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Agenda

Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership

Tuesday 7 July 2026 at 2.00 pm

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Members:

Hannah Battye	Oxfordshire County Council
Phil Whitfield	Oxfordshire County Council
Tom Bridgman	Oxford City Council
Ian Boll	Cherwell District Council
Louise Dell	South and Vale District Councils
Luke Marion	Go Ahead Group (Oxford)
Glen De-Sousa	Go Ahead Group (Oxford)
George Sloan	Stagecoach West
Martin Gibbon	Stagecoach West
Robert Williams	Reading Buses

In attendance:

Councillor Gareth Epps	Oxfordshire County Council
Alyn Jones	Oxfordshire County Council
Katharine Broomfield	Oxfordshire County Council
Stuart Kocan-Payne	Oxfordshire County Council
Melissa Goodacre	Oxfordshire County Council
Susan Harbour	Oxfordshire Partnerships
Babatunde Ogundele	Oxfordshire Partnerships

AGENDA

1 **Welcome and apologies**

2 **Notes of the previous meeting and actions** (Pages 3 - 14)

3 **General BSIP and funding updates**

4 **Bus Plan 2040 and EP+ update**

5 **Traffic Filters / Congestion Charge update**

6 **Oxfordshire County Council and operator updates**

a **LGR update**

7 **BSIP Scheme Progress - questions and comments only**

8 **Working Group updates**

a **Delivering Our Future Bus Vision**

b **Making Buses More Attractive**

c **Improving Bus Speed, Reliability and Infrastructure**

9 **EP Board substantive discussion items**

a **EP Risk Register**

10 **AOB**

11 **Date of next meeting**

- 12 October 2026

Notes

OF A MEETING OF THE

Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL 2026 AT 9.30 AM

Members: Luke Marion (Chair), (Go Ahead Group), Hannah Battye, (Oxfordshire County Council), Tom Bridgman, (Oxford City Council), Ian Boll, (Cherwell District Council), Louise Dell, (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils), Chris Hanson, (Stagecoach West), Glenn De Sousa, (Go Ahead Group), George Sloan, (Stagecoach West), Phil Whitfield, (Oxfordshire County Council) and Robert Williams, (Reading Buses)

In attendance: Councillor Andrew Gant, (Oxfordshire County Council), Katherine Broomfield, (Oxfordshire County Council), Stuart Kocan-Payne, (Oxfordshire County Council), Babatunde Ogundele, (Oxfordshire Partnerships) and Alyn Jones, (Oxfordshire County Council)

153 Welcome and apologies

Members of the Board welcomed one another.

Luke Marion, Go Ahead Group (Oxford) Chaired the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Hannah Battye, Melissa Goodacre, Chris Hanson, and Tom Bridgman (substituted by Carolyn Ploszynski).

Phil Whitfield attended the meeting for the first 30 minutes. Councillor Andrew Gant attended the meeting for the first 1 hour and 30 minutes.

154 Notes of the previous meeting and actions

The notes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record of matters discussed.

The Board considered the updated actions table, which had been circulated in advance. It was noted that actions from the previous meeting had been consolidated, with a view to streamlining the log and removing items that were ongoing monitoring matters rather than discrete actions.

Botley Road Reopening
The Board considered whether this item should be removed and tracked via the risk register. However, it was agreed that, due to the need for careful coordination between

stakeholders (including service registration timelines, coordination with Network Rail, and alignment with infrastructure readiness), the action should remain open.
Action: To retain on the actions log until resolved (anticipated mid-July).

Traffic Filters / Congestion Charge Impacts
It was noted that this matter had been superseded by developments relating to the congestion charge.
RESOLVED: That the action be removed.

District Representation at EP Groups
The Board noted that updates to the EOG Group had been scheduled.

Action:
- Babatunde Ogundele (BO) to coordinate attendance at upcoming Executive Officer Group (EOG) meetings (28 May and 26 November), with operator representation confirmed.
- Luke Marion to attend as operator representative.

