



Enhanced Partnerships: Delivering better bus services

Wider South-East EP Chair Event
Executive Summary

DRAFT

September 2024

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In July 2024, the Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs) for the Wider South-East area, Transport East (TE), Transport for the South East (TfSE), and England's Economic Heartland (EEH), alongside Suffolk County Council (SCC) and the Bus Centre of Excellence (BCoE) brought together Enhanced Partnership (EP) Chairs and Managers and key bus organisations from across the three regions.

It was an opportunity to share learnings and experiences, and to identify ways to maximise the impact of EPs in the future for the benefit of all. This event was the first of its kind, and there are aims to hold similar events across other regions.

This document summarises the shared experiences and views of those who attended; and recommends what wider policy and legislative support is needed to strengthen EPs going forward.

The document is broken down into the following headings:

- **Introduction and Background**
- **High Level Overview of Funding**
- **Strengths of the EP approach**
- **Suggestions to improve the EP approach**
- **Long-term ambitions of LTAs**
- **What do LTAs need from a new government?**
- **Next steps**



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PHOTOGRAPH 1: PHOTO FROM THE EP CHAIR CONFERENCE (SOURCE: ARUP)

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Background to Enhanced Partnerships

NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY

The National Bus Strategy (NBS)¹ for England was published in March 2021. It set out a vision and strategy to improve bus services in England outside London. The NBS focuses on simplifying fares, increasing frequencies, improving bus infrastructure, and promoting zero-emission vehicles – with the goal of making bus travel a more attractive and sustainable option for everyone.

Locally-driven change is central to the delivery of the NBS vision. The key document setting out the local vision, objectives and delivery plans of local transport authorities (LTAs), bus operators and local stakeholders is the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). BSIPs are now in place covering every LTA area in England.

All LTAs seeking bus funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) were required to choose between delivering their BSIPs through an Enhanced Partnership (EP) or through bus service franchising.

An EP is a statutory partnership between local authorities and bus operators to improve bus services, infrastructure, and coordination. The EP Plan sets out the partners' shared goals, such as better timetables, simpler fares, and improved facilities, whilst the EP Scheme sets out the actions by, and requirements on, the partners necessary to deliver those goals. In the EP framework operators retain control over which commercial services they run.

Franchising on the other hand, is an established model for providing bus services used in London and in many cities and regions across Europe. In a franchising scheme, local authorities determine the details of the services to be provided – where they run, when they run and the standards of the services – for bus operators to provide under a contract².

The NBS BSIP Programme is supported by a significant increase in government investment. (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: FUNDING ASSOCIATED WITH THE NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY

Fund	Total amount	Years	Successful LTAs
BSIP (capital and revenue)	£1.2 billion	2022-2025	33
BSIP+ (revenue)	£160 million	2023-2025	64
Network North BSIP+ (revenue)	£1 billion (£150 million allocated to 2025)	2024-2029	North and Midlands LTAs only

Note: The £2 fare cap scheme is also in place between January 2023 and December 2024.

The level of funding received by LTAs within the Transport East (TE), Transport for South East (TfSE) and England's Economic Heartland (EEH) regions is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: FUNDING RECEIVED BY LTAs IN THE TE, TFSE AND EEH REGIONS AS OF AUGUST 2024

STB Region and number of LTAs	Number of LTAs which received BSIP funding	Number of LTAs which received BSIP+ funding	Total BSIP funding value
EEH (11 LTAs)	4	10	£83.9m
TE (5 LTAs)	1	4	£64.9m
TfSE (16 LTAs)	7	12	£227.6m
Total	12	26	£376.4m

^[1] Note: the NBS was written and published under a previous government (Johnson administration)

^[2] Setting up a bus franchising scheme - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

EP BASIS IN LEGISLATION

An EP is a statutory partnership between one or more Local Transport Authority (LTA) and their local bus operators that sets out how they will work together to deliver bus improvement outcomes in a defined geographical area. EP legislation was inserted into the Transport Act 2000 by the Bus Services Act 2017.

LTAs have formal responsibility for making an EP to be aligned with their BSIP and require the support of local bus operators to progress with proposals. Current processes to establish an EP and identify priorities are demanding.

76 EPs have been made across England. 32 of these EPs are within the TE, TfSE and EEH regions. These EPs are of differing levels of maturity and have been established with varying levels of funding, giving rise to a range of experiences and learnings related to the EP process.

