

**Meeting:** Cabinet **Date:** 19 October 2021

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** Bus Service Improvement Plan

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** Before the end of October 2021

**Cabinet Member Contact Details:** Councillor Mike Morey, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture, [mike.morey@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:mike.morey@torbay.gov.uk)

**Director/Assistant Director Contact Details:** David Edmondson, Divisional Director – Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency, [david.edmondson@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:david.edmondson@torbay.gov.uk)

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 This report seeks agreement to the principles, and general support for the publication, of the first Torbay Bus Service Improvement Plan as set out in Appendices A and B, as part of the ongoing process in response to the National Bus Strategy following Cabinet's agreement to pursue an Enhanced Bus Partnership. For clarity, information on what an Enhanced Partnership means in this context is included in Appendix C.
- 1.2 The Plan will set out a vision and priorities for the future of bus services in Torbay (with acknowledgement that routes and journeys do not stop/start at the border but cross into Devon/Plymouth as well) and will be a high-level bidding document used to secure capital and revenue grant funding from the Department for Transport.
- 1.3 On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 the Government published the National Bus Strategy, 'Bus Back Better'. This strategy applies to England and sets out a vision for improving bus services nationally. It recognises the need to act quickly, whilst acknowledging that the industry will need ongoing support for some time to recover from the consequences of Covid-19. The aim now is to re-establish patronage at pre-covid levels and then to exceed them. To do this, buses must be a practical and attractive alternative to the car.
- 1.4 The strategy makes it clear that funding will be made available to Local Authorities who pursue this vision and seek to make the improvements to their services and network. This

has clear direct benefits to the Local Authority, not least in respect of accessibility for the community and supporting the carbon neutrality aims.

- 1.5 Following agreement earlier this year for the authority to enter into a partnership with operators, the next step in the process is publication of a Bus Service Improvement Plan by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021. The Plan is not included in this report in a finalised state due to ongoing discussions with operators and neighbouring authorities, alongside further consideration of the data and current position.
- 1.6 The delivery mechanisms for the Plan will be set out within the Partnership proposals that will be drawn up prior to April 2022. In the interim time, Government is expected to set out the funding available.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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We want Torbay and its residents to thrive.

We want Torbay to be a place where we have turned the tide on poverty and tackled inequalities; where our children and older people will have high aspirations and where there are quality jobs, good pay and affordable housing for our residents.

We want Torbay to be the premier resort in the UK, with a vibrant arts and cultural offer for our residents and visitors to enjoy; where our built and natural environment is celebrated and where we play our part in addressing the climate change emergency.

- 2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver this ambition by improving accessibility for everyone across Torbay, improving connectivity to facilities whether that is education, health, employment or other, ensuring those most deprived are not excluded from that connectivity, supporting our town centres and other trip generating hubs in our towns, and helping to move journeys away from the private car and onto zero emission buses to contribute to reductions in Torbay's carbon footprint.
- 2.2 The reasons for the decision are that the proposals, depending on final provisions, support the corporate plan in the following ways:
  - *Thriving People*, turning the tide on poverty, supporting people to have a good quality of life with access to excellent schools, affordable housing and great local amenities.
  - *Thriving Economy*, achieving clean, green and inclusive growth that enables our residents (especially those living in our most deprived areas) to have access to employment and support the regeneration of our town centres.
  - *Tackling Climate Change*, putting sustainable travel (with 'greener' buses) as part of our core approach, improving air quality, and working towards carbon neutrality by Improving transport connectivity and sustainability.
  - *Council fit for the future*, providing efficient and effective services through a strengthened relationship within the community and across our partnerships. We can

better work with the community on the Bus Services Improvement Plan to provide services and facilities the community want and need, in the right places and at the right times to avoid underutilised provision.

Additionally, the proposals support the objectives of the Local Transport Plan and Local Plan.

### 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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1. Note the National Bus Strategy's overarching goal to grow bus patronage: both to build it back after the pandemic and then to increase it and raise buses' mode share and to approve the priorities and principles set out in this report and appendices for inclusion within the Bus Service Improvement Plan and continue to support the work towards an Enhanced Bus Partnership by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
2. Delegate the publication and submission of the final plan by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021 to the Divisional Director – Planning, Housing and Climate Emergency in consultation with Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture.

