

Cabinet**Thursday, 6 June 2019, 10.00 am, County Hall, Worcester****Appendices Pack**

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Worcestershire County Council - Passenger Transport Strategy

2019-2030

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Worcestershire County Council - Passenger Transport Strategy

Introduction

Worcestershire County Council has developed a new Passenger Transport Strategy which complements our published Local Transport Plan 4.

This document sets out the overall strategy for Worcestershire County Council in relation to passenger transport. This is in line with Worcestershire's Corporate Plan and Local Transport Plan 4 2018-2030.

Passenger transport services form the 'backbone' of Worcestershire's transport networks. It is widely recognised that the most successful economies boast strong, well-integrated passenger transport networks which enable the efficient movement of people. This is particularly important in growing economies such as Worcestershire, where significant growth is planned.

Worcestershire is a county of rural landscapes and cherished, historic urban areas. A legacy of this gradual growth has impacted on the highway network.

Passenger transport offers a valuable means of enabling Worcestershire to remain 'Open for Business' and welcome growth, by making the most efficient use of limited transport network capacity.

It is also important to recognise that 17% of Worcestershire's residents do not drive or do not have access to a car. For these residents, the provision of an attractive, functional and multi-modal passenger transport network is essential to ensure these residents can participate in society and enjoy a good quality of life. There is a fundamental requirement to provide access to education and training.

The Strategy focuses on road and rail passenger transport services within Worcestershire, including Home to School, bus, taxi, Community Transport and other community-based bespoke transport initiatives.



Partnership working is critical to ensure efficient management and delivery of this Strategy. Worcestershire County Council is committed to working closely with transport providers to enhance and improve passenger transport across Worcestershire, to provide a quality of service that our residents, visitors and businesses need and expect.

Statutory Duties

The Transport Act (1985)

This places a requirement on Local Transport Authorities to have regard to the needs of their residents and to provide financial support for local bus services as they see fit, to meet those needs. The duty is 'to have regard to the needs', rather than the actual provision of services. In particular, there is a requirement to consider the specific needs of older and disabled people, with powers to provide funding for service provision, such as Community Transport.

The Transport Act (2000)

The Act defines authorities which are to be Local Transport Authorities and imposes a duty on those authorities to prepare and publish a Local Transport Plan setting out their policies for the promotion of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities in their area, and to develop a bus strategy for carrying out their bus functions.

The Local Transport Act (2008)

The Local Transport Act contains a number of changes that give Local Authorities improved powers to influence the provision of bus services in their area, as well as bringing greater operational flexibility for the Community Transport sector.

The Bus Services Act (2017)

The Bus Services Act presents Local Transport Authorities with additional powers, which include the ability to form stronger formal partnerships to improve the quality, scope and scale of passenger transport networks.

New enhanced partnership and advanced quality partnership powers provide the framework for authorities to work side by side with operators to set a shared vision for bus services in their areas.

Regulations made under the new Open Data provisions and new ticketing powers are designed to support seamless integration. It should make it far easier for passengers to use and move between different modes of passenger transport and access timetables, fares and routes on demand.

The Equalities Act (2010)

The Equalities Act was established to consolidate all anti-discrimination legislation in Great Britain. It requires equal treatment in access to employment as well as private and public services, regardless of protected characteristics including age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Any new services and infrastructure resulting from the policies set out in the Strategy will have due regard to the requirements set out in the Equalities Act.

This legislation is particularly important in the context of passenger transport services. The provision of a suitably integrated network of reliable and frequent passenger transport services is essential to ensure quality of life for all, including those who do not have access to a car.

In light of this, and compliant with this legislation, this Strategy has been subjected to a full Equality Impact Assessment.

The Education Act (1996)

Provisions are contained within the Education Act relating to the provision of Home to School transport services. These provisions confer a duty upon the County Council, as the Local Transport Authority responsible for education, to provide Home to School transport. In cases where there is such a duty to provide transport, the County Council will provide this free of charge.

Pupils can also be awarded transport assistance as appropriate for the needs identified within their Statement of Special Educational Needs.

For students with a personalised educational healthcare plan, this may identify the need for free transport or funded assistance to access their nearest suitable place of education.

Setting the Scene

Worcestershire's passenger transport networks are facing operationally challenging conditions. Worcestershire County Council recognises that the need for passenger transport services remains as strong as ever.