Buses are the lifeblood of communities, but the system is broken.

Too often, passengers are left waiting hours for buses that don't turn up – and some have been cut off altogether.

Change starts now. This new government will give local leaders the tools they need to deliver better buses up and down the country.

NEW GOVERNMENT'S PLAN FOR BUSES

The new Labour Government, elected in July 2024, has placed buses high on their agenda. The Better Buses Bill is set to deliver “improved services up and down the country and support local leaders to create the transport networks that are right for their communities”.

They have committed to delivering new powers for local leaders to franchise local bus services and to lifting the restriction on the creation of new publicly owned bus operators.

They have also made clear that franchising may not be right for every area and committed to reviewing the performance and delivery of EPs, to identify where they can be improved and strengthened to deliver a better minimum standard of bus services.

Transport Secretary, Louise Haigh MP

FIGURE 1: LEVELS OF BSIP FUNDING ACROSS THREE REGIONS

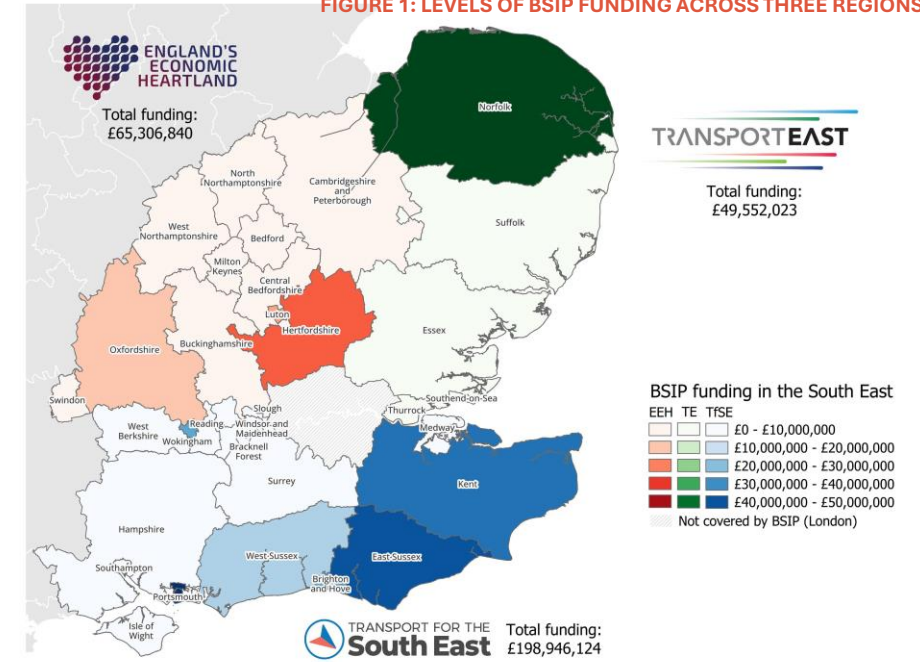
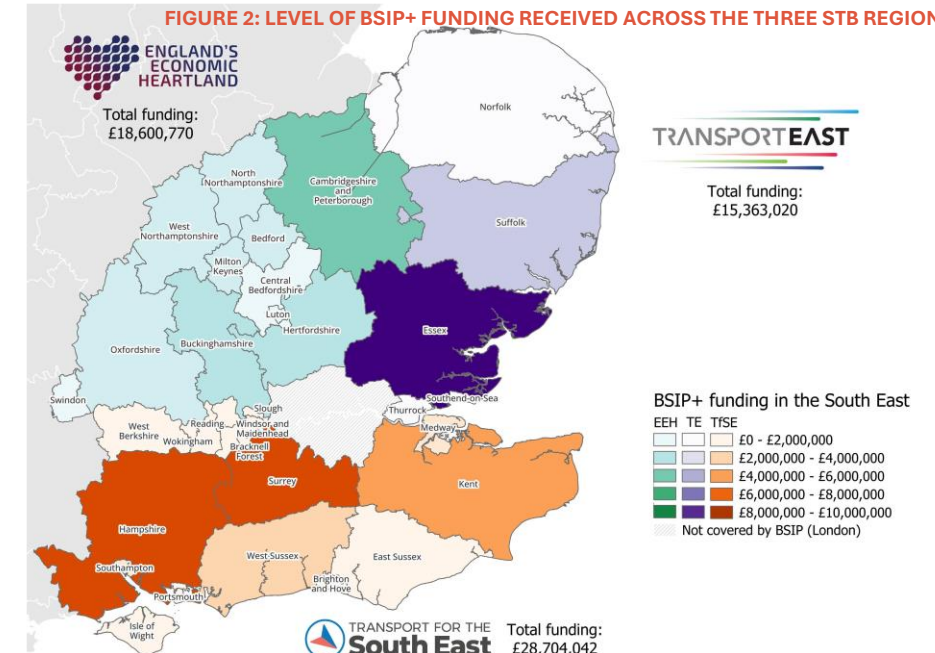