### Appendices

Appendix 1: Bus Service Improvement Plan Structure

Appendix 2: Scheme Proposal Headlines

Appendix 3: What is an Enhanced Partnership? – A summary

### Background Documents

National Bus Strategy "Bus Back Better" - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better>

Bus Services Act 2017 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/21/contents>

The Bus Services Act 2017 Enhanced Partnerships Guidance - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/959501/bus-services-act-2017-enhanced-partnerships-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/959501/bus-services-act-2017-enhanced-partnerships-guidance.pdf)

# Supporting Information

## 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 A Bus Service Improvement Plan must be produced by upper-tier authorities. As a minimum covering the full geographical area, all local bus services, and take proper account of the differing needs of parts of the area.
- 1.2 They should describe in outline how LTAs and operators in an area can achieve the overarching goal of the National Bus Strategy - to grow bus patronage: both to build it back after the pandemic and then to increase it and raise buses' mode share.
- 1.3 Government recognise that Plans have to be produced within six months, and that they will necessarily be outlines. They will not be taken as definitive or immutable commitments or statements of intent. Their main purpose is to get everyone thinking about what questions need to be addressed in the area, to explore possible answers, and to provide an early basis for funding decisions in the autumn and winter in preparation for the financial year 2022/3 when transformational funding begins.
- 1.4 The Plan will align closely with other policies such as the Local Transport Plan and officers will work closely across departments to make buses more attractive to users and to maximise the potential for modal shift from cars towards public transport. It should be recognised that a far-reaching programme such as this, especially alongside the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, and its emphasis on increased use of these sustainable modes of transport may not always align with the priorities of some community sectors. Examples of this may be around parking capacity for private car owners, bus priority lanes and access by buses to town centres. Torbay's Plans must prioritise access to these key destinations for these modes.
- 1.5 The Council has a current Local Transport Plan (LTP) until 2026. This is the strategic transport planning document and includes within the objectives, making better use of the transport network and strengthening/improving the public transport network. There are also a list of key elements including Improvements to public transport including minor infrastructure such as bus stops and bus priority schemes and Improvements to public transport information.
- 1.6 LTPs will become the focus of transport funding discussions between central and local government. LTPs should set out holistic place-based strategies for improving transport networks, proposed projects for investment and ultimately how key objectives will be achieved. LTPs should include clear plans for how interventions across local transport modes will drive decarbonisation in their area. To ensure investments achieve their intended aims, LTPs and business cases in future will need to demonstrate local commitment to deliver certain measures. Bus Service Improvement Plans must be fully aligned with wider Local Transport Plans.

## 2. Options under consideration

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- 2.1 The options for this decision are to agree a Bus Service Improvement Plan and therefore continue the process towards a Partnership, or take the decision to no longer pursue that.
- 2.2 Given that the Local Transport Plan supports bus travel already, the opportunities through the partnership for a greater level of improvement in services helping to meet the corporate visions and objectives, and the ongoing work towards carbon neutrality it is not recommended to stop progress on this work.
- 2.3 There is an option to not only work closely with neighbouring authorities but instead to join up and have a shared/joint plan. In this case, following discussions with Devon, Plymouth and Cornwall, we have agreed to work together on areas that cross boundaries, such as ticketing, passenger charters and cross boundary services, but to have our independent plans. The bus market throughout Devon is varied and differs in some places significantly from that in Torbay. As such, having an independent Plan allows the Council to make clear it's priorities and to work with the small number of local operators to achieve those outcomes.
- 2.4 There are options about the level of ambition demonstrated in the plan and therefore the extent of the proposals. Those included in this report set out a strong basis to recover and rebuild bus use in Torbay and in many ways to initially go "back to basics". The proposals also seek to deliver the visions of corporate policy in alignment with the National Bus Strategy.