Introduction

Over the last 50 years, bus use across Worcestershire has declined. A number of factors have contributed to this picture. On a national level there are increasing levels of car ownership and use, adding to congestion issues. Worcestershire County Council is committed to improving journey times and reliability for all road-based transport, quality of the local environment and to make passenger transport services more attractive for our residents.

Worcestershire County Council recognises the scale of planned future growth needs to be addressed.

With reduced budgets available to support passenger transport services, it is important to develop a Strategy which prioritises the limited funding in a way which will sustain the commercial network, whilst meeting Worcestershire's transport needs in the most efficient and cost-effective way.

Worcestershire County Council is dedicated to providing good quality, best value services to its residents. Like all councils across the UK, Worcestershire has faced significant budget reductions in recent years, which limits the ability of the Council to subsidise and support passenger transport network integrity, particularly when set against fuel price inflation and other cost increases facing the bus industry. It is critical that Worcestershire County Council monitors spending carefully and ensures that when funding decisions are being made, an objective framework is used.

In formulating the Strategy framework, Worcestershire County Council needs to take into account existing strategies, demographics, and market forces. The Strategy cannot be developed in isolation and Worcestershire County Council believes that these elements all assist in formulating a final set of objectives that form the main outcomes.



These elements assist in formulating:

Corporate Plan Objectives

Worcestershire's Corporate Plan 'Shaping Worcestershire's Future' outlines its four key priorities, which will help guide the work of the Council and its relationship with individuals, families, communities and partners over the next five years.

Championing...

Open for Business

Protecting...

The Environment

Supporting...

Children and Families

Promoting...

Health and Wellbeing

Local Transport Plan 4

Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan 4 sets out our priorities for investment in transport infrastructure, technology and services covering the period from 2018 to 2030 (www.worcestershire.gov.uk/LTP) The Plan has been developed to deliver a prosperous Worcestershire, and is underpinned by a series of objectives, which complement the key themes of Worcestershire's Corporate Plan; Shaping Worcestershire's Future.

The Local Transport Plan 4 contains a number of more detailed objectives linked to the Corporate Plan, namely:

- The Economic Objective - To support Worcestershire's economic competitiveness and growth through delivering a safe, reliable and efficient transport network
- The Environment Objective - To limit the impacts of transport in Worcestershire on the local environment, by supporting enhancements to the natural environment and biodiversity, investing in transport infrastructure to reduce flood risk and other environmental damage, and reducing transport-related emissions of nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, greenhouse gases and noise pollution.
- The Health and Safety Objective - To contribute towards better safety, security, health and longer life expectancy in Worcestershire, by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport and promoting healthy modes of travel.
- The Equality Objective - To optimise equality of opportunity for all of Worcestershire's citizens with the desired outcome of creating a fairer society.
- The Quality of Life Objective - To enhance the quality of life for Worcestershire's residents by promoting a healthy, natural environment, for people, wildlife and habitats conserving our historic built environment and preserving our heritage assets.

The principal aim of the Local Transport Plan 4 is to deliver the greatest possible benefits through the delivery of cost-effective transport infrastructure and services.

This Passenger Transport Strategy builds on policies contained within Local Transport Plan 4 and in compliance with the above objectives. The key aim is to develop and deliver an integrated passenger transport network for Worcestershire.

