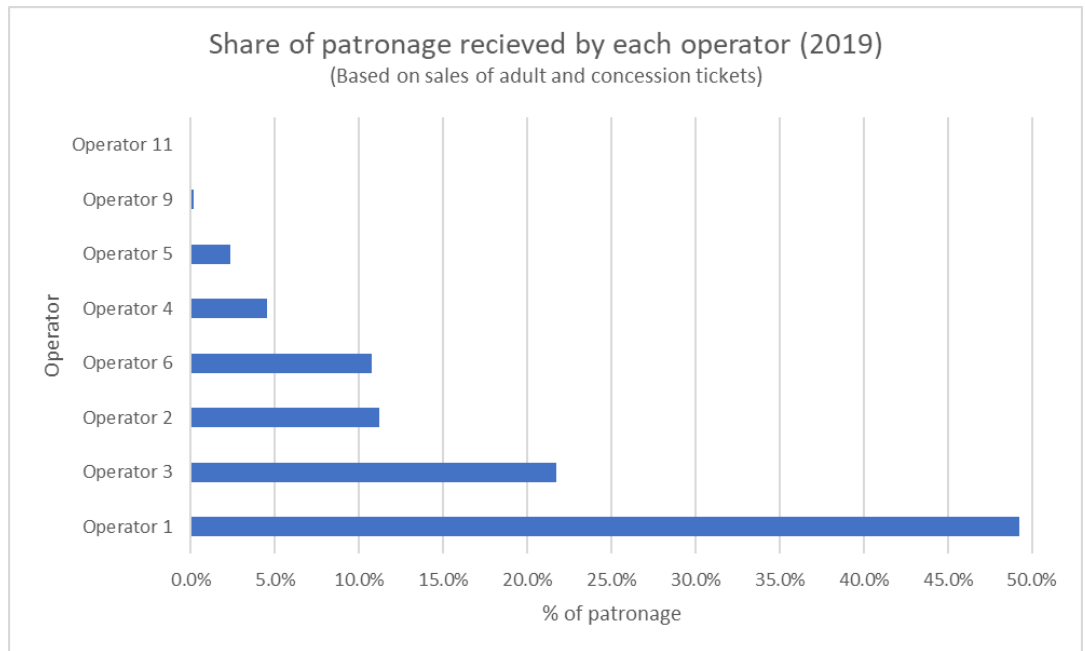
- 2.7 Herefordshire’s bus network is dominated by local independent companies. Eleven operators provide services. Whilst three of the large national operators run services into Herefordshire, they have no base in the county and have a relatively small share of services.

Figure 2-2 - Share of services run by each operator



- 2.8 115 different registered local bus services operate, for at least some of their length, in the county. The largest operator provides a third of all registered services. The top five operators between them run just 75% of the registered services.

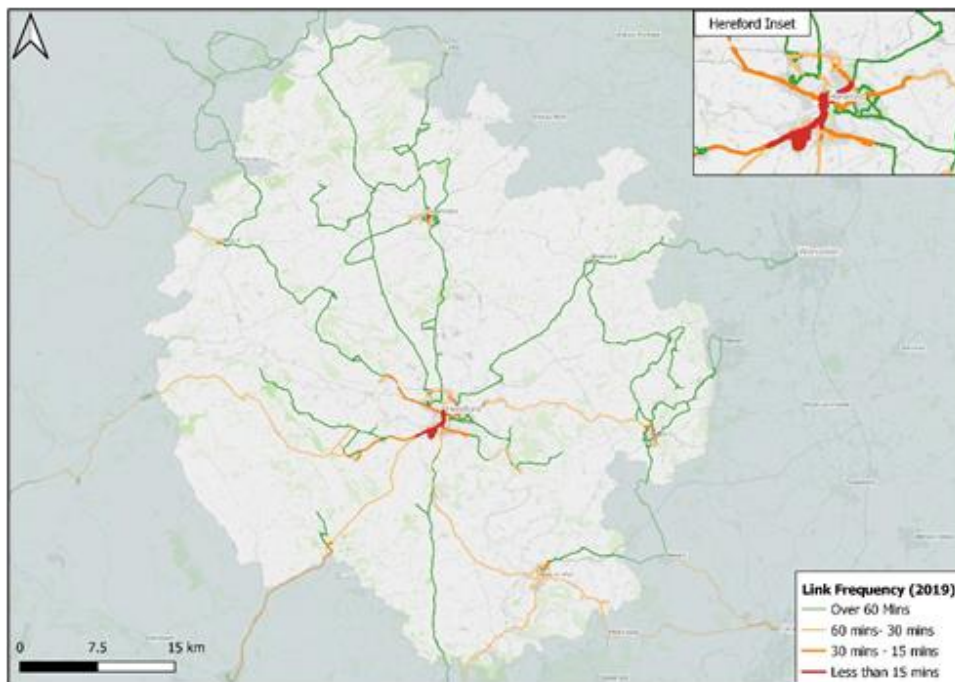
Figure 2-3 - Share of patronage by operator

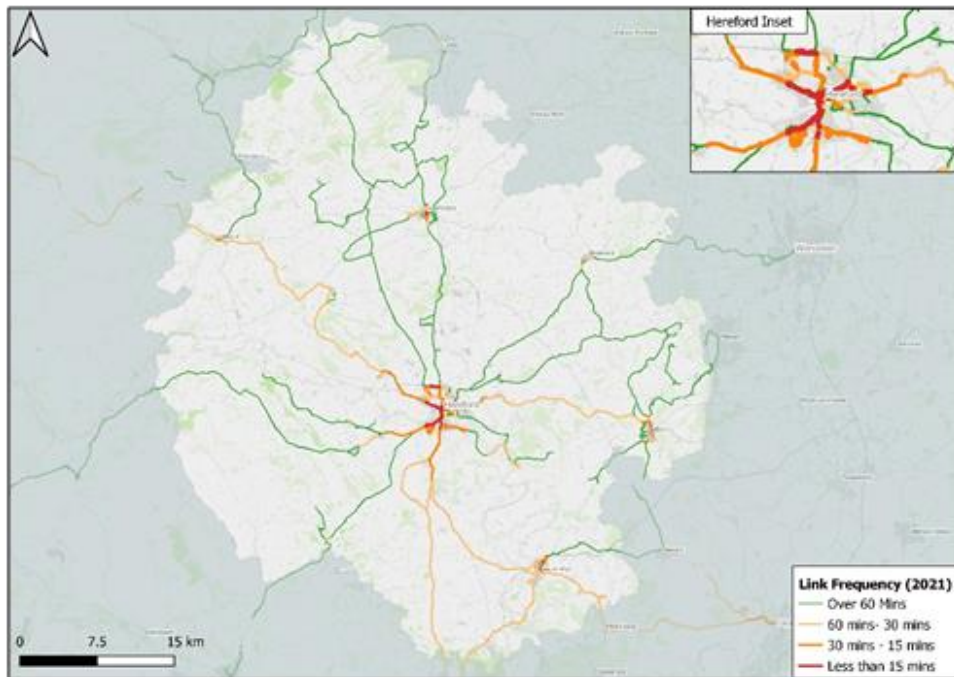


Service frequency

- 2.9 The overall bus network is shown in Figure 2-4, along with maps showing the relative frequencies both now and pre-pandemic.

Figure 2-4 - Herefordshire Bus Network Link Frequency 2019 and 2021





The impact of Covid-19

- 2.10 Although there has been some uplift in service frequency on certain corridors between 2019 and autumn 2021 (notably the Hereford - Monmouth and Hereford - Kington routes), operators have not returned to full Pre-Covid levels on some services, due to caution surrounding demand.
- 2.11 The Council is using Covid recovery funding to provide more Sunday buses and free weekend travel for a year (September 2021 – August 2022).

