

Appendix B – Outline of obligations on Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Transport for West Midlands and bus operators under the varied Enhanced Partnership Scheme

The facilities and measures to be provided by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council under the amended EP Scheme (within the Sandwell area only) include:

- A34(N) and A45/B425 corridors (SPRINT): Maintain existing A34 SPRINT Phase 1 facilities and measures, including bus lanes, and maintain any new facilities and measures subsequently approved for A34 SPRINT Phase 2 (these are detailed for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 in Sandwell in **Appendix A, Section 5, Schedule B**).
- Existing bus priority: Maintain existing bus priority measures, including bus lanes and signal optimisation. When this is not possible and the authority seeks to remove bus priority infrastructure it can only do so with the approval of all members of the Enhanced Partnership, or if there is an objection, with a simple majority of bus operators who are party to the enhanced partnership. This requirement applies to any infrastructure named in the Enhanced Partnership Variation (**Appendix A, Section 5, Schedule B**)
- Local highway authority mechanisms and procedures: Maintain reporting mechanisms to safeguard communication with operators and TfWM. Use resources and powers to enforce Traffic Regulation Orders to improve compliance and improve bus service reliability.
- Bus lane enforcement: Use powers and resources to enforce bus lanes with CCTV equipment.
- Junction enforcement: If and when additional powers are provided to local highway authorities or WMCA to deter vehicles from blocking junctions, these will be taken up and used in the EP Scheme area.
- Managing highway works: Establish mechanisms to minimise disruption to local bus services from both planned and emergency highway works. Commit to investigate Highway Lane rental schemes.
- Management and co-ordination of specific highway works: Work with relevant partners, including local bus operators, to maximise the benefits to bus users of major highway improvement schemes and minimise bus disruption during construction.
- Bus priority development programme: Work with TfWM and bus operators to identify, investigate and develop future bus priority interventions.
- Parking policy and management: Use parking management policies, as set out in the Local plan and any future replacement.
- Plan, to support the provision of bus services.

The facilities and measures to be provided by TfWM under the EP Scheme include:

- Bus stop provision: Continue to maintain the network of c.12,200 bus stops within the metropolitan area, including associated information displays and infrastructure maintenance.
- Bus stations: Continue to maintain the existing bus stations within TfWM's ownership, as outlined in schedule A1 of the appended EP scheme.

- Customer assistance: Continue to provide customer assistance through the customer service centre.
- A34(N) and A45/B425 (SPRINT) corridors: Provide bus lane, bus gate, signal and crossing upgrades for SPRINT Phase 1 (facilities associated with A34 SPRINT Phase 1 in Sandwell are detailed in the report to Cabinet on 24th February 2021) and any facilities subsequently approved for A34 SPRINT Phase 2.
- Network performance and control: Continue to provide and maintain the Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) as a hub for effective management of the highway and bus network and providing up to date information for users.
- Promoting and prioritising bus travel: Actively promote bus travel in the EP Scheme area through the actions within its Communication Strategy and those of the Bus Alliance Communications and Marketing Steering Group.
- Monitoring of bus journey times: Monitor bus journey times in the EP Scheme area by collecting and analysing Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) data and reporting these on a quarterly basis.
- Integration with other sustainable travel modes: Improved access for people to and from bus stop infrastructure, and on to and off buses will be considered.
- Slot booking system: TfWM may introduce a 'Slot Booking System' at a stop in the EP Scheme area in situations where TfWM or an operator highlight the inability of that stop to accommodate all scheduled departures.
- Timetable changes: With the aim of achieving network stability and ensuring service changes are co-ordinated, TfWM will agree with the Bus Operators' Panel a limited number of set service change dates (and no more than 8 per year) as part of the Network Stability Protocol.
- Provision of tendered services: TfWM will continue to subsidise socially necessary bus services where they are not provided on a commercial basis. The services which are to be supported will be governed by the WMCA Access Standards and will be reviewed regularly.
- TfWM bus investment: Continued financing in 2022/23 for supported bus services; Demand Responsive Transport; English National Concessionary Travel Scheme and child travel reimbursement.
- Reinvestment of operational expenditure savings: TfWM will commit to working with local bus operators to agree a process through which, using an open book approach, operational expenditure (opex) savings can be identified and agreed between TfWM and the bus operator for reinvestment in the EP Scheme area on a case-by-case basis, as a result of new public investment to improve bus services. TfWM will also seek operator reinvestment of any cost and revenue growth benefits accruing to bus operators from new public investment to improve bus services, to be reinvested in the EP Scheme area, on a case-by-case basis, and to be captured in the EP Scheme.
- Demand Responsive Transport (DRT): TfWM will actively consider the role of DRT, introducing or promoting services that complement and integrate with the main bus network either by offering the best freestanding solution or means of linking people into the wider public transport network.
- Improving bus emission standards: Through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme, £3 million will be available to upgrade vehicles that operate on qualifying local bus services in the EP

Scheme area to improve emission standards. TfWM will develop and introduce a process for operators to apply and receive funding in 2022/23 to upgrade vehicles to at least Euro VI emission standards.