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership

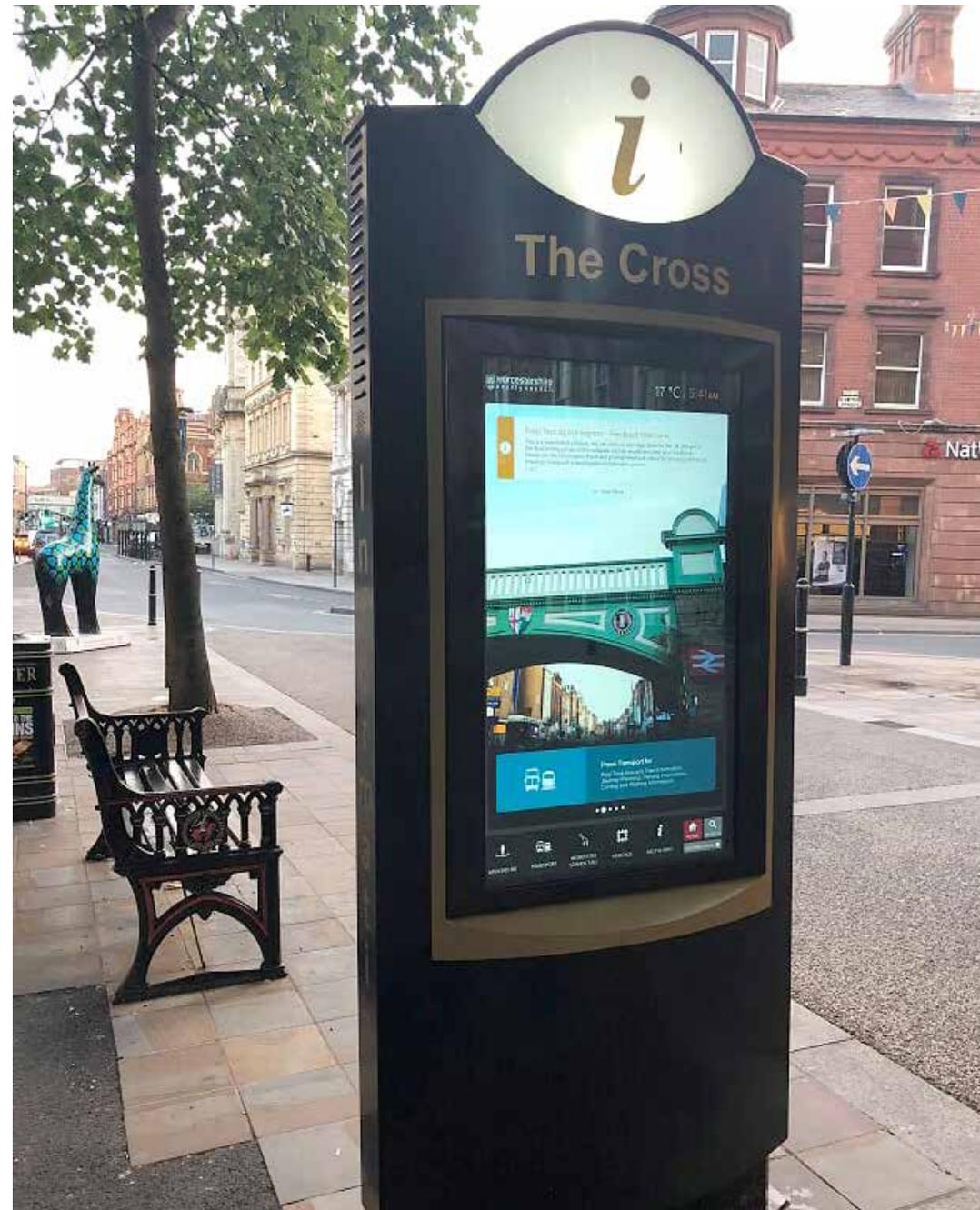
The Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's vision for the County is "to build a connected, creative, dynamic economy that delivers increased prosperity for all those who choose to live, work, visit and invest in Worcestershire." This is working to create 25,000 jobs and increase Gross Value Added by £2.9bn.

Local Plans

Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest Local Plans and South Worcestershire's Development Plan mirror the County Council's agenda for promoting sustainable travel, and recognise that travel is a key factor in improving quality of life, air quality and achieving Worcestershire's desired economic growth.

Worcestershire's Growth and Infrastructure Strategy

This sets out Worcestershire's aspirations for growth and the need for sufficient infrastructure to support this. This document closely aligns with the Passenger Transport Strategy, in that good quality infrastructure helps to create places where people want to live and work. With transport playing a huge role in sustainable growth, an integrated approach is necessary.





Geography and Demographic

Worcestershire is located on the south western fringe of the West Midlands conurbation. Over 85% of the County's population live in the urban areas or on key inter-urban corridors, and the County benefits from a modern multicultural economy, which accounts for the relative affluence of Worcestershire in general terms.

The County has a lower proportion of young adults than is seen regionally and nationally; 19% of people are aged 65 or over. There are a higher proportion of older people in the more rural districts, such as Malvern Hills.

Worcestershire's Growth and Infrastructure Strategy 2019 details the County's aspirations for growth, which needs to be sufficiently supported by transport infrastructure to create places where people want to work and live. The report indicates that the population is predicted to grow by 5.4% by 2021. Local Plans, setting out future provision of housing and employment suggest an estimated increase of some 47,000 homes by 2036, placing pressure on transport systems.

Passenger Transport Network

The primary purpose of Worcestershire's passenger transport network is to provide an efficient, resilient, and integrated system which provides access for all to a wide range of services and facilities, essential to ensure a good quality of life. These include health, employment, leisure, education, retail and transport interchange trip-attractors.