## 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 The ambitions set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan will be reviewed by Government and it is expected that funding for both capital and revenue in the years ahead will be linked to the proposals shown. Government have been clear that they want to see ambition, and they have suggested they will match that with the funding.
- 3.2 If the Plan is aligned to corporate and national policy, and clearly meets those respective aims and objectives, the Council will be able to bid for funding opportunities to help deliver the plan, as well as working with the bus operators and others who may be able to provide solutions for delivery. We will also be able to maximise income from external bidding opportunities.
- 3.3 Non-publication of the Plan or poor plan making could result in reduced Local Transport Plan (LTP) and other government grant funding.
- 3.4 The Council has received two rounds of Local Transport Authority Bus Capacity (Revenue) Funding totalling £150,000 for developing this Plan, local bus proposals and to help the development of the Enhanced Partnership.

## 4. Legal Implications

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- 4.1 Tendering, subsidy arrangements and associated contract management will be an integral part of getting the delivery mechanisms right for this Plan.
- 4.2 The Partnership proposals will be a legal commitment between the parties (and any new bus operators starting in Torbay in future) to achieve certain standards.

## 5. Engagement and Consultation

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- 5.1 Recognising that travel patterns do not match local authority areas and given that the Local Transport Plan is joint with Devon County Council, officers have worked with our neighbouring local authority transport teams to ensure there are no contradictory proposals but more importantly to collaborate on proposals for a consistent level of service and experience for the passenger.
- 5.2 Working with Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, and Cornwall Council we have already highlighted improvements to cross border connections and possible collaborations for fare initiatives for example.
- 5.3 Working with operators is also key to this process. They must be able to agree, through the partnership, to implementing and supporting the measures in order for the Plan to be successful and for bus service improvements in Torbay to be realised.
- 5.4 The timescales involved in this process have limited the public wide consultation opportunities to date. However, as it is a 'living' plan and that is it required to be reviewed at least annually, the intention is to allow the public to comment on the proposals once published and through the partnership, the formation of the forum, and the survey the proposals can be added to, or the specific aspects can be included within the delivery phases.

## 6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

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- 6.1 The proposals do include the use of existing contracts as well as new tenders for bus services or part of services.
- 6.2 Where possible, through both these tenders and the partnership, local skills, employment and the use of apprenticeships will be included alongside exploring opportunities where the bus sector can support the Council as a Corporate Parent and give opportunities to those for whom we have responsibility.

## 7. Tackling Climate Change

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- 7.1 It is well known that transport is a considerable contributor to carbon emissions in Torbay and in our role as influencer we have both a responsibility and an opportunity to support change. This will be a core objective of the Plan.
- 7.2 This is firstly achieved by encouraging and giving the opportunity to our residents, visitors and those working within Torbay to switch journeys from the private car to sustainable modes, including buses. We can also further reduce emissions by reducing those emitting from the buses
- 7.3 The proposals set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan support this by setting out how we will make the services more accessible, operate them more frequently, ensure routes serve the communities who need them and that they access the facilities they need. They also set out how the infrastructure can support biodiversity with green roof shelters and additionally, further developing the proposals for zero emission buses – setting out a programme to achieving a zero-emission bus network across Torbay.

## 8. Associated Risks

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- 8.1 There is a significant risk if the proposal is not implemented. This risk is that the Authority is not likely to be eligible for funding from Government towards the public transport aspects of the Local Transport Plan or other specific funding opportunities for the bus network. Cabinet have previously agreed to support the Partnership but that group will need a plan for what to deliver and funding to enable delivery.
- 8.2 At this stage, the Plan sets out the aspirations of the Authority and the operators to making services better in Torbay and growing passenger numbers. Until such time as funding is announced by Government there is a risk that we will not be able to deliver against these proposals. This risk is unavoidable and is a consequence of the timeline set out by Government. We will make progress against some critical aspects where we can.

