

REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM:6
DATE OF MEETING:	3 MARCH 2022	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	ALLISON THOMAS, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)	OPEN
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SUBJECT:	DERBYSHIRE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL WARDS	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS17

1.0 Recommendations

1.0 It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) express general support for the Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS);
- (ii) request that references in the EPP and EPS to the local bus network being self-contained in the County as a whole, be amended to reflect the fact that the start and/or end points of all bus services operating in South Derbyshire lie outside the County and/or within Derby City.
- (iii) advise that the proposed review of parking charges should take account of the need to maintain the vitality and viability of town/village centres and that any proposals should be based upon clear evidence of positive overall sustainability outcomes.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To seek a Committee resolution in regard to the Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) and Scheme (EPS) prepared by Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and Partners and circulated for consultation.

3.0 Executive Summary

3.1 The report explains that the EPP sets the policies and objectives for improving bus services in Derbyshire over a five-year period and that the EPS identifies the respective obligations of DCC and the bus operators to achieve this end.

- 3.2 It explains that preparation and implementation of the EPP and EPS are the responsibility of the Enhanced Partnership Board (EPB) comprising DCC elected members and officers and representatives of bus and community transport operators.
- 3.3 The community will be represented by the Wider Stakeholder Group (WSG) of which the borough and district councils, among other organisations, will form a part. The EPB will consult the WSG on potential investment projects and changes to the EP.
- 3.4 The report refers to the proposed EPP actions and the respective obligations of DCC and the bus operators, as set out in the EPS, drawing attention to proposed measures of particular interest to South Derbyshire.
- 3.5 It goes on to recommend that the District Council express general support for the EPP and EPS whilst requesting changes to reflect the cross-boundary nature of all conventional bus services operating in South Derbyshire and advising that proposed reviews of car park charging should take account of the need to maintain the vitality and viability of town/village centres.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) published the National Bus Strategy in March 2021. This required all Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to commit to establishing Enhanced Partnerships (EPs) across their entire areas and stated that access to new streams of discretionary Government bus funding would be dependent upon this.
- 4.2 An EP is a statutory arrangement under the 2017 Bus Services Act which allows the LTA to take over the role of registering bus services from the Traffic Commissioners and establishes binding commitments on the LTA and bus operators to provide necessary enhancements to make buses increasingly attractive and easy to use.
- 4.3 DCC duly published notification of its intent to pursue an EP in June 2021, following which it worked with bus operators and other stakeholders to prepare its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), a long-term strategy to enhance bus services, which is also a bidding document for DfT funding. The BSIP identifies investment programmes and sets out details of advances to be made in coming years. This was submitted to the DfT in October 2021.

Enhanced Partnership Plan

- 4.4 The EPP provides an analysis of local services and sets out policies and objectives concerning the quality and effectiveness of services for the five-year period beginning 31 March 2022. It contributes to DCC's vision for buses, which is that they should be:

- The first-choice mode for existing and new customers for most journeys across Derbyshire
- Available for more journeys and grow to meet customer needs
- Affordable to use
- Environmentally sustainable
- Welcoming and friendly for existing and new passengers
- Part of a connected network that helps reduce social isolation.

4.5 The Draft EPP is included at Annexe A.

Enhanced Partnership Scheme

4.6 The EPS sets out the respective obligations and requirements on DCC as the LTA and Local Highway Authority and on the operators of local bus services, with the aim of delivering the objectives of the EPP.

4.7 The Draft EPS is included at Annexe B. The County Council's obligations are set out in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, whilst the bus operators' obligations are set out on pages 16-19.

Governance Arrangements

4.8 An Enhanced Partnership Board (EPB) has been formed to oversee the preparation and implementation of the EPP and EPS and before that the BSIP. It is independently chaired and comprises DCC elected members and officers, bus operators and community transport providers. The EPB also includes the Chair of the Wider Stakeholder Group (WSG - see para 4.9) who will provide the link between the community and users on the Board.

4.9 The WSG reviews the performance of the Partnership, considers potential investment projects when asked to do so by the EPB and considers potential changes to the EP. It is independently chaired and meets twice annually. It comprises representatives of Derbyshire borough and district councils, Derby City Council and other neighbouring LTAs, wider bus and community transport operators, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the East Midlands Chamber, university and further education colleges, transport user groups, the Confederation of Passenger Transport, rail operators, disability groups and ethnic community groups.

