

THE Blackpool Borough Council ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME FOR BUSES IS MADE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 138G(1) OF THE TRANSPORT ACT 2000 BY:

Blackpool Borough Council

## **1. EP Scheme content**

1.1. This document fulfils the statutory requirements for an EP Scheme (“the Scheme”). In accordance with statutory requirements in section 138 of the Transport Act 2000, the Scheme document sets out:

- Section 2 - Scope of the Scheme and commencement date
- Section 3 - Obligations on the Local Transport Authority
- Section 4 - Obligations on bus operators
- Section 5 - Governance arrangements

1.2. The 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. The Scheme has been jointly developed by Blackpool Borough Council (“the Council”) and bus operators that provide local bus services in the EP Scheme area, consulting with Lancashire County Council (LCC) the surrounding Local Transport Authority (LTA). It sets out obligations and requirements on both the Council and operators of local services in order to achieve improvements and the modal shift to bus desired, with the aim of delivering the associated EP Plan’s actions.

	Page number
<b>Annexes</b>	
Annex A – schedule of LTA facilities	xiv
Annex B – schedule of LTA measures	xv
Annex C – definitions	xvi
<b>Figures</b>	
1. The Blackpool bus network	3
2. Bus lanes in Blackpool	6

## **2. Scope of the Scheme and commencement date**

### *2.1. Description of geographical coverage*

2.1.1. The Scheme covers local bus services operating in the borough of Blackpool also addressing cross-border service issues into Lancashire, the Council working closely with LCC. The Scheme focuses on improving services operating within Blackpool.

2.1.2. Blackpool is predominantly urban in nature. There is some rural running between settlements outside Blackpool.

2.1.3. The Scheme will not:

- Impair the ability of any operator to make changes to its commercial services other than to the dates on which these occur, except where the service change would conflict with any agreement within this Scheme;
- Influence the setting of commercial fare levels other than with regard to the date on which fares change;
- Affect the ability of the Council to award or withdraw contracts for tendered services other than:
  - by agreements on frequencies, or
  - the dates on which these occur.
- Prevent the Council undertaking any policy that has a democratic mandate.

2.1.4. The Scheme focuses on Blackpool, but recognises the stand alone Fylde Coast bus economy. In this context there is little chance of over-bussing, the only possibility being the BTS 11 and Stagecoach 68 route between Blackpool, St. Anne's and Lytham. Here a target would be eight buses per hour coordinated on a 7/8 minute frequency offering the public a better service.

2.1.5. All actions taken under this partnership will be taken in the context of the Blackpool bus passenger charter that is discussed further in the Plan document.

### *2.2. Map of EP plan and Scheme areas*

2.2.1. The Scheme applies within the Blackpool boundary as shown on the map below. A separate scheme is likely to be established jointly with LCC specifically to address multi-operator ticketing.

Figure 1: The Blackpool bus network



Based on Blackpool Transport Services Network Map July 2021 © BTS

### *2.3. Commencement date*

2.3.1. The Scheme will be valid from XXXX 2022 (to be determined).

2.3.2. The Scheme will have no specific end date but will be reviewed by the Council and the Partnership Board at least annually.

### *2.4. Exempted services*

2.4.1. All registered local bus services running within the Council's area are included in the Scheme and regarded as qualifying services with the following exclusions:

- The directly run council Rideability community transport service.
- LCC wholly tendered services which operate into Blackpool town centre.
- National Express and any other registered coach services primarily for tourist use and are generally one service per day rather than providing a regular service pattern with Central coach station as the only pick up and drop off point.
- Dedicated school and college services not for general public use.
- Services operated for special events, park and ride services and tourist-focused services such as open-top tours.

### **3. Obligations on the Local Transport Authority**

- 3.1. In order to support bus services, particularly their reliability, the Council will continue to maintain and improve roads and traffic control systems within available resources. Likewise the passenger waiting environment, crucial to achieving the modal shift required. It will continue to work with operators to review and revise this plan at least annually, identifying further opportunities to achieve modal shift, including ongoing and joint promotion of public transport services, including the Blackpool Tramway.
- 3.2. A shared objective to secure the highest quality bus travel for the resort and to achieve modal shift within a system that remains commercially driven, is fundamental to this scheme and its signatories.

