

Notice of:	Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Public Safety, Highways and Transport
Decision Number:	PH39/2022
Relevant Officer:	Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Neal Brookes - Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Public Safety, Highways and Transport
Date of Decision:	3 May 2022

DRAFT ENHANCED BUS PARTNERSHIP

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider Blackpool's Draft Enhanced Bus Partnership documents, the Plan and the Scheme, facilitating the necessary steps to put Blackpool's Enhanced Partnership (EP) in place.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the Draft Enhanced Bus Partnership documents (Plan and Scheme) (Appendices A and B respectively) for formal engagement with both operators and then statutory stakeholders.

2.2 To note that the final Enhanced Bus Partnership documents will be considered by the Executive.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The 2021 National Bus Strategy requires Local Transport Authorities to prepare and implement an Enhanced Partnership (both Plan and Scheme), or pursue a franchise based option to improve local bus services. It has been determined previously that the latter would not be appropriate for Blackpool, given the modest scale of its bus market and the good relations the Council has with operators. Government has made it clear that bus support funding awarded in 2022-2023 onwards requires an Enhanced Partnership to be in place, including Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG).

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priorities are both:
The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool and Communities:
Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

6.0 Background information

6.1 The Enhanced Partnership (EP) will take the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) forward to an implementation phase. The Bus Service Improvement Plan outlines how the Council, working closely with local bus operators, wishes to deliver key elements of the National Bus Strategy's aims at a local level. On 4 April 2022, the Government notified the Council it cannot provide new funding for the Blackpool Bus Service Improvement Plan at this time, whilst alluding to possible future funding. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) programme will be considered to determine what Bus Service Improvement Plan elements it might be possible to deliver without additional resources. Government asks that Blackpool Council proceed with establishing the Enhanced Partnership as soon as reasonably possible, so that the Council is able to benefit from other discretionary funds in the future. Their advice supersedes that from January 2022 which asked for a draft Enhanced Partnership to be submitted by the end of April 2022.

6.2 Following Cabinet Member approval, the next stage will be to consult bus operators during a formal 28-day period. Following that, those organisations set out in Section 138F of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended) as statutory consultees will be consulted. The final stage would be to formally 'make' the Enhanced Partnership through the Council's democratic process, by means of an Executive decision.

6.3 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix A: Draft Enhanced Partnership Plan.
Appendix B: Draft Enhanced Partnership Scheme.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 From April 2022, the new discretionary forms of Government bus funding are only available for initiatives defined under an Enhanced Partnership (EP). Delivery of the substantial measures and facilities identified in the Draft Enhanced Partnership Scheme is largely subject to Government funding being provided. Continuation of Bus Service Operator's Grant also requires an Enhanced Partnership to be in place.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 The Bus Services Act 2017 amended the Transport Act 2000 ("the 2000 Act") to provide local transport authorities with powers to reform local bus markets and these provisions provide for new types of partnership schemes. Statutory requirements for Enhanced Partnerships are laid out in sections 138A-138S of the 2000 Act (and regulations made under those sections).

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Bus travel, especially using newer cleaner buses (Euro 6 standard) and electric buses, is more sustainable than private car use, using less energy per person carried depending on vehicle loadings. Greater bus patronage in Blackpool will contribute to improve local air quality and to climate change mitigation, particularly now that funding for zero emission buses has been received from the Government's ZEBRA fund. The National Bus Strategy's objectives are in line with the Council's own environmental commitments, particularly the climate emergency.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 The Bus Operators' Forum – 1 March 2022 meeting; key external stakeholders – local bus operators and Lancashire County Council.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days?

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed:

Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 None.

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1 The Cabinet Member agreed the recommendations as outlined above namely:

1. To approve the Draft Enhanced Bus Partnership documents (Plan and Scheme) (Appendices A and B respectively) for formal engagement with both operators and then statutory stakeholders.
2. To note that the final Enhanced Bus Partnership documents will be considered by the Executive.

20.0 Date of Decision:

20.1 3 May 2022

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1 The 2021 National Bus Strategy requires Local Transport Authorities to prepare and implement an Enhanced Partnership (both Plan and Scheme), or pursue a franchise based option to improve local bus services. It has been determined previously that the latter would not be appropriate for Blackpool, given the modest scale of its bus market and the good relations the Council has with operators. Government has made it clear that bus support funding awarded in 2022-2023 onwards requires an Enhanced Partnership to be in place, including Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG).

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1 3 May 2022

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1