Network density

- 2.12 Much of the population does not have access to a frequent bus service. Based on 2021 service level, 43% of the county's population had access to at least an hourly bus service (measured during the morning peak). This reduced to just 8% that could access services with frequencies of 30 minutes or better, with these residents living exclusively in Hereford city.
- 2.13 Service frequency falls after 18:00, and there are no services operating after 20:00. Sunday service frequency is also low, with only five services operating, each with a frequency of less than hourly.

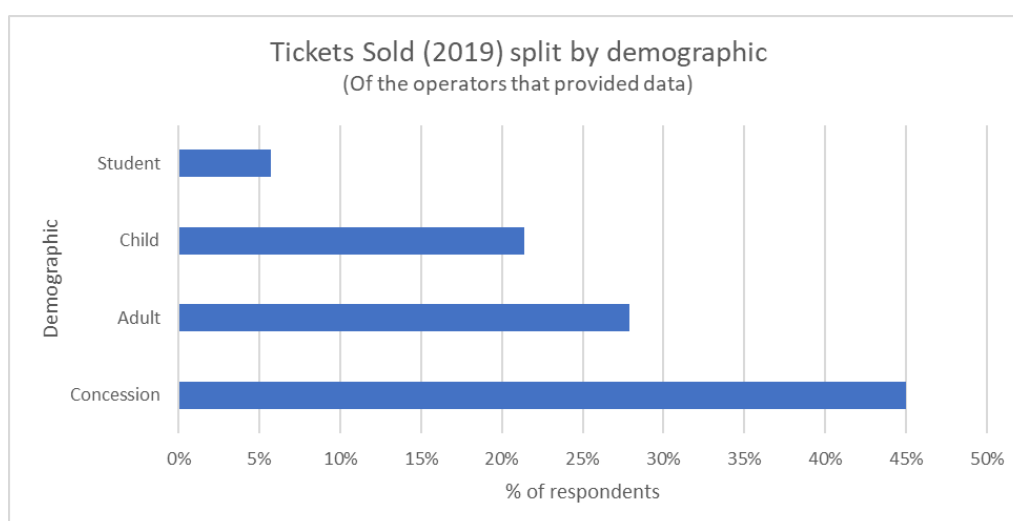
Table 1 - Proportion of population with access to different levels of service

Service frequency		% of population within 400m of a bus service		
	Monday (07:00 - 09:00)	Monday (after 18:00)	Monday (after 20:00)	Sunday daytime
Less than 30mins	8%	No service	No service	No service
30 mins - 60 mins	43%	No service		No service
All Services	56%	40%		25%

Users

- 2.14 Between 2009/10 and 2018/19, total local bus patronage fell by 35%. Concession use fell by 29%, suggesting that there was a more significant fall in fare-paying passengers.
- 2.15 The network is failing to attract fare paying adults. The largest single user group on the network in Herefordshire in 2019 was concessionary fare pass holders, making up approximately 45% of tickets sold (of operators that provided data). Full fare paying adults represent 28% of tickets sold whilst the remaining share was made up of child and student tickets.

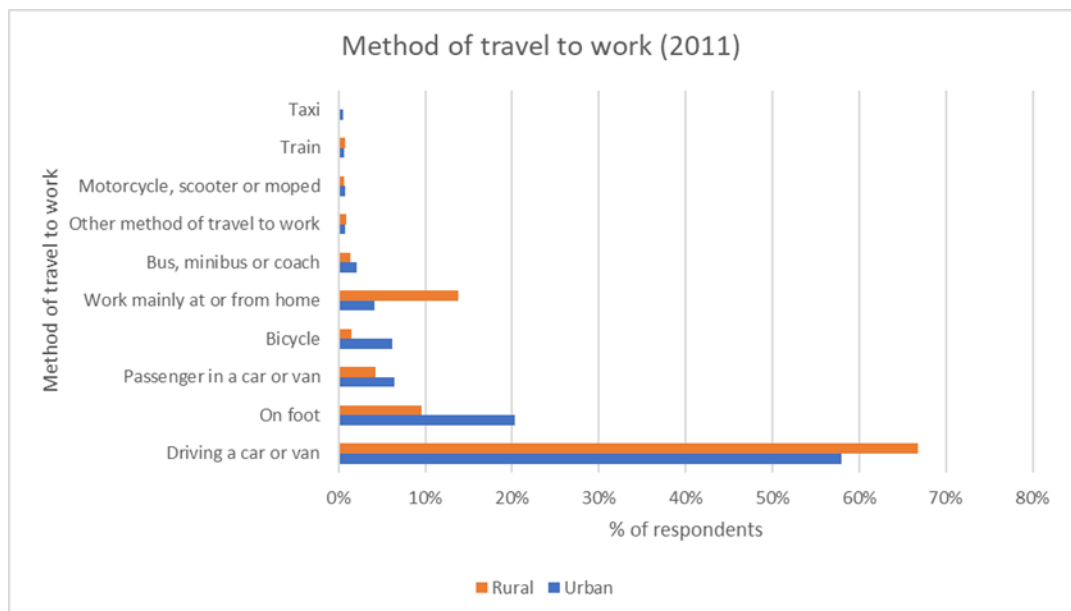
Figure 2-5 - Ticket data (2019) split by demographic



Modal share

- 2.16 With high car ownership, much of the population relies on the car as the main form of transport. The most recent available modal share statistics are from the 2011 Census, at a time when bus passenger journeys were 44% higher than in 2019/20.
- 2.17 In 2011, 62% of all journeys to work were by car and just 1.5% by bus (1% in rural areas, 2% in urban areas). 85% of households had a car, compared to 74% for England as a whole. The decline in bus patronage is likely to have increased the modal share towards car further, and when data is made available from the 2021 census, full analysis will be undertaken.

Figure 2-6 - Method of travel to work (2011)

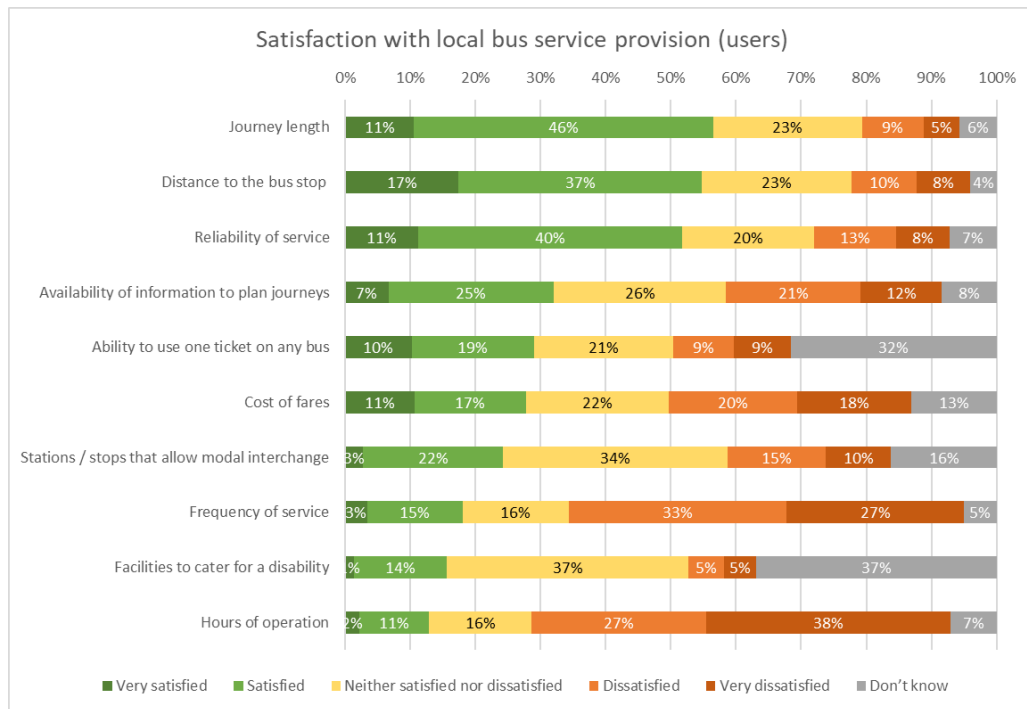


People's views

- 2.18 In summer 2021, an on-line survey was undertaken to better understand people's views of the current bus network and what they considered should be the priority actions for inclusion in the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 2.19 The survey received 753 responses, mainly from residents and with a few from representatives of organisations. 32% of respondents were non-users of bus. 33% were regular bus users and 35% occasional users of bus. Overall, 25% of respondents expected that their journey patterns would change because of the pandemic.