Collaboration on Communications
It was agreed that this was now embedded within business-as-usual activity.

RESOLVED: That the action be removed and monitored via the risk register if required.

Bus Accessibility Study (formerly DRT Study)
The Board noted that the final report remained outstanding.

Action: To update and retain this action under its revised title pending receipt of the final report.

Bus Strategy (Bus Plan) Engagement Timelines
It was agreed that this had been superseded by more recent actions relating to Enhanced Partnership input into future strategies.

RESOLVED: That the action be removed.

Meeting with Public Transport Champion (Cllr Brant)
It was confirmed that this had taken place.

RESOLVED: That the action be marked as completed.

Traffic Signal Junction Upgrades
The Board noted that regular updates were now being provided.

Action: To review updated pinch point analysis when available (anticipated next month).

RESOLVED: That the original action be closed.

Lane Rental Updates
It was agreed that updates should continue during the early implementation phase.

Action: To retain pending post-implementation review.

Cowley Branch Line

Engagement with bus operators outstanding.

Action:
Carolyn Ploszynski (CP) to pick this up with Tom Bridgeman (TB)

Growth Commission Engagement
It was noted that a meeting had not yet been arranged.

Action: Carolyn Ploszynski (CP) to liaise with the Growth Commission and arrange a meeting with Neil Coleman prior to 2 July.

Operator Cost Pressures
It was noted that this had been transferred to the risk register.

RESOLVED: That the action be closed.

Confidential Items in Minutes
The Board agreed that draft minutes would be publicly published subject to confirmation that no confidential items were included.

Action: Board members to notify BO of any confidential elements following meetings.

Other Actions

- Circulation of draft LTDP – **Completed**
- Bus priority and bus stop schemes – **Completed** (now progressed via IBSRI Group)
- Vehicle Improvement Fund update – **Completed - to be covered under a separate agenda item**
- My Bus ticket data – **Completed (received from Stagecoach)**

Additional Action (Branchline Programme)
It was agreed that engagement with the relevant programme lead should be progressed.

Action:

- Carolyn Ploszynski (CP) to invite Clive Tritton to the relevant working group.

Accessibility and Inclusion

The Board noted recent Government guidance placing increased emphasis on accessibility and inclusion within Enhanced Partnerships.

It was agreed that existing arrangements were broadly effective; however, further consideration would be given to ensuring appropriate prominence within governance structures and working groups.

155 General BSIP and funding updates

Katharine Broomfield (KB), Technical Lead, Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council and Alyn Jones (AJ), Capital Schemes Lead, Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, provided the Board with an update on BSIP and funding matters, noting that this item also covered elements of the following agenda items.

KB advised that the Quarter 4 BSIP monitoring and reporting return was being prepared for submission by 1 May, with additional time available to finalise finance information.

The Board noted that the Local Transport Delivery Plan had been submitted to the Department for Transport in March. No feedback had been received, which was considered positive. A final delivery plan, containing further detail for future years, would be submitted in September. KB reported that several new Government guidance documents had recently been issued, including Better Connected, updated Enhanced Partnership guidance, and Local Transport Plan guidance. Officers were reviewing the documents to identify any resulting actions or requirements.

The Board noted that the Department for Transport had revised patronage figures for the previous three years following changes to underlying data and processing. Oxfordshire's 2024/25 figure had increased to 39.51 million trips, equating to 97.1% of pre-Covid levels. This was welcomed as a positive change.

Luke Marion (LM) noted that more recent figures were expected to show further growth above pre-Covid levels, particularly following the introduction of the congestion charge.

KB advised that the 2025 Your Bus Journey Survey results had been published. Overall satisfaction had increased, while most other measures had either remained stable or improved slightly. However, satisfaction with value for money had reduced. A meeting with Transport Focus was scheduled to examine the results in more detail.

The Board received a staffing update. KB advised that she would be seconded to the Area Travel Plans Team from 18 May for six months, primarily to work on the delivery of the Bus Plan. It was noted that her substantive role would not be backfilled, with Alyn Jones and Dave Harrison covering relevant areas of work.