FIGURE 2: LEVEL OF BSIP+ FUNDING RECEIVED ACROSS THE THREE STB REGIONS



High-level overview of Findings

This section summarises the key findings from the document. It highlights the ways EPs have added value and the key asks from a new Government moving forward.

EPS ARE ADDING VALUE:

Strengthened relationships between LTAs and bus operators. The EP framework has empowered bus operators to be more actively engaged in the areas where they are providing services.

Improved governance through regular board meetings where LTAs and bus operators can openly discuss challenges and mitigate problems in a collaborative way.

Improved engagement with local Members and politicians as EPs have helped to put buses at the top of the agenda.

Provided a regulatory framework LTAs have gained the authority to establish specific requirements for bus operators.

Provided an alternative to franchising in areas where it is not applicable.

The event explored what LTAs need from Central Government to accelerate bus improvements. The main recommendations were identified as follows:

TABLE 3: WHAT DO LTAs WANT FROM A NEW GOVERNMENT?

Topic	Request
Long-term and stable funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide funding certainty (5 years plus) to enable better, more stable network planning and scheme development, and to facilitate staff development and retention. Remove competition between LTAs for funding. Make funding more integrated and flexible to allow for the prioritisation and delivery of schemes in line with local strategic plans and other modes.
Greater support for rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater consideration to the rural context when allocating funding and setting requirements. Ensure an appropriate model for delivering bus services in rural areas, including Community Transport (CT) and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT).
Regulatory and policy reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate public transport into land-use planning policies, education and other public services such as the NHS. Simplify the EP process to reduce the level of resource required to prepare the EP Plan, particularly alongside the preparation of the BSIP. Identify opportunities to improve the management of roadworks, and resultant congestion, and parking behaviours that impact on bus efficiency. Coordinate cross-departmentally to align policy so that buses can serve essential destinations effectively, e.g, working with the Department for Education to consider adjusting school hours to ensure buses can serve schools effectively.
Capacity building and knowledge sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set minimum data standards and formats that all operators must meet. Develop professional qualifications to attract, upskill and retain staff. Facilitate knowledge sharing across the industry.
Public perception and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the perception of buses, e.g. targeted advertising campaigns that highlight the environmental, financial, and convenience benefits of bus travel, positioning it as a green and responsible choice. Leverage local influencers and educational campaigns to help reshape public perceptions and make buses more appealing to a broader audience.
Delivery model for the regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited appetite for franchising in the regions. Consequently, there is a need for an effective alternative to support these areas in delivering bus service improvements with appropriate funding support.

Strengths of Enhanced Partnerships approach

STRENGTHENED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LTAS AND BUS OPERATORS

The formation of EPs has strengthened relationships between LTAs and bus operators. The EP framework has empowered bus operators to be more actively engaged in the areas where they are providing services; and has led to the co-writing of BSIPs. While good relations did exist in some locations prior to EPs being introduced, the EP framework has strengthened relations further.

Bus operators and LTAs now sit in the same room more regularly to discuss challenges faced and ways to improve local bus networks. Both small and large bus operators attend EP meetings which has led to LTAs having a greater understanding of how bus services operate, the challenges faced by bus operators, and this has helped to enable better decision-making for the ultimate end user: the passenger.

IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

Greater governance is in place because of EPs. Regular board meetings now take place where LTAs and bus operators can openly discuss challenges, solve problems in a collaborative way, and develop network improvements together. Prior to EPs, a platform did not exist (for most LTAs) to allow for issues to be discussed and resolved. This led to multiple meetings at an individual scale, with limited input from bus operators and slower resolution of issues. Having planned meetings has contributed to greater visibility of risks to delivery and provided a mechanism for issue resolution as one team.