- 2.20 Bus users were most satisfied with journey length, distance to the bus stop and service reliability. They were least satisfied with service frequency, facilities to cater for those with disabilities and hours of operation.
- 2.21 In terms of reasons for using the car rather than bus, similar patterns existed for both bus users and non-users. Most cited were the lack of available buses and the frequency of services.

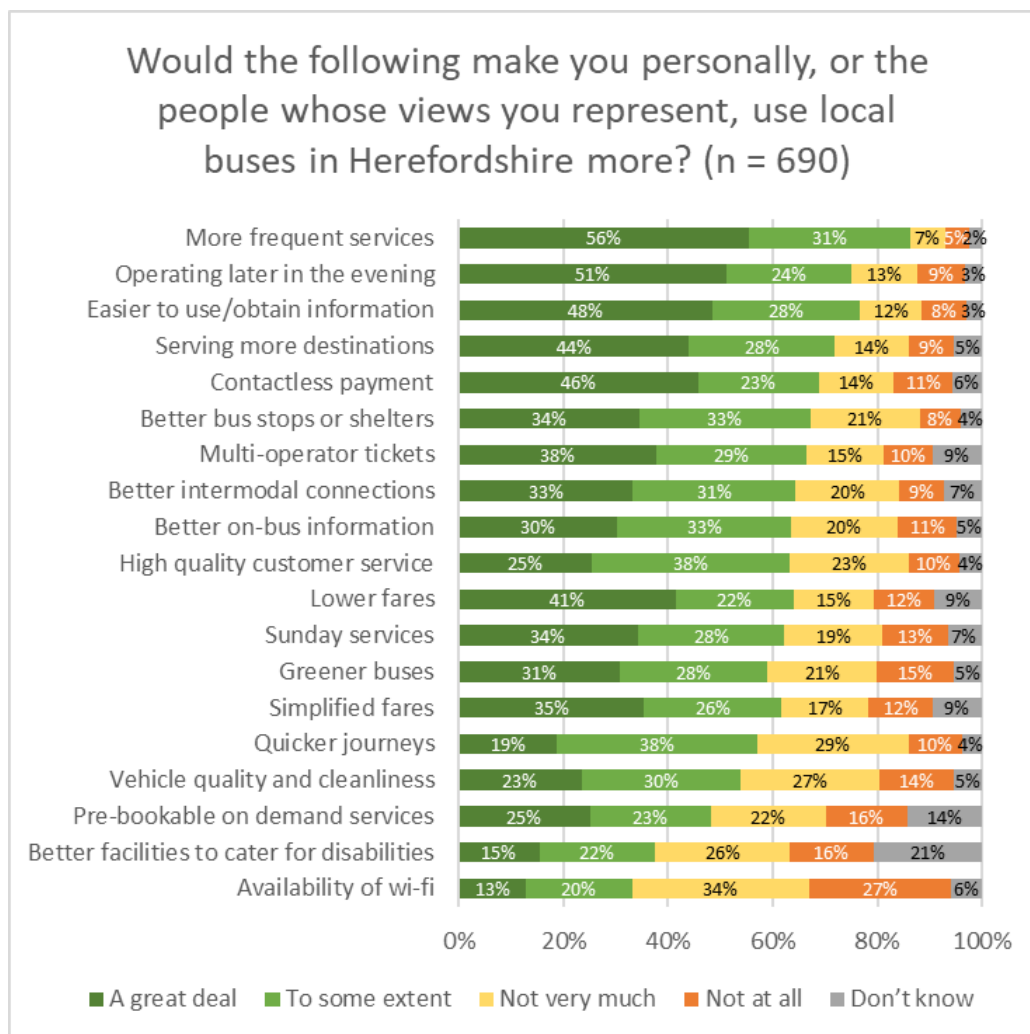
Figure 2-7 - Bus users' satisfaction



2.22 When asked what they considered to be the priorities for the BSIP, the following were highlighted:

- More frequent services (87%)
- Evening services (75%)
- Information that is easier to obtain and use (76%)
- More destinations reached by bus (72%)

Figure 2-8 - Views on which improvements would encourage bus use



2.23 In terms of fares and ticketing, the provision of a multi-operator ticket was considered more important than lower fares. Meanwhile, improved bus stops were mid-ranking and rated above better vehicles. The priorities expressed by users and non-users were aligned and expressed almost in the same order, as highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2 - Priorities for bus users and non-users

Bus users	Non-bus users
More frequent services (88%)	More frequent services (83%)
Information easier to find/use (79%)	Information easier to find/use (74%)
Contactless payment (78%)	Contactless payment (73%)
Serving more destinations (72%)	Serving more destinations (71%)
Multi-operator ticket (69%)	Operate later in evening (68%)
Operate later in evening (68%)	Multi-operator ticket (67%)

2.24 For businesses and groups, priorities were:

- More frequent services (100%)
- Information that is easier to obtain and use (100%)
- Multi-operator ticketing (91%)

2.25 Two workshops were held to gauge the views and thoughts of elected members and wider stakeholder interests (business, Department of Work and Pensions, bus user representatives, community groups; disability groups). Both groups expressed a poor perception of the existing bus network, although bus users highlighted some positive points of services, including examples.

2.26 The main points to emerge were:

- Desire to see more consistent provision and improved frequencies on core routes (operating 07:00 – 22:00) and with a service 7 days per week
- Important to recognise the leisure/tourism potential of bus services
- More links between market towns, such as Kington – Leominster
- Concerns around the operation and image of City Bus Station
- The Council should coordinate the provision of information

Reliability

2.27 High car use is one factor that contributes to poor network reliability, particularly in Hereford. Bus reliability and punctuality are key concerns for the operators. Over time, timetabled journey times have increased to manage falls in reliability, affecting service frequency, service regularity and operating costs. In Herefordshire, the percentage of non-frequent bus services running on time has decreased from 92% in 2015/16 to 78% in 2018/19¹.

2.28 Leading to longer journey times and unreliable journeys, congestion directly increases operating costs, therefore potential capital for investment in service improvements and better levels of services is lost by operators having to maintain headways.