The Board also noted recent awards received by the partnership, including:

- Bronze Award for the MyBus scheme at the Global Transport Ticketing Awards; and
- First place in the Decarbonising Public Transport Award at the Decarbonising Transport Awards.

The Board welcomed the recognition, noting the importance of the University of Birmingham research in evidencing the outcomes of the decarbonisation work.

AJ provided an update on recent statutory guidance and policy documents, including the National Integrated Transport Strategy, updated Enhanced Partnership guidance, and the Department for Transport's Plan for Buses.

The Board noted the Government's emphasis on attractive, accessible and well-used bus services, with passenger needs at the centre. Key themes included access to employment, healthcare, education, shopping and leisure; reliable services; safety, particularly for women and girls; integration with other transport modes; accurate information; affordability; and climate-friendly travel choices.

AJ advised that Oxfordshire was well placed to continue delivering against these priorities, supported by the three- and four-year funding settlement.

The Board noted the three guiding principles within the Integrated Transport Strategy: people, place and partnership. It was further noted that these principles would be central to the development of the Bus Plan and EP Plus.
The Board was advised that the updated Enhanced Partnership guidance introduced additional duties, including:

- stronger focus on funding compliance;
- minimum standards linked to future funding;
- identification of socially necessary local bus services;
- a formal process for withdrawal or substantial changes to those services;
- strengthened governance, accountability and enforceability; and
- greater performance monitoring by the Board.

It was noted that, from 2026/27, the Enhanced Partnership Plan could potentially serve as the BSIP, provided it met all BSIP requirements. The Board discussed the potential to avoid duplication by using the Bus Plan as the more public-facing strategic document, and the EP Plan as the detailed delivery and governance document.

There were no objections raised to the proposal in principle.

KB advised that joint funding had been agreed for a highways-based Bus Champion role for an initial period of approximately 18 months. The role would support mitigation and prevention of disruption arising from road closures and works.

The Board welcomed the update. It was noted that the role would be particularly important in supporting the lane rental scheme by providing earlier visibility of planned works and enabling appropriate mitigation.

KB noted she would pass on the Board's positive feedback regarding the Bus Champion role.

156 Bus Plan 2040 and EP+ update

Katharine Broomfield (KB)**,** Technical Lead Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on progress in relation to the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plus and the development of the Ox Bus Plan 2040. It was noted that the two workstreams are closely aligned, with the Bus Plan setting the strategic direction and EP Plus focusing on delivery.

The Board was advised that public engagement activities for both workstreams would be undertaken jointly. In respect of timescales, it was reported that these are still being finalised; however, the intention is to secure approval of the Bus Plan before the end of the calendar year. It was noted that EP Plus may be approved concurrently or subsequently, but cannot be approved in advance of the Bus Plan.

Action: Katharine Broomfield / Alyn Jones to confirm and communicate finalised timescales for the Ox Bus Plan 2040 and EP Plus.

KB further advised that the structure of the Bus Plan is expected to follow a similar format to the Rail Plan. Ongoing engagement with operators and stakeholders was confirmed, primarily through the Delivering Our Future Bus Vision Group, alongside a planned in-person workshop scheduled for 18 May 2026. It was noted that supporting materials would be circulated in advance of this session.

It was further noted that there is broad alignment on the overall direction of travel and key areas for improvement; however, further work is required to develop the detailed proposals.

Councillor Andrew Gant commented that the proposed delivery plan reflects the wider direction of government policy, particularly in relation to performance-based funding and minimum service standards. He highlighted the risks associated with performance measurement frameworks, including the potential for inequitable funding outcomes and increased administrative burden.