#### ***Summary of obligations***

##### ***3.3. Facilities***

- 3.3.1. The Council will maintain existing facilities and renew them where necessary, existing bus lanes and the bus shelter estate in particular.
- 3.3.2. It will continue to seek opportunities to prioritise bus services within the general traffic flow and to promote bus use.
- 3.3.3. Bus lanes provided and planned are listed below, subject to available funding and stakeholder engagement.
- 3.3.4. A procurement framework to accelerate bus shelter refurbishment and replacement has been established and a list of target locations has been drawn up, subject to funding.
- 3.3.5. A Real Time Information (RTI) screen is now established in the Market Street bus hub area, which is the start of an RTI roll out, beginning with town centre bus shelters. The Council estimates that it will install an initial nine screens over 2022, with maintenance arrangements in place for the screen's anticipated life. These nine will be fitted in the Market Street/Corporation Street complex and the reinstated Central Business District shelters. An information 'totem' will also be activated when the tramway extension comes into operation, also carrying real time bus information.
- 3.3.6. It is intended that town centre bus lane enforcement cameras be fitted, starting with the public transport hub area in Market Street and Corporation Street. Further cameras to deter vehicles from encroaching into the newly tram only Talbot Road alignment are likely to be necessary and this project has been appraised.
- 3.3.7. GPS-based bus priority systems will be appraised as the Scheme moves forward, in partnership with the Council's Community Lighting Partnership arrangement and subject to funding.

### 3.4. Bus lanes

3.4.1. The current bus lanes will be preserved and enforced, subject to funding. The current bus lanes are tabulated as:

*Figure 2: Bus lanes in Blackpool*

Location	Length
Central Drive	320m
Talbot Road	108m
Victoria Hospital	80m
Town centre bus hub	314m
Total	0.51 miles

3.4.2. The following new bus lanes will be provided (subject to consultation and the additional resources required):

- The Promenade, Lytham Road – Chapel Street (northbound)
- Bispham Road, Salmesbury Avenue – Warbreck Hill Road (southbound)
- Talbot Road, Cecil Street – Devonshire Road (eastbound)
- Talbot Road, Mather Street – Devonshire Road (westbound)

3.4.3. These new bus lanes depend upon new capital funding being made available, as these projects cannot be funded from Local Transport Plan or general council capital programmes.

### 3.5. Bus stops and shelters

3.5.1. The Council's stop and shelter estate consists of 239 shelters within a total count of 679 stops within Blackpool.

3.5.2. The Council is committed to rolling shelter improvements using the procurement framework work mentioned above. This will establish a 'gold or silver' standard depending on the shelter's location and service frequency.

3.5.3. Shelters will be improved and will feature a range of facilities as follows:

- RTI – generally town and district centres
- Lighting – solar and wind options are being appraised to enable sustainable lighting upgrades
- Bench seating – all new shelters
- Information display cases.

3.5.4. Subject to available funding, stops will be inspected on a rolling basis and upgraded to 'gold' standard where necessary, including information display. It is intended to provide all non-RTI stops with QR code service information in due course.

3.5.5. Shelters will be cleaned on a regular basis with necessary deep clean to a schedule, covered within the shelter procurement framework.

## **Measures**

3.6. In addition to the ongoing commitments above, and subject to resources and consultation, the following will be pursued:

- Appraise the following key corridors for improvements, including bus priority measures: A584, A586, A5099, B5262
- Bus rapid transit opportunities will be kept under review;
- Support LCC's Superbus proposal
- Deliver multi-operator ticketing in partnership with LCC and other NoWcard concessionary payments scheme participating LTAs
- Work with operators and LCC to identify and promote ticket products aimed to secure long-term modal shift, particularly aimed at young people
- Conducting an ongoing public transport promotion campaign, in addition to and complementary to operators' own activities.

3.7. Furthermore, the Council shall be obliged to consider the following, subject to additional funding:

- A Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) pilot scheme, focused on but not exclusive to connecting the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone to deprived estates and dense residential areas
- Supporting and increasing service frequencies together with late night running services and including Sundays
- Supporting increasing network density
- Pursuing modal integration opportunities, including within the Talbot Gateway Central Business District
- Conducting baseline passenger surveys, firstly in 2022/23, to be repeated annually.

3.8. Implementing this list depends on additional revenue resource being provided as identified within the Council's BSIP financial submission.