- Parking policy and management: TfWM will work with local authorities to explore opportunities to better use parking and land use policies to support viable bus services and provide the conditions that encourage greater bus use.
- Ticketing simplification: TfWM will explore a process of ticketing reform, whereby its nBus multi-operator tickets become the main form of bus tickets, significantly reducing the overall number of tickets on offer. This will be achieved by pricing these the same as operators' own products. TfWM will work towards a target implementation date of 1 January 2023 for this ticketing simplification.
- Bus Priority Development Programme (£1m): TfWM will work closely with bus operators and local highway authorities to identify, investigate and develop a pipeline of future bus priority interventions on the unfunded corridors of the West Midlands Bus Priority Network (as shown by the "Bus Priority 2025+" network), for faster bus journey times and reduced bus journey time variability.
- Passenger Led Recovery Programme (£39m): TfWM will deliver a programme of passenger led recovery actions and incentives to help the recovery of the bus network post-pandemic. These incentives will be delivered between December 2022 and March 2025. The passenger-led recovery actions will fall into two categories –
 - Incentives to get people out of their cars and to try the bus. These will involve free trials for people who currently use a car and are identified as those most likely to be encouraged to change.
 - Incentives to specific groups who suffer exclusion because they are unable to access transport. This will provide assistance for a set period to improve life chances (such as training opportunities or a job) and then encourage continued bus use at usual fares.
- Bus network development (£23.4m): TfWM will manage and lead a collaborative review of the bus network to identify core routes and agree consistent levels of performance and quality of service, in order to establish a viable long-term network by 1st January 2023.
- Network Performance Management (£3.3m): TfWM will commission a functional and operational review of the RTCC to determine its future scale and scope in effectively managing bus network performance and operation. This will be undertaken in close collaboration with local bus operators and will be completed by 31 March 2023.
- Lower Fares (£18.5m): TfWM will freeze the prices of the nBus ticket products at the levels as of 1 April 2022 (which are below pre-pandemic levels) until at least 31 March 2025.
- Safety and security (£1.1m): TfWM will maintain its current team of 3 Transport Safety Officers (TSO). TfWM will also recruit and deploy 9 additional TSOs in 2022/23 for a minimum period of 3 years, with a focus on the bus network.
- West Midlands Bus Customer Charter (£0.3m): In line with other improvements to the bus network, TfWM will formulate a new bus customer charter to create a step change in customer expectation and experience, it will set standards and provide strong commitments that are specific and measurable, driving continuous improvement. The charter will be launched by March 2023.

- Staff capacity and capability (£1m): TfWM will strengthen its internal bus team capacity and capability, employing up to 5 additional full time equivalent members of staff, around the planning and management; project management; scheme delivery, and monitoring and evaluation.

Requirements imposed on bus operators include:

- Vehicle emission standards: All qualifying bus services will be operated with vehicles that meet Euro VI emission standards or better by 1 May 2023.
- Vehicle livery: An appropriate finished livery, which clearly identifies either the bus operator or brand route must be used.
- Timetable changes: bus services may only be changed on the dates agreed with TfWM and in line with Network Stability Protocol. In exceptional circumstances, and in agreement with TfWM, services may be changed on other dates.
- Information provision to the public (with TfWM): Operators will be required to participate in the coordinated approach to the provision of bus information in displays at bus stops. Operators will also be required to notify TfWM of any known cancellations to trips or part trips at the earliest opportunity.
- Information provision to the public (by the operator): Operators providing multi-operator tickets in the EP Scheme area will display the range of nBus and nNetwork day ticket prices at the point of entry to buses on qualifying local bus services. Operators will also be required to display details of relevant planned route changes and timetable changes on vehicles at least 2 weeks prior and 1 week following the change and publish journey times data on their websites for public access.
- West Midlands Bus Alliance Customer Charter: Operators of qualifying bus services will work with TfWM to put a new bus charter in place by March 2023, which will be adopted immediately. Operators will be required to display the principles of the West Midlands Bus Alliance Customer Charter on all their buses. This must include a means of contacting the local bus service operator with comments or complaints and an escalation option if the passenger is not satisfied with the response they receive.
- Ticketing schemes: nBus (full suite); nNetwork (full suite) must be offered and accepted on all services subject to TfWM progressing multi-operator capping schemes, multi-operator capping on contactless and smart card must also be offered unless the service runs less than three times a day.
- Passenger Led Recovery programme: Operators will help develop, promote and implement the actions and incentives, ensuring that each incentive is accepted for use on appropriate services as agreed. Use of each incentive will be monitored to provide data to TfWM for evaluation purposes.
- Reinvestment of operational expenditure savings: Operators will commit to work with TfWM to agree a process through which, using an open book approach, operational expenditure (opex) savings as well as cost and revenue benefits arising as a result of new public investment to improve bus services can be identified and agreed for reinvestment in the EP Scheme area on a case-by-case basis.

- Bus network development: Operators will commit to active participation in the reviews of the RTCC and bus network and the implementation of its findings and recommendations.
- Parked Vehicles:
 - Vehicle engines must be switched off at all times unless departure is imminent.
 - No vehicle must be left unattended.
 - Quitting (vehicles left unattended with the engine running) is strictly prohibited.
- Vehicle Standards Vehicles used on qualifying local bus services will be required to meet specified standards, dependent on their type and age as set out in tables 4,5,6,7 and 8 in the appended draft EP Scheme (Appendix A). These standards place an emphasis on the inclusion of audio-visual announcements, CCTV, USB charging and contactless payment to improve customer experience.