Improved governance has also allowed for LTAs to attend neighbouring EP board meetings to foster cross-border collaboration and idea sharing. Regular communication across borders has especially been useful where bus services start in one local authority area and route through another, as barriers to delivery have been able to be resolved more quickly.



Strengths of Enhanced Partnerships approach



IMPROVED ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCAL MEMBERS AND POLITICIANS

EPs have helped to put buses at the top of the agenda with local members and politicians. For example, the Chair of the EP Board for Hampshire is the leader of Hampshire County Council and converses regularly with Councillors and MPs.

Regular engagement has allowed for an increased understanding of the sector and for their expectations to be managed, enabling them to understand what can realistically be achieved within timescales and with the amount of funding available.

Having these discussions has helped to put buses at the forefront of Council leaders' minds where previously, the bus sector was given little consideration in comparison to other modes. The EP process has also led to increased knowledge of the bus sector across local authority officers, increasing their confidence to speak more openly about the challenges faced by bus operators and passengers to local Members and politicians

PROVIDED A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Larger LTAs often have more complex and extensive bus networks. With an EP in place, LTAs have gained the authority to establish specific requirements for bus operators. These include minimum service frequencies, bus quality standards, or requirements for zero or low-emission vehicles.

To ensure bus operators adhere to the agreed-upon requirements, the EP allows the LTA to impose penalties if these standards are not met. This could mean financial penalties, restrictions on operating in an area, or other consequences such as cancelling of vehicle registrations.

LTAs can align operator obligations to broader policy objectives such as improving service reliability, reducing emissions, increasing passenger numbers, or enhancing accessibility. The EP framework provides a mechanism to enforce progress towards these goals by holding bus operators accountable.

Suggestions to improve Enhanced Partnerships approach

EP PROCESS

Many LTAs have expressed that the EP process is long and, at first, confusing. For example, understanding the difference between the 'EP Plan' and 'EP Scheme' and how they influence the other. A suggestion is to make EPs a lighter touch process, which would allow for more energy to be focussed on delivery. This could be achieved by simplifying the EP agreement document to make it easier to understand for all parties involved.

Smaller bus operators are less likely to attend EP meetings due to a lack of resource and time. Reducing the length of the EP agreement, and streamlining the EP process, would help to balance the commitments between LTAs and operators to hold both parties to account.

There is a need to improve the involvement of the 3rd sector, such as rural and community transport providers, through better contractual powers for these operators. This would help to ensure that community transport providers have a stable and predictable role in local service planning, fostering increased engagement.

Section 22 operators particularly were not referenced in the national bus strategy and so are not part of the current EP process. Section 22 operators provide not-for-profit public transport services to underserved communities, often in rural areas, where commercial bus services are not viable.

Other Suggestions to Improve the EP Process are:

- Make the EP Chair role reimbursable to attract wider societal representation.
- Establish EPs as a framework to deliver all future schemes from a prioritised list.
- Include dedicated items for operators to lead on EP board meeting agendas to improve their participation.
- Place a larger focus on two-way commitments between LTAs and operators by agreeing objectives to be able to hold both parties to account.
- Simplified consultation requirements for EPs and BSIPs.



Suggestions to improve Enhanced Partnerships approach



DATA AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

The availability and consistency of data being reported to LTAs by bus operators and vice-versa has been challenging.

Attempts have been made by the DfT via their monthly bus forum, and via the BCoE to improve knowledge of how to use platforms such as Bus Open Data Service (BODS), however, training does not always reach everyone, and the quality of data being input into the system has varied by operator.

The following suggestions relate to improving data across the sector:

- Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs) to lead on the development of an integrated data/ analytics approach across all transport modes within their region. This could then be reported to DfT/ BCoE at a national level.
- Continued knowledge sharing via the BCoE or other platforms such as Confederation for Passenger Transport (CPT) and Association of Transport Coordinating Officers (ATCO). CPT could
- aid areas, where needed, to set up EPs, and share learnings from other areas (using knowledge gained from attending a variety of EP meetings).
- Regulating and monitoring the sharing of data between operators, ticket machine providers and LTAs/ DfT to achieve minimum requirements and timelines for submission of data. Penalties on not supplying the data would also help to ensure data remains up to date to aid decision making.
- Investigating whether bus operators have a preferred format for data requests to streamline the data sharing process. For example, a smaller bus company may not be able to provide as much information as larger operators.
- Sharing of lessons learnt between LTAs on how they have approached common challenges such as the de-minimis rule and project change requests, etc.