## 9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

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	Positive Impact	Negative Impact & Mitigating Actions	Neutral Impact
Older or younger people	Improved access to facilities has a positive impact on this group. All age groups with people who do not have access to a motorised vehicle are likely to be impacted. This group are less likely to have the same opportunities		

	<p>for other travel choices and as such may rely more on public transport.</p> <p>Young people are most likely to use buses for employment, education and training. This age group are more reliant on digital forms of information provision via mobile apps and web applications. Evidence indicates a high proportion of bus passengers are older people with concessionary passes. This group are most likely to use buses for shopping, leisure and to attend health appointments. This age group will continue to require access to traditional paper based forms of information such as printed timetables and timetable books.</p>		
<p>People with caring Responsibilities</p>	<p>Improved access and more frequent services, linking to key facilities, could have a positive impact on this group – especially if caring within the community and helping residents to live independently. Exploring ticket options for this group is also an option proposed.</p> <p>Carers who do not have access to a motorised vehicle are likely to be impacted. The Plan seeks to make bus services more attractive, cheaper, easier to use, faster, more reliable, and greener. Vehicle and bus stop accessibility, including low floor buses, raised curbs and space to transport pushchairs and wheelchairs, is critical for carers.</p>		
<p>People with a disability</p>	<p>Ensuring that all services are fully accessible and fitted with on board audio-visual equipment, as well as ensuring there are more services, accessing more facilities will have a positive impact on this group.</p> <p>Disabled people who do not have access to a vehicle are likely to be impacted. The Plan seeks to make bus services more attractive, cheaper, easier to use, faster, more reliable, and greener. The National Travel Survey (NTS, 2019) identifies that people with a disability or illness expected to last more than 12 months make more trips by bus than those without a disability. Vehicle and bus stop accessibility, including low floor buses, raised curbs and space to transport wheelchairs, is critical for anyone with a physical impairment. Accessible information provision is also critical, both pre journey and during the journey, including traditional paper based information, digital media, and on bus announcements and displays. Through the Enhanced Partnership information will be produced in an easy to read/understand format for customers with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities, and all other customer groups.</p>		
<p>Women or men</p>	<p>The proposals will have a positive impact on both users and non-users of the bus network and as such is likely to have a positive impact on this group although there are not specific proposals.</p>		



People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME) (Please note Gypsies / Roma are within this community)	The proposals will have a positive impact on both users and non-users of the bus network and as such is likely to have a positive impact on this group although there are not specific proposals.		
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	The proposals will have a positive impact on both users and non-users of the bus network and as such is likely to have a positive impact on this group although there are not specific proposals.		
People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual	The proposals will have a positive impact on both users and non-users of the bus network and as such is likely to have a positive impact on this group although there are not specific proposals.		
People who are transgendered	The proposals will have a positive impact on both users and non-users of the bus network and as such is likely to have a positive impact on this group although there are not specific proposals.		
People who are in a marriage or civil partnership	The proposals will have a positive impact on both users and non-users of the bus network and as such is likely to have a positive impact on this group although there are not specific proposals.		
Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave	Ensuring that all services are fully accessible, as well as ensuring there are more services, accessing more facilities will have a positive impact on this group.		
Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)	Improved access to public transport and through those links, improved access to facilities and employment will have a positive impact on this group. Low income groups who do not have access to a car are likely to be impacted. The Plan seeks to make bus services more attractive, cheaper, easier to use, faster, more reliable, and greener.		
Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)	Supporting the community to be able to move around, not to be isolated, and to have the access to services/facilities they need and can benefit from for their health and wellbeing will have a positive impact on this group. The Plan seeks to make bus services more attractive, cheaper, easier to use, faster, more reliable, and greener.		

## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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- 10.1 The working relationship with SWISCO is critical for a lot of the 'highways' implementation aspects of the plan.
- 10.2 There is also a connection with both Children's and Adult's services as representatives of key groups in the community who rely on the support of public transport.

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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- 11.1 None

## Appendix 1 Bus Service Improvement Plan Structure

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### An Overview and The Current Situation

As well as general background information, the Bus Service Improvement Plan should, as a minimum, take into account available operator and LTA data on:

- Passenger numbers by route, time of day and ticket type.
- Bus vehicle speed and congestion data by route and time of day – using GPS vehicle data from operators.
- Bus average journey times.
- Data on fare volumes – including the average price.
- The current bus market share compared to other modes, particularly the private car.
- Bus service frequency (including days of operation).
- Bus stop network density.

Where particular datasets are not available, the Plan should explain why and what urgent action will be taken to fill the data gap.

It is mandatory that they seek and report the views of passengers and third parties on the merits and demerits of bus services locally and the performance of the LTA and the local operators.