4.10 The BSIP, EPP and EPS will be reviewed and updated annually by the EPB, informed by feedback from the WSG, customers and the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of measures implemented to date.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 None identified at this stage, but any funding requests in support of specific measures will be the subject of further reports to Committee as necessary.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

- 6.1 None specifically identified, but individual measures may potentially impact staffing resources depending on the outcome of consultations and collaboration between DCC and the District Council. Any such proposals will be the subject of further reports to Committee as necessary.

Legal Implications

- 6.2 The EPP and EPS have been prepared in accordance with the Transport Act, 2000 and the Bus Services Act 2017.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.3 The EPP and EPS have implications for the following key aims of the Corporate Plan:

- 'Tackle Climate Change' insofar as modal shift from the private car to public transport can assist in reducing CO₂ emissions.
- 'Enhance the attractiveness of South Derbyshire' in regard to potential infrastructure improvements, e.g. bus shelters, the bus station.
- 'Supporting and safeguarding the most vulnerable' in that bus services can help to reduce social isolation for those without access to other means of travel.
- 'Develop skills and careers' insofar as public transport can provide access to employment for those who are unable to travel by other means
- 'Support economic growth and infrastructure' in regard to potential improvements e.g. to bus shelters, the bus station

Risk Impact

- 6.4 None identified

7.0 Community Implications

Consultation

- 7.1 This is a consultation exercise being conducted by Derbyshire County Council and Partners.

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.2 Public transport can improve accessibility for those unable to travel by other means.

Social Value Impact

- 7.3 Improved bus services can help to reduce highway congestion and social isolation.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.4 Modal shift from the private car to public transport can help to reduce CO₂ emissions.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The EPP and EPS present an opportunity to improve bus infrastructure and bus services with potential for reductions in highway congestion, transport related CO₂ emissions and social isolation for those unable to travel by other means. The District Council will be a consultee on the rolling forward and implementation of the programme of measures through the WSG.
- 8.2 The sections of the EPP and EPS that consider the effects of the proposals (pages 18 and 26 respectively) indicate that for the County as a whole the *'local bus network is largely self-contained, with some limited cross boundary services providing links to adjacent towns and cities'*. This is not the case in South Derbyshire where every conventional bus service begins and/or ends in an adjoining district or in Derby City. The cross-boundary nature of the local bus network has a significant bearing on the ways in which local public transport needs are addressed. It is therefore proposed to ask that these references be amended to better reflect circumstances in this part of the County.
- 8.3 The EPS identifies a number of potential County-wide measures that could potentially help to improve public transport in South Derbyshire, subject to confirmation of funding. These include the introduction of new Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services; the fixing of timetable change dates; improvement of services to key attractors; the introduction of lower fares for key groups; fare capping; the development of plans for transport hubs; the establishment of an all-operator one stop website and app and the review of planning policies and procedures in relation to public transport.
- 8.4 Of particular interest to South Derbyshire is the provision of real time information at Swadlincote Bus Station at a cost of some £36,000, subject to DCC Local Transport Plan funding approval. If implemented this will clearly improve the local bus user experience.
- 8.5 The proposed evaluation of future options to improve provision and better manage bus shelters is also a matter of direct interest, as the District Council is responsible for their cleaning and maintenance. Any new arrangements arrived at through consultation may have District Council staffing and budgetary implications although these cannot be quantified at this point. The proposal will involve a County-wide £150,000 DCC maintenance contribution to Borough and District Councils, subject to County Council LTP funding approval.
- 8.6 One of the supporting activities identified in the list of measures is the review of parking charges. This relates to the summary of 'risks' included on page 17 of

the EPP which identifies the availability of free parking in town/village centres as a risk to increased bus use.

- 8.7 At the present time the District Council does not charge for the use of any of its car parks. Free parking has for many years been considered essential to the maintenance of the vitality and viability of Swadlincote town centre, enabling it to compete with the nearby centres of Burton and Ashby, which lie within some 9km and 7.5km respectively. A reduction in custom at Swadlincote town centre could lead to loss of shops and services thus potentially encouraging local residents to meet their needs by travelling greater distances to the other centres, including by private car.
- 8.8 Therefore, whilst the review of parking charges is not opposed in principle, it is recommended that the District Council should advise that any proposal to introduce parking fees at any particular town/village centre should be based upon clear evidence of positive overall sustainability outcomes.

9.0 Background Papers

National Bus Strategy for England	Department for Transport, 2021
Bus Service Improvement Plan	Derbyshire County Council and Partners, October 2021
Enhanced Partnership Plan	Derbyshire County Council and Partners, January 2022
Enhanced Partnership Scheme	Derbyshire County Council and Partners, January 2022

ANNEXE A

ANNEXE B