Suggestions to improve Enhanced Partnerships approach

FUNDING

Many LTAs expressed the need to eliminate competition for funding and shift towards a more proportional approach. This approach would consider the size and geography of each LTA and acknowledge that many LTAs collaborate to serve a broader region.

A key recommendation is to **provide long-term funding certainty, with a minimum of five years, to foster strong relationships and ensure that resources are consistently available to deliver projects against an agreed strategy.**

Improved visibility of future funding plans was also suggested, as it would enable all LTAs to plan more effectively. For instance, while the £2 cap is seen as beneficial, it will be challenging for LTAs to continue similar offers in an affordable way when funding ends. Many LTAs refer to this as the 'cliff edge' of funding, looming over LTAs to continue to deliver without future funding certainty.

There is also a call to **coordinate funding efforts with other DfT funding sources**, such as Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) funding, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) funding and the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF), to create a unified funding stream for LTAs.

Ensuring longer-term funding stability was highlighted as crucial for the recruitment, training, and retention of staff. Longer-term funding will also facilitate a stable pipeline of improvements, allowing for the development, consent, delivery and management of schemes over multiple years.

Additionally, it is suggested that funding allocations should be based not only on the ambitions of LTAs but also to ensure a fairer distribution of resources and more effective project delivery.



SKILLS AND RECRUITMENT

Encouraging the provision of qualifications, such as degrees and apprenticeships is seen as essential for retaining staff and creating new jobs within the bus sector. Suggestions were made for **secondment opportunities between DfT, STBs and LTAs to facilitate learning and the sharing of best practice.** A 'buddy' program could be a way to support upskilling across the sector.

Additionally, there is a **strong emphasis on the need to attract young people to the industry**, recognising the need to build a future workforce that is skilled for future industry needs and engaged to deliver change.

Long Term Ambitions of LTAs

The long-term ambitions of LTAs and how they plan to use their EPs are centred around four key areas:

SERVICE AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

LTAs are focused on improving the reliability and accessibility of bus services. Bus networks are important for everyone as they support local communities and economies to thrive. They are particularly vital for people with fewer alternative transport options, including those in rural areas. LTAs want to use their EPs to, where possible, collaborate with operators to plan bus services that improve access to opportunities, including the choice of work, education, and leisure for those who live in their local areas.

There is an emphasis on retaining existing networks and ensuring the long-term sustainability of services without the need for ongoing subsidies. The financial support that LTAs can decide to provide to operators to run specific services, based on local objectives, comes from a scarce pool of funds.

Collaboration between LTAs and operators to respond to external factors influencing their bus networks, whilst addressing social policy needs, is therefore a critical use case of the flexibility of EPs.

Investment in bus priority schemes, junction upgrades, and mobility hubs alongside measures to improve integrated ticketing are also key long-term ambitions of LTAs to enhance their bus networks.

FARES INITIATIVE

Making the bus more affordable for young people is a mechanism to both improve bus patronage, reduce youth social isolation and widen access to further education, training and employment opportunities. Several LTAs are looking to introduce, through their EPs, initiatives such as youth tickets and reduced fares to improve accessibility for areas of deprivation.

Multi-operator ticketing schemes remain a long-term ambition of LTAs to enable a seamless experience for passengers. The EP framework enables this and STBs are working together to accelerate progress towards integrated ticketing.

STREAMLINING OF SERVICE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

Streamlined procurement processes for services and the establishment of longer contracts with operators is desired by several LTAs. This is also linked to more long-term certainty of funding which would allow for operators to have more commercial assurance.

TRANSPORT AND LAND USE INTEGRATION

Bus service planning and land use planning integration is essential for creating an effective local public transport system, and in turn, thriving communities. This is a priority for local authorities. To enable better alignment with land use strategies, long-term funding is needed to enable long-term strategic planning.