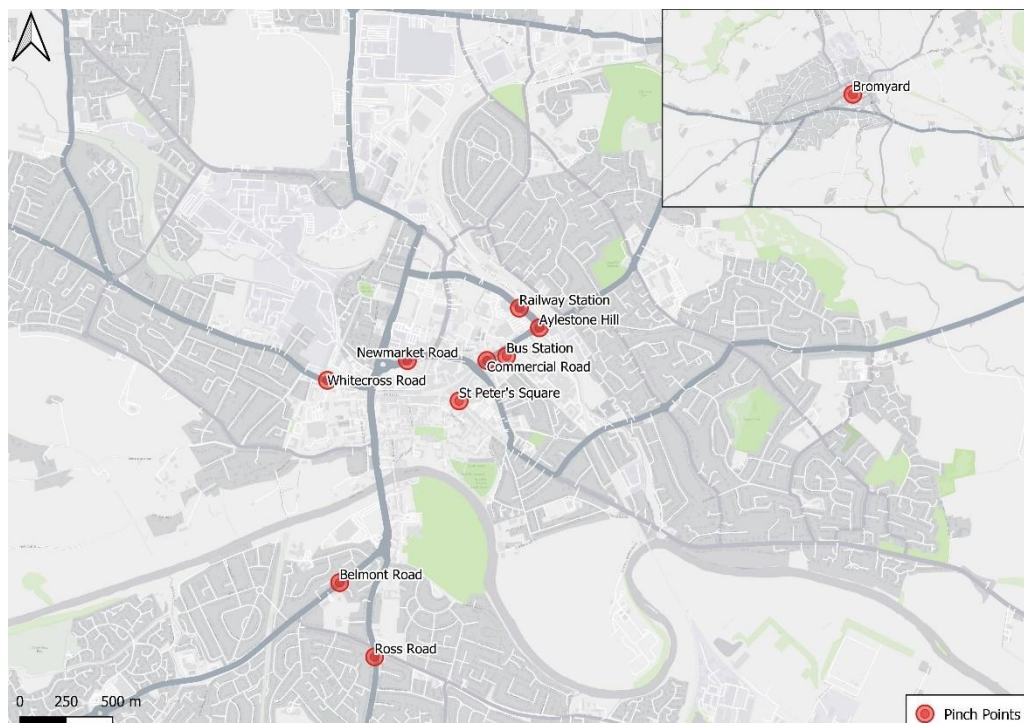
Pinch points

2.29 Operators were asked to identify sections of road and junctions where delays to their services occurred. Central Hereford is the main area for delays at locations including:

- Entry to the City and Country Bus Stations.
- Major roads into the city, including Belmont Road, Whitecross Road, Commercial Road and Aylestone Hill.
- Newmarket Road (a key link between major roads in the city).
- St Peter's Square (a narrow road located in the historic city centre).

2.30 Only one location outside of Hereford was identified, which was in Bromyard (Broad Street into Pump Street). The locations of pinch points identified is shown in Figure 2-9.

Figure 2-9 – Pinch points in Herefordshire identified by operators

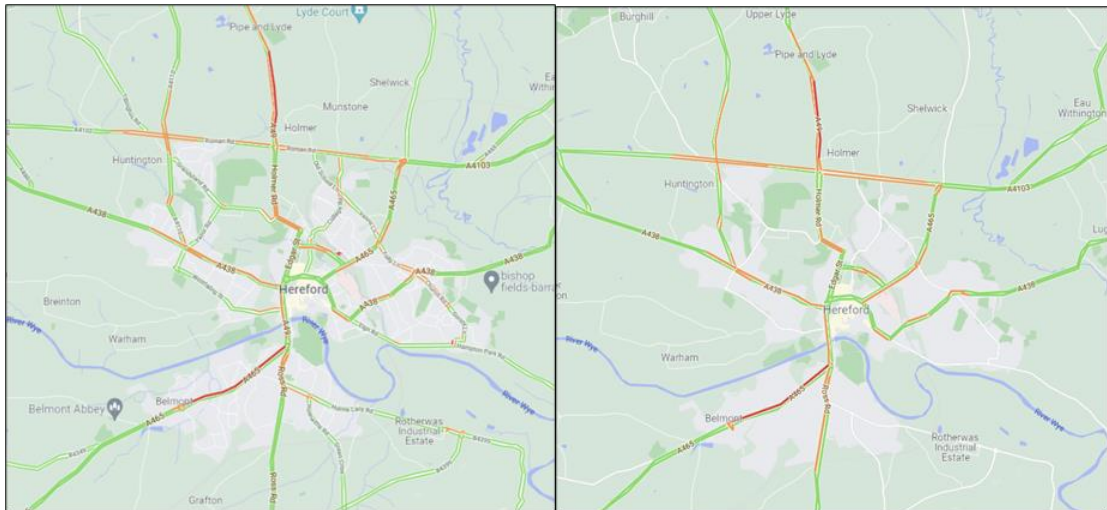


2.31 Operators were also asked about desirable interventions at these pinch points. Bus priority at junctions and bus lanes were considered to offer the best solutions.

Congestion

2.32 Traffic levels and a lack of priority are the cause of the problems at the identified pinch points. The maps below show typical congestion in Hereford city according to the Google Maps predictive model at 08:00 (left) and 17:00 (right). Virtually all major roads in the city are congested at these times, delaying buses, and reducing the competitiveness of the bus compared to private vehicles.

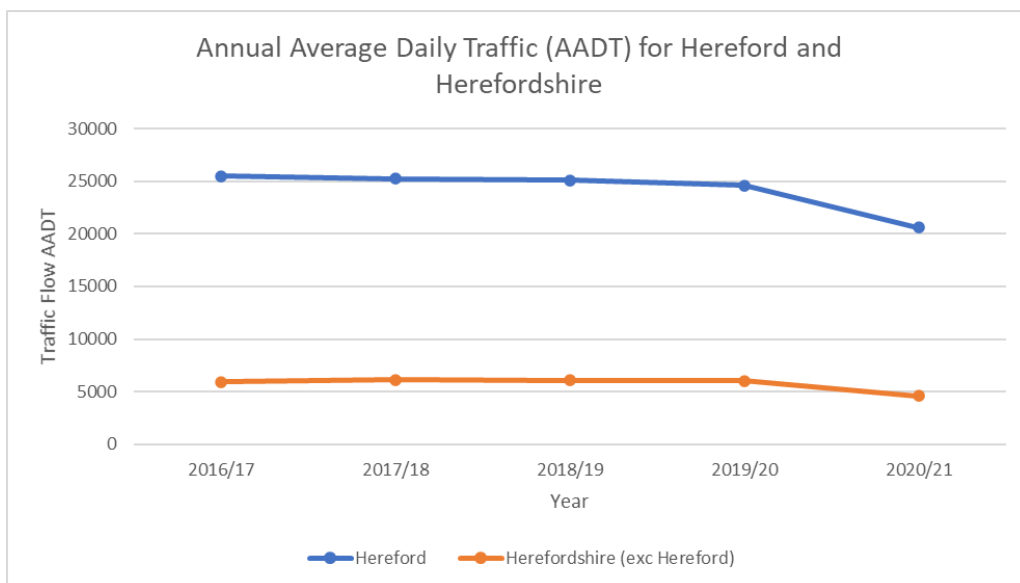
Figure 2-10 - Typical congestion in Hereford city in the am (left) and pm (right)



Source - Google Maps, 2021

- 2.33 Overall Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in Hereford fell by 1.6% between 2016/17 and 2019/20.² During the same period for Herefordshire county (excluding Hereford), AADT rose by 1.3%.
- 2.34 During the Covid-19 pandemic, traffic levels fell across Hereford and Herefordshire, offering an opportunity to 'lock in' improvements to bus priority and promote a sustained decrease in traffic in the years ahead.

Figure 2-11 - Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for Hereford and Herefordshire



Bus vehicle speed and journey times

- 2.35 Congestion in Hereford slows down vehicle speeds and impacts on bus journey times. In the absence of location or service-specific speed and journey time information, basic analysis has been undertaken using the timetabled journey time for the 33 services that operate in Hereford for at least part of their journey. This analysis indicated that:
- End-to-end average speed of services in the morning peak is 14.7mph (23.7 km/h).
 - End-to-end average speed of services between the peaks is 15.5mph (25km/h).
- 2.36 Almost 65% of services have timetabled speeds slower in the morning peak than between the peaks, indicating the impact of congestion.

3. Policy Context

Herefordshire County Plan 2020-2024

“Respecting our past, shaping our future – we will improve the sustainability, connectivity and wellbeing of our county by strengthening our communities, creating a thriving local economy and protecting and enhancing our environment.”