### Proposals for Improvement and Delivery of the National Bus Strategy

This section should describe in outline how the Council and operators propose to deliver the key goals of the Bus Strategy in your area. These are making services:

- more frequent, with turn-up-and-go services on major routes and feeder or demand-responsive services to lower-density places.
- faster and more reliable, with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room.
- cheaper, with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.
- more comprehensive, with better services in the evenings and weekends, not necessarily with conventional buses.
- easier to understand, with simpler routes, common numbering, co-ordinated timetable change dates, good publicity, and comprehensive information online.
- easier to use, with common tickets, passes and daily capping across all operators, simpler fares, contactless payment and protection of bus stations.
- better integrated with other modes and each other, including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers.

It is also expected that the Plan considers and reports on what is required to co-ordinate bus services with other public-sector transport provision (hospital patient transport services, school transport) to minimise duplication and maximise journey opportunities – the so-called “Total Transport” approach.

The Government guidance makes clear that they expect to see the following covered in the Plans. LTAs and operators may also cover other topics referenced in the Strategy and not covered here and may do so at their discretion.

- Intensive services and investment on key corridors, with routes that are easier to understand
- There must be significant increases in bus priority
- Fares must be lower and simpler
- There must be seamless, integrated local ticketing between operators and this should be across all types of transport
- Service patterns must be integrated with other modes
- The local bus network is presented as a single system that works together, with clear passenger information
- Modern buses and decarbonisation
- Give bus passengers more of a voice and a say
- More demand-responsive services and 'socially necessary' transport
- Longer term transformation of networks through Bus Rapid Transit and other measures

These will be 'living' documents and can be altered (and republished) if the LTA, working closely with its bus operators, believes this is necessary. They should be revised at least every twelve months to ensure they remain relevant and that the plans within it are working as intended.

#### Working together with operators

This is key to a successful partnership. Although the LTA is ultimately responsible for producing the Bus Service Improvement Plan, it cannot unilaterally decide what goes in it. Operators are expected to engage constructively in discussions, offering active suggestions for improvement, explaining what they can and cannot support and why and seeking to resolve any differences of view constructively and in the best interests of current and future bus users.

As noted above, as a living document these plans can be amended and it is possible that as discussions about the Partnership develop up to March 2022, it may become necessary to make amendments to the Plan.

#### Targets

Based on the data that is available or that will be included in the future, targets for passenger numbers, frequency and reliability, and for fares will be critical. Other targets aligned to the decarbonisation programme and the existing Local Transport Plan will also be incorporated.

#### Overview Table

A summary of the key outputs of the Plan and how it meets requirements set out in the Strategy giving readers, including passengers and the Department for Transport, an overview of the commitments which LTAs and operators will work towards to improve local bus services.

## Appendix 2 Scheme Proposal Headlines

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### Intensive services and investment on key corridors, with routes that are easier to understand

We will ensure all services are regular and reliable, getting the basics right and fixing the dysfunctions that currently exist.

Key corridors will primarily be focussed on the routes of the 12, 13 and 22. Those are critical corridors in the network but work will be done to understand any others that exist. This will include enhancing the N12 that was previously operating and exploring if there are other night service opportunities on the network.

Another key corridor not currently well served by bus is between Torbay and Exeter. The East of Exeter market for employment is very strong and although to the centre of Exeter there is competition with the train, the bus could be a better solution for the areas to the East. Also, providing a connection to Exeter Airport is one of the key outstanding objectives of the Local Transport Plan. We will explore the opportunities that exist here to develop a service that for the future, connecting employment areas, the airport, and links to Bristol airport as well via other services.

We will work with the operators to look at the intensity of the key services, as well as other 'town' services, to increase frequencies across Torbay – developing a turn up and go culture for the key corridors and a strong feeder network across all three towns with frequent services into the wider residential areas serving communities that need them.

### There must be significant increases in bus priority

We will ensure that we are designing improvements with the bus and active travel as the priorities. Initial discussions with operators have not highlighted any particular areas of concern beyond those that are well known. Previously some work has been carried out to look at the potential of a bus lane on Torquay Road alongside Oldway and through to Seaway Road – that will be explored again.