## **4. Obligations on bus operators**

4.1. The Scheme commits the Council's partner operators to meet the following obligations.

### *4.2. Vehicle standards*

4.2.1. To commence the move to a minimum Euro VI emissions standard within five years of the Scheme's commencement (subject to resources) and to commence transition to a zero emission bus fleet (ZEBs) following this, subject to range considerations.

4.2.2. Vehicles should be Wi-Fi equipped over a five year period from the Scheme's commencement.

### *4.3. Timetable changes*

4.3.1. Permanent timetable changes can only occur on four dates per year, to be agreed by the EP Board and co-ordinated with LCC. Further changes with the agreement of the EP Board can occur where:

- It is an emergency change to address unforeseen circumstances
- It is a temporary change caused by ongoing resourcing issues, short-term highway changes or roadworks
- It is in response to permanent highway changes such as road closure or access to a new development
- The change is to a service or journey at the request of a third party such as a neighbouring authority, educational establishment or employment facility
- The change is to implement a seasonal timetable; or
- Other such reasons that the EP Board feels appropriate.

4.3.2. Changes should be advertised in the local press and social media outlets.

### *4.4. Service changes*

4.4.1. Operators and the Council are required to notify passengers of forthcoming services changes at least four weeks before commencement via their websites, social media channels and on vehicles in the appropriate area. Where this cannot be done, such as an emergency or short notice road closure, the operator and / or the Council should endeavour to notify passengers as soon as possible.

### *4.5. Ticketing*

4.5.1. Operators must promote, sell and accept the multi-operator ticket products that are agreed by the EP Board.



4.5.2. The Partnership must establish a long-term ticket strategy intended to establish sustained modal shift, with a particular stress on young people with appropriate promotion. Ticket products must reflect emerging working patterns, including intermittent office working.

#### *4.6. Enhancing frequency*

4.6.1. Where it is projected that the bus modal share might be increased, particularly in the medium term, the operator should bring forward proposals to achieve this, including a financial appraisal indicating the proposal's subsidy requirements, which would then be discussed. Where it is agreed that a service will receive an enhanced frequency, this will be added to the Scheme via the Bespoke Variation Mechanism.

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## 5. Governance arrangements

5.1. This section describes the body and mechanisms that will be established to coordinate the Partnership and its projects and measures.

### 5.2. EP Board

5.2.1. The existing Bus Operators' Forum will be amended to form an EP Board to manage the process.

5.2.2. A chairperson will be chosen by consensus on an annual basis. A person from the same organisation will not enjoy the chairpersonship for consecutive years.

5.2.3. Decision taking will be by consensus until in the case of an impasse that the chairperson shall declare, the following voting mechanism will be employed:

- Blackpool Council = 3 votes
- Blackpool Transport Services = 2 votes
- Representatives for other operators = 1 vote

5.2.4. A right of veto for the Council and a unanimous vote of operators will also be included in the terms.

### 5.3. Review of EP Scheme

5.3.1. Once the EP Scheme is made, it will be reviewed by the EP Board every twelve months following publication of data on progress towards targets. Baseline data will be collated and reviewed, the Council assuming this responsibility. A report will be produced, to be posted on the Council's website. The Council's audit department will be asked to conduct a review at three years and again at five years.

5.3.2. To support this process an annual EP Forum event will be convened. While open, a direct invitee list of organisations and individuals will be drawn up.

5.3.3. The EP Board can also decide to review specific scheme elements on an ad-hoc basis. EP Board members should contact the Transport Policy Manager, Blackpool Council using the following email address [transport.policy@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:transport.policy@blackpool.gov.uk) explaining the issue and its urgency. The LTA and EP Chair will then decide whether to table at the next scheduled meeting or make arrangements for all or the necessary EP Board members to gather more quickly.

#### *5.4. Bespoke arrangements for varying or revoking the EP Scheme*

5.4.1. Under powers at s.138E of the Transport Act 2000, EP Scheme variations where this section is quoted will be subject to the voting mechanism as set out above.

5.4.2. Changes to or new flexibility provisions added to the Scheme under s.138E of the Transport Act 2000 shall only be included in the Scheme if they satisfy the statutory objection mechanism of The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018.