Ambition for Herefordshire to be “an exemplar of 21st Century rural living where market towns and rural communities are properly valued and recognised for the contributions they make to the success of the county”

- 3.1 The Council’s ambitions for the role public transport can play in reducing congestion and carbon emissions, and contribute to enhanced wellbeing, is recognised in the County Plan:

“We will enable more healthy low carbon travel options, including walking, public transport and cycling, to reduce congestion, improve local air quality and enhance health and wellbeing.”

- 3.2 The County Plan is supported by the ambition to improve and extend active travel options throughout the county. Capital schemes are already progressing, which will support public transport and integration, including the Transport Hub project at Hereford rail station and public realm improvements that will consider improved access to rural and city-based services in Hereford.
- 3.3 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2016-31 centres on a transport network that supports growth, enables development and provides safe conditions for active travel. Its 5 objectives are to:
- Enable economic growth
 - Provide a good quality transport network for all
 - Promote healthy lifestyles
 - Make journeys safer, easier and healthier
 - Ensure access to services for those living in rural area
- 3.4 The role of public transport was assessed and developed through the Hereford Transport Strategy Review, 2020. Whilst the review focused on the Hereford urban area, it identified a series of priorities for public transport that impact the wider

network and have been taken into account in the development of this BSIP. These include increased frequency and hours of operation of services, bus priority to increase the efficiency and attractiveness of services, electrification of the fleet and greater provision for school access. Further development is currently being undertaken on these proposals.

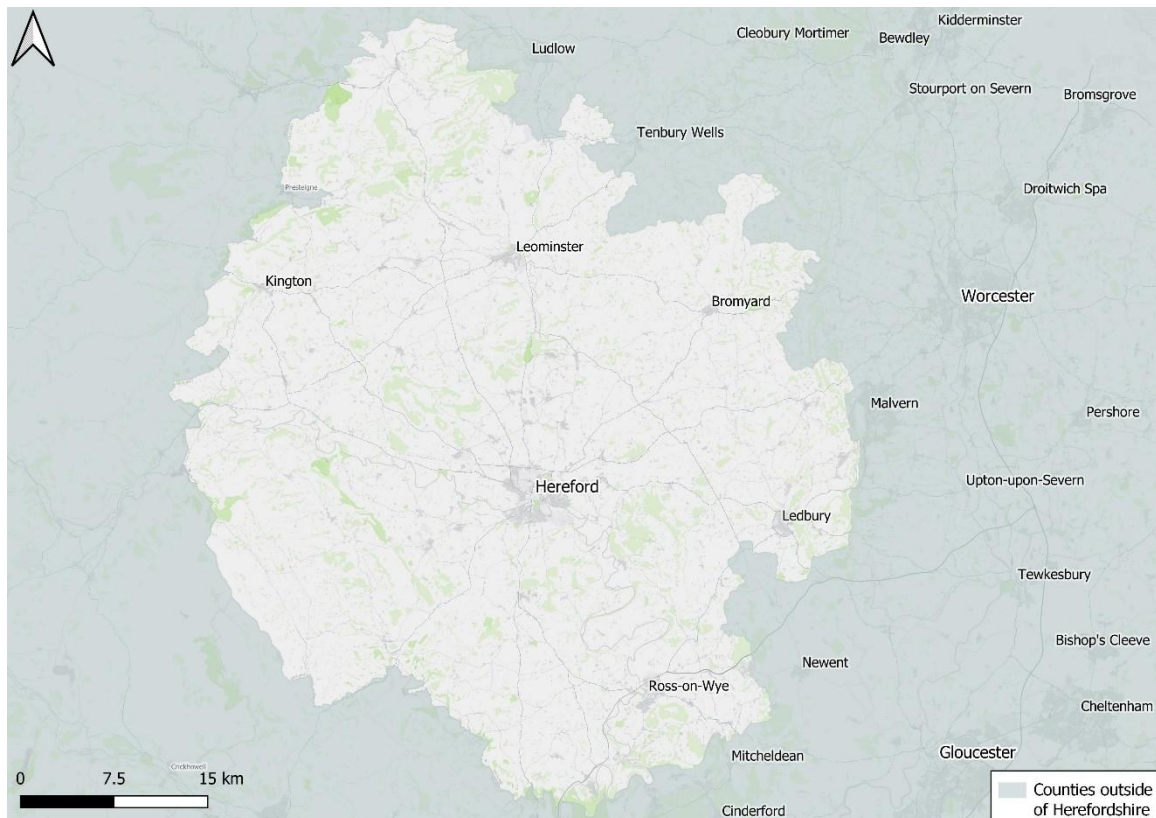
- 3.5 The wider transport strategy recognises the importance of demand management for car-based travel (focusing primarily on parking charges and supply) in combination with positive measures to support bus use and active travel modes. The strategy and proposals are being developed further as part of a master plan for the city which will ensure coordination with land use planning proposals (the Council is currently updating its adopted local plan), economic development strategy (the Council is developing the Big Plan 2050 which will set out the strategy for long term economic growth and the Pathway to Carbon Neutral, the carbon management plan 2020-26).
- 3.6 The important role improved bus services and better integration with rail could play in supporting tourism is reflected in the priorities of the Herefordshire Sustainable Destination Management Plan 2018-22. This includes an action to encourage sustainable accessibility under the key priority to Grow Herefordshire as a Visitor Destination. (link to the destination management plan – [here](#)). This is further supported by the County Plan 2020-2024 that includes ambitions to protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty to enhance quality of life and support tourism

4. Enhanced Partnership Plan

Area covered

- 4.1 The Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan covers the whole of Herefordshire.

Figure 4-1 - Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership Area



Aims and objectives

- 4.2 The Bus Service Improvement Plan vision is that **buses in Herefordshire play a significant role in meeting travel needs, having a positive impact on the lives and wellbeing of those who use them and making a positive contribution to the county's economy and environment.**
- 4.3 The EP Plan provides the framework to contribute towards meeting the aims and objectives set out in the BSIP.
- 4.4 The overall aim is to establish a firm foundation for the Herefordshire bus network on which to build, develop and improve service provision. This will be achieved by

focusing efforts and resources on measures that maximise benefits. This aim will be achieved through five key objectives:

- Establish a coherent, consistent, and integrated bus network that is well understood and easy to use.
- Offer a quality service that is attractive to use and portrays a positive image.
- Provide a service that offers value for money.
- Contribute positively towards Herefordshire's ambitions for decarbonisation and environmental improvement.
- Support the wellbeing of Herefordshire residents, enabling people to access key services and live independently

4.5 The Plan provides the backdrop for specific EP Schemes that will detail actions and developments to be taken jointly by partners to deliver a significant improvement in bus services in Herefordshire that will help meet the above objectives.

4.6 The first EP Scheme seeks to outline and commit partners to measures that will help provide a stable and consistent network for users in Herefordshire and outlines a commitment to the development of other schemes on approval of funding.

4.7 Within the Herefordshire BSIP, a range of interventions has been identified that address the aim and objectives set out above. As funding availability allows, these will be brought forward and implemented (either singly or in combination) in future Schemes made under the Enhanced Partnership Plan.

4.8 An EP Plan can only exist if there is at least one associated EP Scheme in place. Therefore, for as long as an EP Scheme is in place, a Plan must also be in place.