We will work with the technology that supports the GPS tracking of vehicles and the technology that can exist within traffic signals to detect and give priority to late running buses and key signalised junction on the core routes..

We will explore other opportunities across the network but in reality the network constraints, such as road widths, are likely to limit much conventional bus priority in respect of lanes. Whilst the strategy makes clear that on main roads there is an expectation that parking is not given priority, we also have to balance the need for safe active travel provision on some of the same routes.

Fares must be lower and simpler; and

There must be seamless, integrated local ticketing between operators and this should be across all types of transport

These two sections may be joined up and reflecting this as a statement from Government, we will work with operators, neighbouring authorities and other transport providers to reduce fares, align ticketing options and make a more cohesive and joined up public transport system. A joint ticketing system is critical to developing the 'one-network'/'turn up and board' approach.

We will ensure that tickets offer better value to the passenger and provide more opportunities for tickets targeted at younger passengers and families – particularly those on low incomes.

Service patterns must be integrated with other modes

Joining up the 12 with the rail network to provide through connections to and from Brixham, and increasing all frequencies will ensure Paignton acts a key hub for transport across the modes. The opportunity exists also to extend services from Torquay Town Centre across to Torquay Railway Station, as well as to improve the signage and connectivity between the station and the existing stops at both Torquay and Torre. Proposals for Edginswell Station (due to be open in 2024 as funded by New Stations Fund) will also be aligned with this to ensure those stops nearby to the station are accessible but also that the connection to the service into the nearby community and to the Hospital is strong.

To aid with the integration, we will work with the operators of both bus and rail, alongside other authorities to explore opportunities for joint ticketing.

We will also explore opportunities to work with ferry companies in Torbay to allow for the use of a single ticket.

The local bus network is presented as a single system that works together, with clear passenger information

Consistent bus stop infrastructure and information at those stops is key and we will develop minimum bus stop standards to support this. We can develop the existing real time information system, ensuring it is fit for purpose and is useful to the passenger. We will use the existing Travel Torbay branding and identity developed through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund across all buses, bus stops, information, marketing etc...

The single system approach will be broader than the bus, ensuring information sharing with rail and ferry services too so that it is clear where passengers moving between services need to go.

Modern buses and decarbonisation

Some of the fleet in Torbay is aging and it would benefit from renewal, some also have more restricted access. We will work with operators to ensure that all vehicles are modernised and that they all meet the full accessibility needs of passengers. This will include expanding the programme of implementing on board audio/visual equipment that has started on the 12 and 22 services.

Alongside that is the importance of decarbonisation – meeting the Council’s core principle. We will build on the current work to establish a programme to achieving a zero-emission fleet across Torbay. We will seek support for the infrastructure and enable the operators to update their fleets at the earliest opportunity. It is also important to recognise that filling buses, and enabling people to switch from car to bus will make a considerable contribution to carbon neutrality.

Decarbonisation can also extend to the infrastructure and in particular the shelters for which the programme of green roofs will be continued.

### **Give bus passengers more of a voice and a say**

We will develop a Torbay wide bus passenger survey and expect the Partnership to manage that and take actions depending on the feedback. Alongside that we will also be exploring how a passenger charter could be implemented consistently across and beyond the area. It is expected that a forum will be created or used which will include the authority, operators, user groups, representatives of disabled people, local business and education establishment representatives, the highway authority and any other key stakeholders identified. Locally, it is suggested that the other key stakeholders include Brixham Town Council, the Torbay Community Development Trust, Torbay Hospital, South Devon College and others. Transport Focus can provide key support in this using their advice to enable us to follow best practice. The forum and survey must be representative, across the area, with users and non-users, considering the equality categories etc.

### **More demand-responsive services and ‘socially necessary’ transport**

The Council has recently re-budgeted for ‘socially necessary’ services and the proposals will build on that decision to ensure the right services to the right places and at the right frequencies are in place.

A review of the existing fare car services will be set out, alongside the specific services that operate for certain retail destinations.

Demand responsive transport will be considered, particularly in relation to the hospital ‘out of hours’ but there are no proposals currently. The previous study work highlighted some potential and that is most likely to be linked to late evenings or weekends and to destinations such as key employment hubs.