#### *5.5. Proposer of a variation*

5.5.1. Consideration to potential Scheme variations highlighted either by a stakeholder LTA, one of the organisations represented on the EP Forum, or by an operator of local bus services, will be given. A variation's proposer should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the BSIP, EP Plan and other current local transport policies' objectives. Such requests should be in writing and submitted to [transport.policy@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:transport.policy@blackpool.gov.uk)

The Council will forward all requests onto all EP Board members within five working days.

#### *5.6. Decision-making process and bespoke objection mechanism*

##### *General Variation*

5.6.1. A variation to the Scheme should be submitted for discussion at the EP Board using the rules above.

##### *Extraordinary Meeting Request*

5.6.2. Where a variation cannot wait for the next EP Board, the operator should submit a request for an extraordinary meeting of the EP Board to the Council, stating the reason for the need (where the request is from the Council an internal request should be produced). The Council will reconvene the EP Board, giving at least fourteen days' notice for the meeting, to consider the proposed variation. The notice should include the outline of the proposed variation and the reason for it being classed as an urgent matter.

##### *Variation for Infrastructure Changes*

5.6.3. If the Council, operators of local bus services or relevant third parties wish to put forward specific proposals for introducing infrastructure improvements (such as bus priority measures on an individual section of highway or a bus corridor; new or upgraded bus hub; or bus stop upgrades) not already in the Scheme, they should first request that the EP Board set up a working group to discuss the matter.

5.6.4. The working group should include representatives from:

- The Council's Transport Policy Team and other relevant departments such as Highways and Traffic;
- All bus operators affected by the proposal;
- Other relevant third parties where appropriate.

5.6.5. The working group shall:

- Review the proposed infrastructure upgrade(s) put forward;
- Discuss and approve amendments where necessary;
- Agree any measures to be undertaken by operators in return for the infrastructure improvement(s); and
- Produce an agreed Scheme variation for submission to the EP Board.

*Revocation of an EP Scheme*

5.6.6. While it is impossible to imagine all circumstances that might arise, the Council adopts the position that the Scheme will not be revoked unless on the grounds of force majeure, including natural disaster or war.

5.6.7. Another scenario is that an operator will cease trading making the Scheme inoperable. Clearly in this scenario the Scheme may need to be remade.

5.6.8. If any member of the EP Board believes it is necessary to revoke the Scheme, the EP Board will be reconvened for an extraordinary meeting unless the request falls within the cycle of meetings. The Council will provide notice to the EP Board of the request for revocation of an Scheme at least 28 days prior to the meeting to allow for:

- EP Board members to understand the impact of the revocation and consult stakeholders more widely and seek legal advice as necessary;
- The Council to discuss the issue internally to understand the required member involvement;
- Alternative options to be drawn up where necessary.

5.6.9. Depending on the outcome of the internal discussions, if the EP Board agree to revoke a Scheme it may still require approval by the Council elected members.

*Postponement*

5.6.10. Should it be necessary to postpone the implementation of any Facility, Measure or Requirement, the Council will follow the procedure at Section 138I of the Transport Act 2000. It must first use reasonable endeavours to seek the approval of the EP Board.

### *Data sharing*

- 5.6.11. It is not envisaged that personal data will be handled routinely as part of the Scheme administration. Any personal data collected on a one-off basis will be handled in line with The Council's data protection policy outlined here: [blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Transparency-and-open-data/Data-protection/Privacy-notices/Privacy-notices.aspx](http://blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Transparency-and-open-data/Data-protection/Privacy-notices/Privacy-notices.aspx)
- 5.6.12. Established procedures already cover personal data including names and addresses for those booking DRT services and any expansion of such services will be covered in the same way. From time-to-time analysis of trip patterns may be carried out by reference to postcode or settlement but will not refer to individuals.
- 5.6.13. From time-to-time personal data may be collected derived from online surveys or public consultation. The analysis of this will never contain personal data at a level finer than postcode analysis where this might inform the EP going forward. The core data will be held securely by the Council in line with the above policy.
- 5.6.14. The EP's operation will require patronage data provision by operators for monitoring and measuring purposes, stipulated in s.143 and s.143b of the Transport Act 2000. Such data will never be reported publicly other than in an aggregated form. The nature of this data and its publication will be agreed by the EP Board in line with the DfT guidance for EPs.
- 5.6.15. In line with the recommendations of the Competition and Markets Authority, revenue data will only be collected where necessary. Primarily this will be in relation to subsidised fares and for sales of multi-operator tickets where a 'pot' of revenue is to be distributed between operators on principles agreed by the EP Board.
- 5.6.16. Passenger and revenue data from services or journeys financially supported by the Council will be regarded as being in the public domain and is likely to be published at the time of retendering and at other times as the Council sees fit. A similar approach will be taken with data relating to any commercial service or journeys which the operator has given notice of its intention to deregister, in line with the provisions of s.143 of the Transport Act 2000.