Luke Marion (LM) emphasised that maintaining baseline funding does not necessarily equate to maintaining service provision, noting increasing cost pressures such as inflation and national insurance, and recent developments in Bracknell Forest which had highlighted this point. He therefore highlighted the importance of continuing to increase bus patronage to ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Councillor Andrew Gant further noted that Oxfordshire is in a comparatively strong position, with increasing bus usage. He also highlighted the importance of partnership funding arrangements, including contributions from external stakeholders such as developers (Section 106 agreements), universities and community transport providers.

AJ added that Oxfordshire has demonstrated strong reinvestment practices, whereby efficiency savings and patronage improvements are reinvested into services. He noted that this approach is not consistently observed across other areas and represents a positive position for the County.

157 Oxfordshire County Council and operator updates

Phil Whitfield (PW), Head of Network Management, Oxfordshire County Council provided an update on the implementation of the Lane Rental Scheme, due to go live on 5 May 2026.

The scheme will introduce a daily charge for works undertaken on designated traffic-sensitive streets during peak times, with the aim of reducing disruption and encouraging works outside peak hours. It is anticipated that approximately 85–90% of works will occur outside chargeable periods.

Since the previous update, the following progress was noted:

- Approval received from the Department for Transport (DfT)
- System enhancements implemented within the Aurora street works system
- Updates issued to the National Street Gazetteer
- Recruitment of additional staff, with a focus on network coordination
- Ongoing “shadow running” period with utility companies
- Development of governance arrangements for surplus funding

PW outlined that surplus funds generated by the scheme will be split, with 50% allocated to highway maintenance and the remainder used for initiatives aimed at reducing disruption and improving the transport network. A Lane Rental Surplus Fund Board will oversee allocation of funds.

It was noted that initial business cases for funding are expected from August 2026, although early discussions can commence earlier.

Members of the Board discussed opportunities for partnership working, particularly in relation to mitigating disruption to bus services and developing innovative solutions. The potential for a small, rapidly deployable reserve fund to address urgent disruption (e.g. shuttle bus provision) was also discussed.

Action: OBEP Board Members to begin identifying potential schemes and mitigation measures for Lane Rental funding, ahead of initial business case submissions (target: August 2026).

Action: Phil Whitfield to confirm governance arrangements and provide guidance on the development of business cases for Lane Rental surplus funding.

Action: Phil Whitfield to provide a further update at the next meeting, including early findings from implementation.

Members of the board noted that the introduction of lane rental represents a significant operational change and will require a more proactive approach from the partnership in identifying mitigation measures and developing business cases.

Action: Board members to consider how operational practices may need to adapt in response to the Lane Rental Scheme and associated funding opportunities.

Congestion Charge Update

Councillor Andrew Gant, Oxfordshire County Council, provided an update on the Oxford congestion charge scheme.

It was confirmed that:

- The scheme is temporary and intended to operate until the introduction of traffic filters
- Traffic filters are expected following the reopening of Botley Road (anticipated 31 August 2026) under an ETRO
- The scheme has delivered positive outcomes for bus services, including increased passenger numbers and improved journey times

Cabinet considered the investment plan for congestion charge revenues. It was agreed that:

- Free Park & Ride travel will not be extended in its current form
- A revised £3 Park & Ride ticket is proposed
- The full investment plan will return to Cabinet on 19 May 2026 for further consideration

Members of the Board noted that further engagement with operators will take place to support development of additional schemes.

KB informed the Partnership that discussions were underway regarding the communications and launch arrangements for the reopening of Botley Road, anticipated towards the end of August. It was noted that this matter would be further discussed at a forthcoming meeting of the Making Buses More Attractive Working Group (MBMA).

Action: Katharine Broomfield / Alyn Jones to provide a further update on the Botley Road reopening communications and launch plans following discussions with MBMA.

KB further noted that a written update from Hannah Battye, Head of Place Shaping Oxfordshire County Council regarding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), devolution, and internal restructuring was available.

Action: Katharine Broomfield/Babatunde Ogundele to circulate Hannah Battye's written update on LGR, devolution, and internal restructuring to all members following the meeting.