### **Longer term transformation of networks through Bus Rapid Transit and other measures**

Conscious of the need to show ambition this section should not be considered unimportant nor a step too far. We need to be clear that until the basics are right, we know the support we will have going forward, and we know the market for buses following recovery from the pandemic it is difficult to judge what transformation will look like. We will continue to transform our network, considering changes in technology that may emerge alongside other opportunities and learning from best practice. Increasing patronage and decreasing the reliance on concessionary fare income will give all services a boost.

## Improvement proposals by category

### Services

Increased frequency of services across the Bay

Extending, and making consistent, the service times of services either where they serve key destinations or to attract new passengers

Ensure all routes currently provided for are maintained as well as others grown

Reinstate and consider expansion of N12

Extension of Torquay town service/s to Torquay Railway Station

Torbay to East of Exeter (inc Airport)

Working with Devon County Council to consider cross boundary services including the 13 and 18, as well as others that can join up to better support the communities.

### Ticketing

Joint ticketing as a priority

Explore ways to reduce ticket prices

Link up with the railway, including a through ticket to/from Brixham connecting with the 12 and the train at Paignton.

### Vehicles

Setting a programme for a zero-emission network

Installing required infrastructure to support new vehicles being introduced

Full roll out of on-board audio-visual stop information systems

A modern, fully accessible fleet

### Infrastructure

Continued roll out of Green Roof shelters

Minimum Bus Stop standards – set at categories depending on the usage and to include prioritising access for bus users.

Improved information at bus stops

Maintenance plans including at stops, signing and lining, and tree cutting along routes

### Passenger Information

Real time information system upgrade and refinement

Consistent published material including timetable information at bus stops

Use of the existing “Travel Torbay” branding



## Appendix 3 – What is an Enhanced Partnership? – A summary

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An EP is an agreement between a local transport authority (LTA) and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services. It includes a clear vision of the improvements that the EP is aiming for (known as an EP plan) and accompanying actions to achieve them (set out in one of more EP schemes). The local transport authority has formal responsibility for making the scheme, but at set points in the process they can only proceed with their proposals if they have the support of a defined proportion of local bus operators. The 2017 Act allows individual partnerships to tailor their schemes to meet local needs.

Once authorities and relevant bus operators have held formal discussions on the proposed content of an EP, the next step is to draft the formal documentation. This comprises:

- an EP plan - which is a high-level vision and objectives for bus services in the local area; and
- one or more EP scheme(s) - which set out the detail of how the vision and objectives will be achieved, including any commitments made by the local authority or standards to be met by bus operators

The EP plan is the high-level strategic document that sets the bus network in the EP area into context. There are a number of specific things that the plan must cover.

These are:

- the geographical area covered by the EP plan;
- the period to which the plan relates;
- whether the plan is to be reviewed and, if so, how and when that is to happen;
- an analysis of local bus services;
- the objectives of the plan – in terms of how it will improve the quality and effectiveness of local bus services in the EP area;
- what policies regarding local bus services will be pursued in the EP area;
- how the related EP scheme(s) are intended to assist in implementing the policies and achieving the objectives set out in the plan;
- the intended effect of the EP scheme(s) on neighbouring areas that are outside the plan area; and
- the authority's plans for consulting passenger groups on how well the plan and scheme(s) are working.

These are all high-level requirements, and the plan can interpret them as widely as the partnership considers necessary. It can include for example:

- targets for bus usage, journey times, or connectivity – the key here is that any targets should be assessed using existing available data or data that the partnership agrees it can compile;
- the strategic issues that, in the opinion of the EP stakeholders, are relevant to the future provision of local bus services (such as the retail, business and housing developments that

are likely to change the flow of people and their transport demands over the life of the plan, local economic growth objectives or air quality challenges);

- the local and central Government investment that is likely, or has the potential to be, available. This can include funding which is specifically available to improve or support bus services, as well as wider funding such as that for new housing (including developer contributions) or transport infrastructure; and
- the aspirations of local transport providers – how they would wish to see the local bus market develop over time and how an EP can contribute to that.