## Annex A – schedule of LTA facilities

Facility planned	Time horizon (years from Partnership commencement)
Real Time Information at town centre shelters – roll out to further high ridership locations	Town centre – 1 year; network – 2-4 years
Town centre bus lane enforcement cameras	1 – 3 years
GPS-based bus priority - appraisal	2 – 4 years
New bus lanes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Promenade, Lytham Road – Chapel Street (northbound)</li> <li>• Bispham Road, Salmesbury Avenue – Warbreck Hill Road (southbound)</li> <li>• Talbot Road, Cecil Street – Devonshire Road (eastbound)</li> <li>• Talbot Road, Mather Street – Devonshire Road (westbound)</li> </ul>	2 – 5 years (subject to additional funding and consultation)

These facilities depend on additional funding being provided.

Amendments to this Annex can be made via the Bespoke Variation Mechanism.

## Annex B – schedule of LTA measures

Measure planned	Time horizon (years from Partnership commencement)
Refurbish and renew bus stops and shelters	1 – 5 years
Appraise key corridors for bus priority measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A584</li> <li>• A586</li> <li>• A5099</li> <li>• B5262</li> </ul>	2 - 4 years
Support LCC's Superbus project	Ongoing
Introduce multi-operator ticketing	1 – 5 years
Deliver bus ridership promotion campaign	1 year - ongoing
Maintain roads	Ongoing
Maintain existing bus lanes	Ongoing
<b><i>Subject to additional funding:</i></b>	
Demand Responsive Travel service pilot, focused on the Blackpool Airport Enterprise Zone	Year 2
Support increased service frequencies	Year 2 - ongoing
Support increased network density	Year 3 - ongoing
Modal integration measures – e.g. Talbot Gateway Central Business District interchange	Year 2 - ongoing
Baseline passenger surveys	Year 1 - ongoing

Amendments to this Annex can be made via the Bespoke Variation Mechanism.

## Annex C – definitions

In this Enhanced Partnership Scheme, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them below:

1985 Act	Transport Act 1985
2000 Act	Transport Act 2000
2017 Act	Bus Services Act 2017
Bus Operators (or Operators)	All Operators running Qualifying Bus Services taken collectively.
Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation	This comprises either: A variation of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme as a result of the voting mechanism set out in section 5 with respect to Facilities, Measures or Requirements or A variation of the EP Plan or Scheme agreed as a result of the mechanism set out in Section 5.4. Each of which will then constitute a formal variation of the EP Scheme for the purposes of s.138E(1) of the 2000 Act.
EP Board	The committee of selected Blackpool Bus Operator representatives, Blackpool Council representatives and chairperson, responsible for considering recommendations put forward and making decisions including specific Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations.
Enhanced Partnership (EP)	The Enhanced Partnership covering the geographic extent of the administrative boundary of the unitary borough of Blackpool.
Facilities	Those facilities referred to in Annex A which shall be deemed such for the purposes of s.138D(1) of the 2000 Act.
Measures	Those measures referred to in Annex 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 as defined in section 2 and also any service operated under a s.22 permit. In addition, any tendered service on which the tendering authority takes the revenue risk will not be subject to the Operator Objection mechanism, consistent with The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018.
Operator Objection Mechanism	As defined at The Enhanced Partnership Plans and Schemes (Objections) Regulations 2018.
Qualifying Bus Service	A registered local bus service with one or more stopping place within the geographical area of the Enhanced Partnership, with the exception of those defined in section 2.4 as specifically excluded from all measures in the EP: For the avoidance of doubt, Blackpool Council will publish a list of Qualifying Bus Services at the start of each Council financial year.
Requirements	Those obligations placed upon Bus Operators, which shall be deemed as such for the purposes of s.138C of the 2000 Act.