Our priorities will include home to work and home to school commutes. A vibrant commercial network is critical in delivering this.

The primary providers of passenger transport services in Worcestershire are commercial organisations that operate local bus services on a profit-making basis, as envisaged when the local bus service market outside of London was de-regulated in 1985. It is in the interests of the people of Worcestershire for commercial bus networks to be attractive, efficient and stable. Such networks can meet the needs of many people in providing a means of collective transport that reduces congestion, vehicular emissions and provides access to a wide range of employment and wider life-enhancing opportunities.

While commercial bus services are outside the Council's direct control, we will work in co-operation with commercial operators to help deliver an efficient, reliable bus network which meets the needs of the people of Worcestershire and supports increased network integrity through patronage growth. We hope to encourage operators to achieve this by:

- Working closely with them to identify problems and find solutions to ensure an efficient and integrated network
- Ensuring passenger transport operators do not suffer unduly from congestion through planned roadworks.
- Working with them to improve reliability and punctuality of services
- Developing quality partnerships with operators in line with the Bus Services Act 2017
- Supporting integration, ensuring that multi-modal journey options are feasible with seamless transitions at key transport hubs including rail stations
- Working with key local businesses and employers to encourage promotion of passenger transport services.

Network Analysis

Passenger transport services (excluding dedicated school and social work transport services) vary in nature based on the geographical area. These services, which cater for strategic and local travel needs, may be delivered in a variety of different ways and by different types of operators.

Deregulated Market

Passenger transport in Worcestershire is provided in a deregulated market place, with most bus services across the County operated on a commercial basis by private companies. Essentially, operators can provide services on any route and with any timetable, as long as they have registered the service with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.

Local Transport Authorities have a duty to ensure that travel needs are accommodated within their areas. As part of this duty, they may provide financial support for services that are not operated commercially. As Worcestershire County Council has limited funds at its disposal for this purpose, it is essential that there are robust mechanisms in place to assess the benefits that are derived from subsidised services and that, in delivering these services, best value is achieved.

Many of the aspirations for passenger transport in Worcestershire relate to a desire for increased integration between services and also in regard to the availability of ticketing and the provision of comprehensive information provision. This presents a number of challenges, in particular, given the nature of the deregulated market place, consistency of information and continued adherence to relevant competition legislation.

Conclusions

Worcestershire County Council sets out a commitment in the Local Transport Plan 4 to promote the role of passenger transport and improve services across the region. In order to increase passenger transport usage, there are a number of challenges to be faced.

The policies set out in this Passenger Transport Strategy are designed to address these challenges. By setting appropriate ambitions and targeting resources in the right areas, service improvements can be made and passenger transport can become a more attractive option for a variety of journeys across the region. In doing so, patronage growth can be achieved, increasing the viability and sustainability of commercial and subsidised services, whilst access opportunities can be improved and social inclusion enhanced.

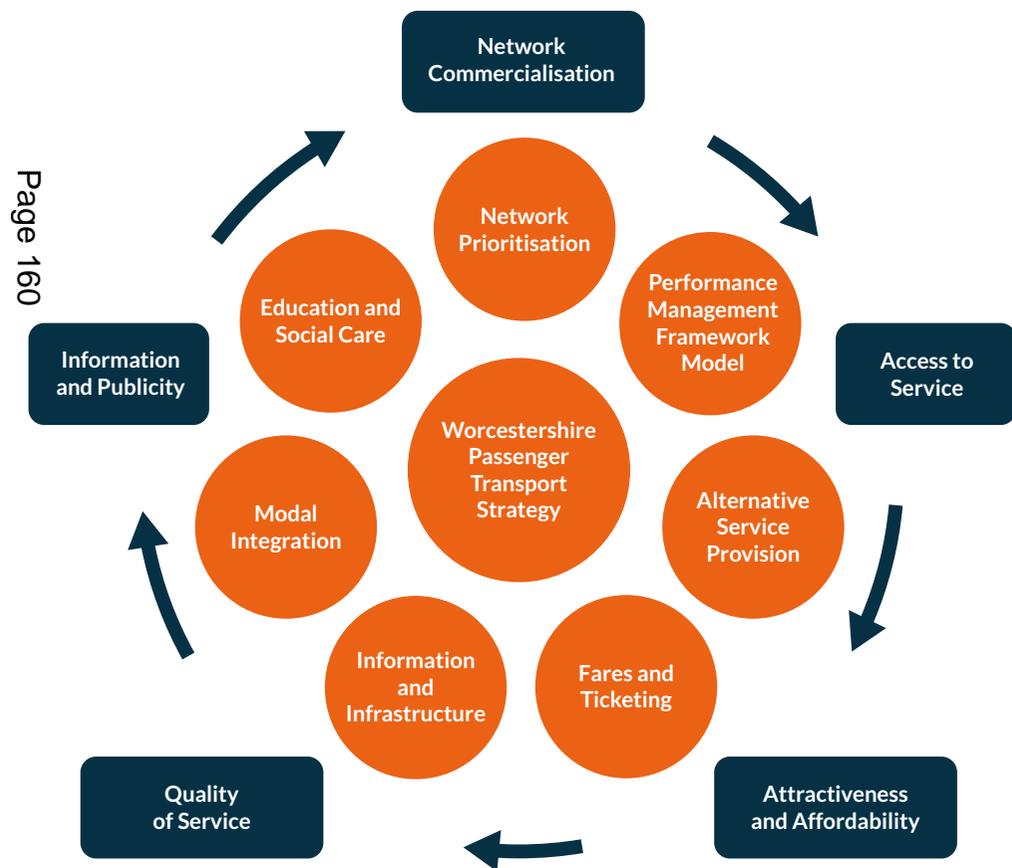
The successful delivery of this Strategy will deliver essential travel choice.