Operator Updates

Stagecoach
George Sloan reported ongoing service disruption in Banbury due to the closure of Bridge Street. It was noted that additional vehicles and services had been deployed to mitigate impacts, with close liaison maintained with local authority officers. George Sloan noted he would continue working with Dave Harrison and relevant officers to mitigate disruption caused by the Bridge Street closure in Banbury.

An update was provided on service improvements in Bicester, including the introduction of the S5A service, delivering a more direct connection to Oxford whilst retaining key interchange opportunities at Summertown. Early passenger growth on this route was noted as encouraging.

Work was also progressing on service planning for West Oxfordshire, particularly in preparation for the reopening of Botley Road.

Action: Stagecoach to inform on West Oxfordshire service changes at the next Oxfordshire Bus Enhanced Partnership meeting.

Members of the Board were advised that the introduction of a weekend Oxford Tube service had been well received, responding to requests from the Witney Bus Users Group.

Further updates were provided on changes to the Oxford City Network, including:
- Introduction of circular Services 9 and 10
- New Service 12 offering faster connections
- Introduction of Service 13 providing improved access to Headington and hospital sites

These changes were expected to be implemented at the end of May.

Reading Buses

Robert Williams confirmed the completion of refurbishment works on the Pink 25 bus fleet, including upgraded interiors, new livery, and onboard Wi-Fi enhancements.

He further advised that timetable changes were proposed from July, aimed at improving journey times on the Aqua 28 route and adjusting the Pink 25 service accordingly. Consultation with relevant local authorities was ongoing.

Action: Robert Williams to inform on the timetable changes at the next Enhanced Partnership Board meeting.

Go-Ahead Group

Luke Marion reported that service reliability had improved following the introduction of congestion management measures implemented in February.
It was noted that:

- Seven new electric vehicles had entered service, with further roll-out planned
- Additional new diesel vehicles (4 x ADL Enviro 400 Euro 6) would be introduced shortly
- Changes to Service 600 would take effect from 3 May, including improved connectivity to Oxford Science Park and Churchill Hospital

The reintroduction of bus services within the Churchill Hospital site was highlighted as a significant improvement.

An update was also provided on the X52 service, which had launched in March and was performing satisfactorily, supported by targeted marketing activity.

Action: Officers to produce some positive communications on all service improvements (after the elections).

158 BSIP Scheme Progress - questions and comments only

The Board noted the **BSIP tracker update** (agenda pack pages 15 and 19), including delivery progress and traffic signal improvements.

No comments were raised.

AJ reported that £1.405m of bus grant funding had been allocated to the Vehicle Improvement Fund in 2025/26, supporting fleet decarbonisation and passenger improvements. Seven schemes were approved, delivering 13 electric vehicles and wider enhancements. Total investment was approximately £5.5m.

For 2026/27, an increased budget and an unchanged application process were noted, with applications proposed to open shortly and decisions by end July.

Action: Alyn Jones to confirm the 2026/27 Vehicle Improvement Fund (VIF) timetable.

It was confirmed that funding must be committed within the financial year, with flexibility on delivery timelines. Operators should include indicative delivery timelines within any applications. LM highlighted the potential need to understand the outcome of an expected forthcoming OCC tender process to enable operators to confirm their investment plans.

It was reported that the proposed BSIP funded A423 bus stop scheme at Great Bourton was not deliverable within budget due to significant infrastructure and safety requirements. Given limited-service frequency and community size, members supported reallocation of funding.

Action: Alyn Jones to progress reallocation of funding to alternative bus stop and shelter improvements.

159 Working Group updates

160 Delivering Our Future Bus Vision

Luke Marion reported that a workshop had been held to align workstreams relating to the Ox Bus Plan 2040 and the wider bus vision. It was noted that previous inconsistencies between the two had been addressed, with improved shared understanding achieved.

A follow-up workshop was scheduled for 18 May 2026. No matters were escalated.

161 Making Buses More Attractive

Katharine Broomfield, Technical Lead Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, reported that the last MBMA meeting took place on 11 February 2026, with the next meeting scheduled later this day.