Funding sources

4.9 The Enhanced Partnership will draw on multiple funding sources to deliver the desired outcomes of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme(s), as appropriate. This includes, but is not limited to:

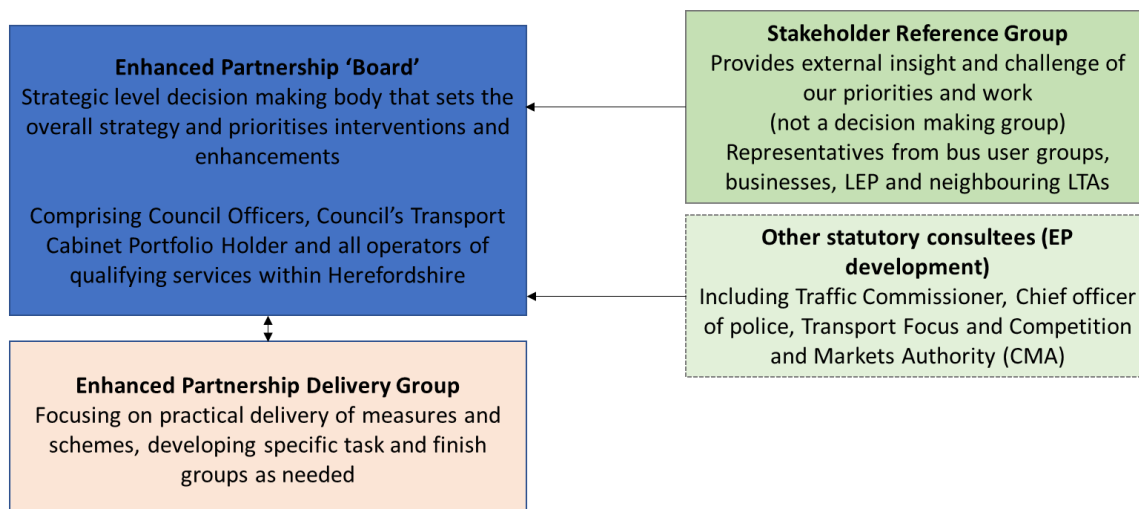
- Funding provided by Central Government
- Council capital funding
- Council revenue funding
- Developer contributions
- Operator investment
- Reinvestment of operator revenue generated by schemes

- Other external funding opportunities.

Enhanced Partnership governance

- 4.10 An **Enhanced Partnership Board**, comprising the following, has responsibility for the EP Plan and Scheme:
- Council officers
 - Council's Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport
 - Operators of qualifying local bus services in Herefordshire
- 4.11 Operating under agreed Terms of Reference, the Enhanced Partnership Board is responsible for the introduction and management of the EP, in addition to prioritising the planned improvements set out in the BSIP, based on funding received from Government. The Board will be responsible for the development of any future EP Schemes and agreeing variations to existing Schemes or the EP Plan itself.
- 4.12 A **Stakeholder Reference Group**, including representation of bus users, provides external insight and constructive challenge. Its membership will comprise Council officers, elected members, bus operators, bus user group representatives, business group representatives and other interested parties.
- 4.13 An **Enhanced Partnership Delivery Group** will be responsible for the practical delivery of those facilities and measures set out in the EP Schemes. This group consists of Council officers, bus operators and other relevant stakeholders and experts as appropriate, but may be different to those on the Enhanced Partnership Board. Specific task and finish groups will be established to implement certain elements, reporting directly to the Enhanced Partnership Board.
- 4.14 The Board has consulted the following in the development of this EP Plan and Scheme:
- Transport Focus
 - Traffic Commissioner
 - Chief Officer of Police
 - Competition and Markets Authority
 - Neighbouring authorities
- 4.15 The relationship between these different groups is shown in Figure 4-2.

Figure 4-2 – Herefordshire EP Governance Structure



- 4.16 An EP Plan can only exist if there is at least one associated EP Scheme in place. Therefore, for as long as an EP Scheme is in place, a Plan must also be in place.

Monitoring progress

- 4.1 The success of the EP Plan will be monitored in a number of ways, outlined below and further detailed in Herefordshire's BSIP:
- Passenger Satisfaction (Core target in the BSIP) – monitored and measured through annual Transport Focus Passenger Surveys. As well as overall passenger satisfaction, satisfaction in value for money; punctuality; on-bus journey time and passenger transport information will be monitored.
 - Passenger Growth (Core target in the BSIP) – monitored and measured by reviewing operator patronage data on a route-by-route basis, which is currently submitted to the Local Transport Authorities as part of their returns to the DfT.
 - Reliability (Core target in the BSIP) – monitored and measured using operator punctuality data, which is submitted to the DfT as the Bus Reliability and Punctuality dataset for non-frequent bus services running to time.
 - Journey time (Core target in the BSIP) – Average speed has been estimated using the timetabled journey time for the 33 services that operate in Hereford city for at least part of their journey. Going forward it will be measured using a combination of timetable information and data supplied through the Bus Open Data Service (BODS).

- Network improvements – as an indicator of accessibility at different time periods. This will be measured as the proportion of the population that lives within 400m on either side of a route operating at various frequencies and time periods
 - Journey times – compared to the car to identify the competitiveness of bus services against the car. Timetabled journey times by bus will be compared against estimated driving time at different periods of the day on key urban, inter-urban and rural routes
 - Passenger growth – to determine the impact of specific interventions and monitor post-COVID travel patterns e.g. total passenger journeys on targeted routes; share of journeys made by fare-paying passengers + ENCTS; passenger journeys after 19:00 Monday-Saturday; passenger journeys on Sundays;
 - Infrastructure – monitored by recording the number of stops and shelters upgraded each year and number of Park and Choose sites directly connected to the bus network
 - Decarbonisation – measured and monitored by proportion of overall fleet that is zero emission and or ultra-low emission and, of the diesel fleet, the proportion that is Euro VI or better
- 4.2 Consultation with partners, businesses, special interest groups, elected representatives, and passenger representatives, including those who were engaged with during the development of the BSIP, will continue throughout the life of the EP and is reflected within the EP governance structure through the Enhanced Partnership Reference Group. This Group will be convened at least twice a year to consider progress towards the BSIP and EP objectives. It will also provide feedback on the effectiveness of the EP in delivering the improvements set out in the BSIP.
- 4.3 Rail and Bus for Herefordshire will represent the views of public transport users and will be part of the EP Reference Group. It will regularly engage with its members to provide feedback on bus network improvements from users' perspectives.

Small and medium sized operators

- 4.4 Given the variety of bus operators involved (in terms of market share, fleet size, company turnover and structure), it is important to ensure that the effects of the Enhanced Partnership do not unduly negatively impact smaller operators' ability to engage or to comply with requirements.
- 4.5 As such, the needs of small and medium-sized operators (SMOs) have been considered in the development of the Enhanced Partnership, with opportunities for all bus

operators to participate throughout, either through individual discussions or through attendance at the Enhanced Partnership Board meetings. The Plan seeks to support improvements in all aspects of bus provision, regardless of the size of operators providing services. Indeed, in Herefordshire, a significant proportion of the bus network is provided by smaller local operators, and so their needs are reflected well in the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

- 4.6 Within the Enhanced Partnership Schemes, smaller operators may be given extended periods to comply with certain standards.

Competition

- 4.7 The Enhanced Partnership has been subject to the Competition Test as set out in Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. The assessment, undertaken by the Council and shared with the Competition and Markets Authority, concluded that there will be no adverse impact on competition. The implementation of an Enhanced Partnership Plan and associated Scheme is aimed at delivering improvements to bus services for passengers in a deregulated environment. The Enhanced Partnership will not impact on competition, as operators will be free to amend and introduce services in the area, provided that the standards and requirements that apply to all operators are met.

Reviewing the EP Plan

- 4.8 Once the EP Plan is made, it will be reviewed by the EP Board at least annually, following the review of the Herefordshire BSIP. The Council will initiate each review and it will take no longer than 6 months to complete. Monitoring reports for the BSIP will be produced every 6 months to demonstrate progress towards the objectives and targets set.