Aims and Objectives

A vision for the future needs of Worcestershire’s Passenger Transport Networks.

Introduction

The Passenger Transport Strategy sets out a number of key aims and objectives that are required to achieve the passenger transport aspirations in the Local Transport Plan 4. The Local Transport Plan 4 sets out a series of wider transport objectives that support the Council’s overarching strategic vision.



The overarching aim and objective of this Strategy is to ensure that residents and visitors benefit from a level of access to services and facilities, essential to enjoy a good quality of life.

An efficient, affordable, frequent and high quality passenger transport network is essential to achieve this aim.

Aims

Worcestershire County Council believes that, in order to deliver aspirations within the Local Transport Plan 4, a number of key aims will be taken into account when delivering the Strategy:

- Network Commercialisation
- Access to Services
- Attractiveness and Affordability
- Quality of Service
- Publicity and Information

Network Commercialisation: Worcestershire County Council is committed to developing and enhancing the ability for operators to provide their services commercially. Worcestershire County Council will support and work in partnership with operators to understand methodologies where this could be achieved.

Access to Services: Good network coverage, operating periods, service frequency and network integration is a desirable outcome of the Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy, but best value also needs to be achieved. The Strategy includes a Performance Management Framework Model which will be the mechanism used in completion of the review.

Attractiveness and Affordability: It is essential that the costs of transport services are attractive. Technology will play a key role in improving these elements with good use of ticketing options, concessionary fares, smartcard technology. Other innovative technology solutions, such as Real Time Information, will be explored.



Quality of Service: Worcestershire County Council recognises that quality of service is an essential component in delivering successful passenger transport services. Passengers need services that are reliable, punctual, clean, have reasonable journey times, and they want to feel safe. Excellent customer service, both by drivers and other staff is essential, together with high quality infrastructure.

Publicity and Information: The Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy will ensure information about services is readily available and is easily understood, whilst also considering the cost effectiveness of production. Passengers need to understand what services they can use and, essentially, how to access them.

Strategy Objectives

In order to achieve the overarching aims of this Strategy, a number of key objective areas have been identified;

- Network Prioritisation
- Education and Social Care Provision
- Performance Management Framework Model
- Alternative Service Provision
- Fares and Ticketing
- Information and Infrastructure
- Modal Integration

Network Prioritisation

Worcestershire County Council provides transport for circa 9,000 students per day using various means: commercial and bespoke. One of the aims of the Strategy will be to assess integration opportunities to optimise the commercial bus network. There are a number of Worcestershire residents whose transport needs are met by commercial services. One of the County's priorities will be to support the commercial market. Where some transport needs cannot be met by the commercial market, the Council has to consider whether it should intervene, by offering organisational, operational or financial support for any additional service provision. Worcestershire County Council will assess its priorities, in the context of limited funding availability. The sections below set out which groups, areas and locations will be prioritised.

Priority Areas

To further support the objective in the Local Transport Plan 4 'to limit the impacts of transport on the local environment'.