Integration with other modes of transport is also important. This includes bus-rail ticketing options and exploring Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) opportunities where traditional services may not be viable.



What LTAs need from a new Government and how STBs can support

LONG-TERM AND STABLE FUNDING

Provide funding certainty (5 years plus) to enable better, more long-term network planning and scheme development, and to facilitate staff development and retention.

Long-term, stable funding from Central Government is critical to enabling LTAs to effectively plan and prioritise schemes, and implement long-term ambitions to improve their bus network. It also allows LTAs to hire or train staff in roles where they can provide some guarantee of longer-term job certainty. Attracting younger and more diverse people into the industry should be a key priority for ensuring sustained growth of the sector and continuity of knowledge.

Remove competition between LTAs for funding.

The way funding is allocated should not be through competition. Many LTAs work together to deliver improvements as one region/ area and this should not be disincentivised. Furthermore, the bidding process for limited funding pots is time-intensive for all LTAs, many of which are resource-constrained. Instead, a more proportional approach based on population size and geography, considering, for example, the rurality of the location or the level of deprivation in an area, would be preferred.

Make funding more flexible to allow for the delivery of schemes in line with local strategic plans.

Funding is often required to be used to deliver schemes related to specific modes. This means that local projects and strategies must be tailored to Central Government's priorities and timelines, rather than the local context.

It is challenging for LTAs to plan long-term, join up strategies across policy areas or integrate modes, because they cannot rely on winning the numerous ring-fenced bids at different times that are needed to fund holistic strategic improvements. Since buses do not operate in isolation, funding should be able to cover multi-modal improvements.



What LTAs need from a new Government and how STBs can support



SUPPORT FOR RURAL AREAS

Give greater consideration to the rural context when allocating funding and setting requirements.

Rural and urban areas have different transport challenges. In rural areas, lower densities make it challenging to deliver a comprehensive network of commercial scheduled bus services, and longer journey times can make buses less attractive for passengers. Yet bus services are essential for people accessing services in rural communities. Rural services often require funding support from LTAs to make them viable, placing pressure on already constrained rural LTA budgets. For this reason, bus services often look different in rural areas, including community transport, DRT, and shared taxis.

Ensure there is an appropriate model for delivering bus services in rural areas.

Franchising is unlikely to be the right solution for all LTAs, especially those with more rural communities. There would be insufficient farebox revenue and the resourcing required to implement franchising is unaffordable for these LTAs. There needs to be a delivery model, supported by adequate funding, that allows all LTAs to enhance their bus networks.

REGULATORY AND POLICY REFORMS

Integrate public transport into planning policies.

Ensuring that public transport is integrated within land use planning policies will lead to better public transport provision and help to reduce car dependency. There is a need for consistency in Central Government policy on road space allocation which would assist with the long-term planning of bus priority schemes alongside other transport schemes. For example, the publication of the 'Plan for Drivers' under Rishi Sunak's Government led to confusion across the sector as to whether bus lanes should be made permanent and where priorities should be focused. Further, guidance in LTN 1/20 related to cycle infrastructure design often conflicts with guidance for designing for bus priority. Inconsistencies lead to poor business cases to demonstrate value for money and delays delivery of schemes.

What LTAs need from a new Government and how STBs can support

REGULATORY AND POLICY REFORMS

Remove the requirement to update and produce an EP Plan (alongside BSIP)

It would greatly benefit LTAs if the EP process was simplified in terms of the amount of resource required to prepare the EP Plan, particularly alongside the preparation of the BSIP.

Identify opportunities to improve the management of roadworks

There needs to be improvements to how roadworks, and resultant congestion, are managed such that they do not impact bus service efficiency. For example, currently, some LTAs are not sighted on when utilities companies will need to close bus lanes or roads to undertake works. This leads to sudden changes in bus routes, services and leads to delays, and passenger frustration, which can ultimately lead to people choosing to no longer travel by bus.

Coordinate across Government departments to ensure a more holistic approach to transport provision

Total Transport involves integrating transport services that are currently commissioned by different central and local government agencies - and delivered by different operators. The aim is to improve passenger transport in isolated communities by allocating existing resources more efficiently to access healthcare, education and other essential destinations. Better integration of transport services with schools was noted throughout the event, as was integration with other public services such as the NHS. There are currently issues with schools changing their start/end times without notice which advertently means that the bus services no longer align with the timings to benefit staff, students and parents. There is a call for school hours to be set centrally to ensure bus services are reliable long-term, and that LTAs have more control over home-to-school transport. Better integration of health services including patient transport with bus service planning could also result in financial efficiencies and improved service outcomes.