Variations to the EP Plan

- 4.9 Consideration will be given to potential EP Plan variations raised by one or more of the representatives on the EP Board. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the EP Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be set out in writing and submitted to the EP Board administrator.
- 4.10 On receipt of a valid request for a variation, the Council will reconvene the Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership Board, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. Following the meeting, any proposal to

proceed with the variation will lead to the Council notifying stakeholders and operators of the intention to vary the EP Plan. Any planned variation will then be subject to the operator objection process and consultation process as set out in s138L of the Transport Act 2000. Having passed through these, the Council will make the EP Plan variation, subject to the approval of the Council.

Revocation of EP Plan

- 4.11 If, for some reason, it becomes necessary for the EP Plan to be revoked, the EP Board will be reconvened and follow the same process as outlined in the section 'Variations to the EP Plan' (noting that the agreement will be for revocation and not variation).
- 4.12 If at any point in the future the EP Plan area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Plan document will cease to apply from the commencement date of the Franchising Scheme.

Part B Enhanced Partnership Scheme

The Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership Scheme for Buses is made in accordance with Section 138G(1) of the Transport Act 2000 by The County of Herefordshire District Council.

The Plan comes into effect on 1 April 2022 and will remain valid until revoked.

Section 1 – EP Scheme Content

- 4.13 This document fulfils the statutory requirements for an EP Scheme. In accordance with statutory requirements in section 138 of the Transport Act 2000, the EP Scheme document sets out:
- **Section 2** - Scope of the EP Scheme and commencement date
 - **Section 3** - Obligations on the Local Authorities
 - **Section 4** - Obligations on Bus Operators
 - **Section 5** – Governance Arrangements
- 4.14 The EP Scheme can only be put in place if an associated EP Plan has been made. Therefore, this document should be considered alongside the associated EP Plan.
- 4.15 The EP Scheme has been jointly developed by the Council and those bus operators that provide local bus services in the EP Scheme area. It sets out obligations and requirements on both the Local Transport Authority and operators of local services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of the associated EP Plan.

5. Scope of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme

Description of Geographical Coverage

- 5.1 The EP Scheme will support the improvement of all local bus services operating across Herefordshire.
- 5.2 The EP Scheme is will cover the same area as the EP Plan, namely the entirety of the county.

Figure 5-1 - Herefordshire Enhanced Partnership Area



Commencement Date

- 5.3 The Scheme is made on 1 April 2022. It will have no specific end date but will be reviewed at least annually.

Exempted Services

- 5.4 The following services are exempt from the requirements of the EP Scheme:
- Any schools or works registered local bus service not eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant
 - Any cross-boundary registered local bus service with less than 10% of its registered mileage within the Enhanced Partnership area
 - Any services operated under section 22 of the 1985 Act
 - Any registered local bus service which is an excursion or tour
 - Any other registered local bus service that the Operators and Council decide should be excluded from all or specific requirements of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.

- 5.5 For the avoidance of doubt, a list of Qualifying Bus Services will be published at the start of each Council financial year.

6. Requirements of the Council

- 6.1 This Scheme document will be varied and, if relevant, further and/or substitute Scheme documents adopted to implement Facilities and Measures that have the objective of contributing to meeting the objectives of the EP Plan for Herefordshire.
- 6.2 Herefordshire Council will implement the following Facilities and Measures in the EP Scheme area; further detail of which is set out below:
- Facilities:
 - Accurate and up-to-date bus stop information
 - Measures:
 - Supporting and promoting local bus services
 - Supporting Sunday services and weekend travel on buses
 - Supporting service stability
 - Adoption of a joint bus passenger charter
 - Supporting enhanced information provision
 - Development of multi-operator ticketing
 - Development of proposals for Hereford hub / interchange
 - Support initiatives for travel demand management and transport decarbonisation
 - Supporting driver training initiatives
 - Communicate and co-ordinate with operators on road closures and emergency events
 - Communicate with operators on land use planning matters
 - Lead and/or support external funding bids
- 6.3 Depending on the award of Government funding, the Council may commit to implement additional measures or to supplement the measures listed in this EP Scheme.
- Lead on the prioritisation, refinement, and delivery of BSIP measures in partnership with operators and stakeholders.

(1) Accurate and up-to-date bus stop information

- a. Herefordshire Council will maintain an up-to-date bus network map on its website.
- b. Herefordshire Council will maintain a real time passenger information system, with the provision of displays at the locations listed in Schedule A.
- c. Herefordshire Council will provide and maintain up-to-date bus service information at locations across Herefordshire, including key stops listed in Schedule B.

(2) Supporting and promoting local bus services

- a. Herefordshire Council will provide continued financial support, within available budgets, for non-commercial services which the council deems socially necessary.
- b. Herefordshire Council will ensure that the bus is properly considered in decisions made by the Council on traffic management, urban redevelopment/expansion, home-school and large-scale planning applications, at early stages of development through active engagement and representation with relevant groups.
- c. Herefordshire Council will actively engage with local businesses to promote bus travel.

(3) Supporting Sunday services and weekend travel on buses

- a. Herefordshire Council will provide continued support for Sunday services implemented through the Covid Recovery Plan until August 2022.
- b. Herefordshire Council will provide continued support for free weekend travel on buses implemented through the Covid Recovery Plan until August 2022.

(4) Supporting service stability

- a. Herefordshire Council will set the dates and develop guidelines for limiting service changes to three dates per year.
- b. Herefordshire Council will agree and publish each date at least 9 months beforehand.
- c. Herefordshire will coordinate Christmas, New Year, and bank holiday service levels to be consistent across all operators.

(5) Adoption of a joint bus passenger charter

- a. Herefordshire Council will agree with Operators, and publish, a Bus Passenger Charter by the 1 April 2022.
- b. Herefordshire Council will monitor adherence to the Charter, and public feedback on how well services match up to the Charter.
- c. Herefordshire Council will establish appropriate passenger feedback and engagement procedures by 1 June 2022.

(6) Supporting enhanced information provision

- a. Herefordshire Council will provide guidance on expected on-line information formats for Operators by 30 June 2022.
- b. Herefordshire Council will develop guidance and timescales detailing Operator data requirements to support RTPI by 30 June 2022.
- c. Herefordshire Council will ensure the Council website is providing accurate information and continue to use Traveline as an effective data source and planning tool.

(7) Development of multi-operator ticketing

- a. Herefordshire Council will coordinate and lead discussions around developing a Multi-Operator Ticket for Herefordshire with the aim of introducing such tickets as soon as is feasible.

(8) Development of Hereford hub / interchange

- a. Herefordshire Council will support the development of plans for a Hereford Transport Hub.

(9) Support initiatives to promote travel demand management and transport decarbonisation

- a. Herefordshire Council will actively investigate opportunities for travel demand management measures aimed at reducing single occupancy car use, and will identify opportunities by 31 March 2023.
- b. Herefordshire Council will actively pursue and support initiatives to decarbonise local transport, and will identify opportunities by 31 March 2023.

(10) Supporting driver training initiatives

- a. Herefordshire Council will support Operators in their joint initiative to recruit and train more drivers.

(11) Engage with operators on road closures, roadworks and emergency events

- a. Herefordshire Council will liaise with bus operators on all planned and unplanned road closures, roadworks and other events that may affect the provision of bus services.
 - i. A minimum of 28 days' notice will be provided by Herefordshire Council to bus Operators regarding planned road closures.
 - ii. Herefordshire Council will provide as much notice as possible to Operators when roads are affected by roadworks or emergency events.
- b. Herefordshire Council will coordinate responses from operators and represent the interests of operators at relevant meetings/groups.