It was noted that:

- Bus usage monitoring was ongoing
- The MyBus scheme review remained in progress
- A “Where to catch your bus” map for the JR Hospital had been agreed, subject to final updates
- Three promotional bus videos had been produced and shared with operators

Action: Alyn Jones to update the JR Hospital bus map to reflect recent service changes prior to publication, primarily the Stagecoach changes expected to take place at the end of May.

Upcoming areas of focus included:

- Marketing activity (including BetterPoints and video promotion)
- Concessionary fares promotion
- Botley Road reopening communications
- Transport Focus survey results

Ongoing workstreams including fare simplification, accessibility and website improvements

162 Improving Bus Speed, Reliability and Infrastructure

Stuart Kocan-Payne, Technical Lead Bus Infrastructure, Oxfordshire County Council reported that:

- The bus stop order had been completed and passed to GIS for mapping

- Nine corridor upgrade schemes had been issued to contractors, with works expected to commence mid-May
- Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) works were progressing
- Consultants had been appointed for JR Hospital improvements, with a report expected in June

Further updates included:

- Progress on Section 106-funded schemes, with additional resource anticipated
- Ongoing work on S1 route upgrades
- Orders placed for shelters and stops (12–14-week delivery expected)

An update was provided on works at Gloucester Green, including RTPI installation, seating provision and site improvements. It was noted that physical works were expected to commence in the coming weeks, subject to resolution of outstanding issues. Operators raised concerns about any works taking place over the busy summer period.

Action: Stuart Kocan-Payne to provide a programme update for Gloucester Green works and confirm timelines.

163 EP Board substantive discussion items

164 EP Risk Register

Katharine Broomfield, Technical Lead Bus Service Improvement, Oxfordshire County Council, presented the updated Risk Register, which was duly considered by the Board**.**

It was noted that a new risk had been added following discussion at the previous meeting, with initial scoring applied.

Members reviewed the register and agreed the following:

- The risk relating to Stagecoach bus tracker installation (RR7) was no longer required, as implementation was nearing completion

Action: Katharine Broomfield to remove RR7 from the Risk Register.

- The HIF1 risk remained a concern; however, engagement with project leads had improved and was ongoing. LM advised that a meeting had been scheduled to review the programme in detail on 13th May 2026.

No further action was required at this stage.

- The risk relating to the reopening of Botley Road required refinement to reflect concerns regarding **coordination and uncertainty of reopening timing**, rather than delay alone

It was further noted that the absence of a confirmed reopening date increased residual risk.

Action: Katharine Broomfield to revise the Botley Road risk wording and scoring to reflect coordination risks and uncertainty.

Action: Officers to ensure appropriate coordination planning is reflected within mitigation measures for the Botley Road reopening.

KB confirmed that the updated Risk Register would be recirculated for review.

Action: Babatunde Ogundele to recirculate the Risk Register for member confirmation.

The Board noted the Risk Register update and agreed the amendments outlined above.

165 AOB

Members of the Board noted that further meetings need to be booked in, with the next meeting to take place in early July 2026 to align with key timelines relating to the Botley Road reopening.

Action: Babatunde Ogundele to circulate calendar invitations for upcoming meetings, including scheduling the next meeting for early July.

KB advised that a Thames Valley Integrated Transport Conference was scheduled for 27–28 April (2027), with further details to follow.

It was noted that the conference would include multi-modal transport discussions and wider authority participation.

Action: Members of the Board to note the conference dates and hold diaries pending further details.

Members of the Board noted that announcements relating to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) were expected ahead of the summer recess, with implementation to follow thereafter.

The importance of maintaining continuity of work and ensuring key outputs, including the Ox Bus Plan 2040, were clearly communicated through the transition period was highlighted.
The Chair thanked members for their contributions and closed the meeting.

166 Date of next meeting

The next meeting was noted as 7 July 2026.

The meeting closed at 11.33 am