What LTAs need from a new Government and how STBs can support

CAPACITY BUILDING AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Regulate and monitor data sharing.

The quality of data available to LTAs to make informed decisions varies across the country. There is a need for centralised data collection and sharing, with IT platforms for data analysis and monitoring. STBs could facilitate this on a regional basis through an integrated data platform for all transport modes that could then be reported to DfT at a national level.

Maintain efforts to attract, upskill and retain staff across the industry.

Encouraging the provision of qualifications, such as degrees and apprenticeships is essential for retaining staff and creating new jobs within the bus sector. Secondment opportunities between DfT, STBs and LTAs to facilitate learning and the sharing of best practices, or a 'buddy' program could be a way to support upskilling across the sector.

Facilitate knowledge sharing.

Continued knowledge sharing, particularly via the BCoE and regionally through the STBs, is needed to support the industry. Sharing of lessons learnt between LTAs on how they have approached common challenges is especially useful to upskill staff and reduce the occurrence of repeat risks and issues.

DELIVERY MODEL FOR THE REGIONS

Ensure there is an effective alternative to franchising in the regions.

Currently, there is limited appetite for entire network franchising in the regions. There needs to remain a focus on assisting these areas deliver bus service improvements through a delivery model that aligns more with their context. There is the opportunity to explore franchising of specific transport, such as Community Transport or municipal ownership of taxis, which could transform rural transport provision. The legislation needs to be flexible to allow for franchising opportunities within rural areas.



What LTAs need from a new Government and how STBs can support

PUBLIC PERCEPTION AND EDUCATION

Fund campaigns and education programmes to improve the public perception of buses.

To improve the public perception of buses, which are reported as being unreliable and inconvenient, Central Government could launch targeted advertising campaigns emphasising the cost-effectiveness, convenience and environmental benefits of bus travel. By highlighting how buses contribute to reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion, the campaigns could position bus travel as a green and responsible choice. Promoting passenger benefits like free Wi-Fi and comfortable seating, along with the financial savings compared to driving, can make buses more appealing to a wider audience.

The Government, supported by STBs, could also leverage local influencers to authentically promote bus travel through social media, reaching broader audiences. Educational campaigns in schools could also teach the next generation about the benefits of public transport. This, coupled with initiatives that address common misconceptions about buses, could reshape public perceptions, particularly in young people, establishing habits for life.

INTEGRATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ensure fully integrated transport to improve customer experience

To make public transport more attractive and increase patronage, it should be fully integrated across modes and operators, making end-to-end journeys easy and improving customer experience. This can be achieved by integrating ticketing, supported by the current Broker Solution. The coordination of timetables will ensure that bus can be seen as the first choice for travelling to and from rail stations, and that services meet the needs of its customers.

Recognising the different needs of public transport in rural areas, enabling DRT, CT and other “bus” options to integrate with conventional bus services will help to address the cost challenges and service demands of large rural areas. The integration of data and analytics within and across regions to improve monitoring, reporting and service optimisation, supports decision making and future investment. An integrated approach to funding and guidance across modes will enable the prioritisation of schemes and optimise delivery.



Next Steps

To progress the resolution of issues raised by the attendees of the Enhanced Partnerships chair event, the wider South-East Sub-National Transport Bodies will:

Continue to discuss issues with EPs and LAs in their regions and through our Regional Bus Forums and advocate on their behalf to Government

Work with partners to explore the right models for increased Local Authority influence on bus service planning and provision outside franchising

Explore opportunities for increased data alignment and analysis as part of their wider regional Centres of Excellence

Work jointly to progress integrated ticketing linked to the DfT supported Broker Solution being developed by partners in the Midlands

Building on research and studies ensure the case is made for investment in public transport and for it to be integrated across other modes and in land use planning.

Bring EP Leads together again in the future to gather further insight.



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The Transport East logo consists of the words "TRANSPORTEAST" in a white, sans-serif, all-caps font. The text is centered between two horizontal white lines that have a slight break in the middle, giving it a dynamic, forward-moving appearance.

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