(12) Communicate with operators on land use planning matters

- a. Herefordshire Council will consult with Operators on matters relating to the Local Plan.
- b. Herefordshire Council will consult with relevant Operators on relevant planning applications at early stages of development, including technical considerations of bus access and routing, bus stops and other infrastructure. These will typically be developments that meet one or more of the following criteria (although others that are considered to have particular public transport interest may also be included):
 - i. Housing developments of 200+ dwellings
 - ii. Development sites of more than 1 hectare
 - iii. Building(s) with floor space of more than 1000 m²

(13) Lead and/or support external funding bids

- a. Herefordshire Council will lead and/or support external funding bids with Operators to secure monies for improvements to public transport services.

(14) Lead the prioritisation of BSIP service improvements, once DfT funding award is known

- a. Herefordshire Council will, in consultation with operators and other stakeholders, prioritise the measures in the BSIP for delivery, to match the funding provided by the DfT, within 3 months of the funding being announced.

7. Requirements of Bus Operators

7.1 The following requirements on Operators will apply in respect of Qualifying Local Bus Services:

- Accurate and up-to-date bus stop information
- Supporting and promoting local bus services,
- Supporting Sunday services and weekend travel on buses,
- Supporting service stability,
- Adoption of a joint bus passenger charter,
- Supporting enhanced information provision,
- Development of multi-operator ticketing,
- Development of Hereford hub / interchange;
- Support in decarbonisation and demand management,
- Supporting driver training initiatives,
- Communicate and co-ordinate with Herefordshire Council on road closures and emergency events,
- Communicate with Herefordshire Council on planning applications,
- Support external funding bids.

7.2 Subject to DfT BSIP funding, Operators will:

- Engage with the prioritisation, refinement, and delivery of BSIP measures.

(1) Supporting and promoting local bus services

- a. Operators will proactively market and promote those local bus services, either commercial or supported, that they operate to raise awareness. They will individually, or jointly, set out a plan for promotional and marketing activity by 31 March each year.
- b. Operators will, where required, make available a named company representative to engage and support Herefordshire Council, to ensure the bus is properly considered in decision making processes.
- c. Operators will support Herefordshire Council with the promotion of bus to local businesses through engagement, development of promotional schemes and service review.

(2) Supporting Sunday services and weekend travel on buses

- a. Operators will, by 1 May 2022, have actively examined and considered the opportunity to continue Sunday services, implemented through the Covid Recovery Plan, on a commercial basis. Operators will report to the Council a plan for development and promotion of those services, or an exit strategy for when funding ceases.
- b. Operators will, by 1 May 2022, have actively examined and considered opportunities for weekend fares and ticketing provision to follow once the free travel initiative (Covid Recovery) ceases. They will set out either a continuity plan or exit strategy.

(3) Supporting service stability

- a. Operators will support the development of guidelines for limiting service changes to three per year.
- b. Operators will adhere to the agreed three set dates per year for service changes.
- c. Operators will provide 15 weeks' notice for local bus registrations (variations or cancellations) where the operational days or hours of a qualifying service are to be reduced, or where a qualifying service is to be withdrawn entirely. This notice period may be reduced in exceptional circumstances, subject to the agreement of Herefordshire Council, particularly where it would be in the interests of bus users. This excludes cross border services. (commitment effective from 1st September 2022)
- d. Operators will work with other Operators and Herefordshire Council to ensure Christmas, New Year, and bank holiday service levels for qualifying local bus services are consistent.

(4) Adoption of a joint bus passenger charter

- a. Operators will adopt and adhere to the Bus Passenger Charter from 1 April 2022.
- b. Operators will promote the charter to passengers and encourage feedback from 1 June 2022.
- c. Operators will agree with Herefordshire Council ways of encouraging passenger feedback by 1 June 2022, and actively seek such feedback from thereon.

(5) Supporting enhanced information provision

- a. Operators will present information about qualifying local bus services on websites in an agreed format, with cross-referencing to other operators' services where appropriate, by 30 September 2022.
- b. Operators will provide accurate and relevant information to Herefordshire Council to allow for RTPI, including:
 - i. RTI ready TransXChange
 - ii. Vehicle / Service allocation
 - iii. SIRI feeds from ETM, where required.
- c. Operators will ensure service details are up to date and accurate, provided through BODS for both services and fare information.

(6) Development of multi-operator ticketing

- a. Operators will work together and with Herefordshire Council to develop multi-operator tickets for Herefordshire as soon as is feasible.

(7) Development of Hereford hub / interchange

- a. Operators will, as appropriate, engage with and support Herefordshire Council in the planning and development of the Hereford transport hub / interchange.

(8) Support in decarbonisation and demand management

- a. Operators will actively engage with the Council in investigating opportunities for travel demand management measures aimed at reducing single occupancy car use, contributing to identifying opportunities by 31 March 2023.
- b. Operators will actively engage with the Council in developing and supporting initiatives to decarbonise local transport, contributing to identifying opportunities by 31 March 2023.

(9) Supporting driver training initiatives

- a. Operators will, in partnership, explore options for the promotion, recruitment and training of bus drivers, and agree a recommended approach by 1 June 2022.

(10) Engage with Herefordshire Council on planned roadworks, road closures and emergency events

- a. Actively engage with agencies (Herefordshire Council; utilities companies; events' organisers) regarding potential disruption to bus services resulting from planned and unplanned roadworks or road closures. Operators to ensure

that agencies have appropriate contact details to provide information to them.

(11) Engage with Herefordshire Council on land use planning matters

- a. Actively engage with Herefordshire Council on matters relating to the Local Plan.
- b. Actively engage with Herefordshire Council and developers regarding the provision of public transport services for new development, providing technical insights in respect of bus access and routing, bus stops and other infrastructure.

(12) Support external funding bids

- a. Operators will cooperate and provide data to Herefordshire Council, within requested timescales, to support external funding bids to improve public transport services in Herefordshire.

(13) Support the prioritisation of BSIP service improvements, once DfT funding is known

- a. Provide input to support Herefordshire Council in its prioritisation of measures in the BSIP for delivery.
- b. Actively support the annual review of the BSIP.

8. Governance arrangements

Enhanced Partnership Board

- 8.1 The EP Scheme and any variations or revocation will be overseen by the Enhanced Partnership Board, comprising:
 - Council officers
 - Council's Transport Cabinet Portfolio Holder
 - All operators of qualifying services within Herefordshire
- 8.2 The EP Board will operate in accordance with agreed Terms of Reference.

Reviewing the EP Scheme

- 8.3 Once the EP Scheme is made, it will be reviewed by the EP Board at least annually, following the review of the BSIP. The Council will initiate each review and it will take no

longer than 3 months to complete. Monitoring reports for the BSIP will be produced every 6 months to demonstrate progress towards the objectives and targets set.

Variations to the EP Scheme

- 8.4 Consideration will be given to potential EP Scheme variations raised by one or more of the representatives on the EP Board. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the EP Plan and current local transport policies. Such requests should be set out in writing and submitted to the designated EP Board administrator.
- 8.5 On receipt of a valid request for a variation, the Council will reconvene the EP Board, giving at least 14 days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. If the proposed variation is agreed by all members of the Board present, the Council will make the EP Scheme variation. Those organisations not represented at the meeting will be deemed to be abstaining from the decision.
- 8.6 If there is not unanimous agreement of all those present, then the proposed variation will be put to the operator objection mechanism, but with a reduced objection period of 14 days, replacing Part 2 of the Transport Act 2000 section 138L (2) (c). The proposed variation will be advertised on the Council's website and emailed to operators of qualifying local services in the EP Scheme area. If the proposed variation passes the operator objection mechanism, the Council will make the EP Scheme variation, subject to the approval of the Council.

Revocation of EP Scheme

- 8.7 If, for some reason, it becomes necessary for the EP Scheme to be revoked, the EP Board will be reconvened and follow the same process as outlined in the section 'Variations to the Scheme' (noting that the agreement will be for revocation and not variation).
- 8.8 If at any point in the future the EP Scheme area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this EP Scheme document will cease to apply from the commencement date of the Franchising Scheme.