Priority Groups

As set out in the Local Transport Plan 4, there is an emphasis on supporting health and well-being, improving the environment, and helping deliver the right conditions for economic growth. As well as optimising equality of opportunity for all, we also have a statutory obligation to consider the needs of elderly and disabled people in determining what to support and how to provide passenger information.

Greater consideration will be given to meeting essential transport needs for older, disabled or isolated people. We will also prioritise the needs of those without access to a car or living in areas of higher deprivation.



Access to a Local Centre

To enable Worcestershire residents to access essential services, we will prioritise support for transport serving local centres (offering a range of essential services including employment, education, healthcare and food shopping), enabling as many residents as possible to access these services. It must be accepted that in some cases it may only be possible to offer a limited service.

With the County's limited funds and to cater for as many residents as possible, priority will be given to areas of higher population density. Where commercial services do not exist, priorities will be considered in the following order:

1. Urban connections – provide a service for people living in urban areas of over 15,000 (currently Worcester, Kidderminster, Bromsgrove, Redditch, Droitwich, Malvern & Evesham) to access that urban centre.
2. Inter-urban connections – provide a connection between urban areas of over 15,000 population where there is a travel to work demand. Where train services exist along those corridors, consideration will be given to linking to the nearest rail station rather than supporting the whole route, should the frequency and timings on the rail network suffice.
3. Provide a service to areas of medium population density (around 7,000 – 15,000), e.g. Bewdley, Catshill, Pershore, to the nearest town or suitable alternative.

For areas of lower urban density, e.g. Upton-upon-Severn and Tenbury Wells, we will work with Town and Parish Councils, local interest groups and operators in each area to define the most appropriate local solution.

Subsidised Service Provision

Where Worcestershire County Council considers that passenger transport objectives justify the provision of additional services to fill any gaps in the commercially provided network, the Council may, through negotiation with commercial operators and/or through exercise of the statutory tendering system, secure the provision of services. In such cases, these services will complement the commercial service.

Where commercially operated passenger transport services are to be withdrawn or reduced, the County Council will use its Performance Framework Model to determine whether to support the service or assess options for alternative provision.

In securing the provision of passenger transport services, the County Council shall only enter into subsidy agreements with suitably qualified operators.

When securing passenger transport services, the County Council will seek to integrate all other modes of passenger transport, including Home to School transport, in order to achieve best value. In doing so, the County Council will aim to achieve improved fleet utilisation. Such arrangements may include running conventional passenger transport services with school transport, and using the same vehicles for both Demand Responsive Transport and Social Care services. Services will be integrated where possible, meet passengers' needs, achieve the most efficient application of the financial resources and comply with legislation.

The Council shall secure subsidised passenger transport services in accordance with the requirements of the Service Subsidy Agreements (Tendering) Regulations 1985 (SI 1921), as amended. The Council will also exercise its powers to enter into negotiated subsidy agreements with suitably qualified operators, where such action represents best value and/or offers passenger benefits.

Subsidised services shall be specified to satisfy identified unmet social needs and/or strategic transportation objectives, as appropriate. All subsidised services will be monitored closely to ensure that the specifications are being met.

In determining the award of contracts for the operation of subsidised services, the Council shall seek to achieve best value within the resources at its disposal and, in addition to price, will take into account the ability of prospective operators to deliver services efficiently and effectively.

The provision of subsidised cross-boundary services shall be secured on the basis of negotiated agreements with adjoining councils and shall take account of the respective policies and priorities of each funding authority

Worcestershire Developments

In the planning of new developments, Worcestershire County Council will work with planning authorities and developers in seeking to ensure the delivery of planned development is brought forward in locations that offer genuine opportunities for access by a range of travel modes. This includes ensuring that commercially viable, long term accessibility by passenger transport to key services and facilities is appropriately and properly considered.

Where appropriate, we will either:

- Encourage and look to developers to engage with passenger transport operators to seek to develop and implement a passenger transport solution that aligns with the type and nature of the development to be served and which is likely to be commercially viable and sustainable over the long term (we will seek appropriate legal agreements to ensure the solution is secured), or
- Seek developer contributions to facilitate such accessibility through an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). The size of contribution sought will depend on the size, nature and location of the proposed development.

Section 106 contributions may be sought for funding support for a fixed period of either an existing passenger transport service that might be altered to accommodate the development, or for a new service. This will only be sought where there is a reasonable prospect that the service alteration or new service can become self-funding due to patronage growth at the end of the defined period. Contributions may also be sought for passenger transport infrastructure.

Home to School and Social Care Transport

Other Transport Provision

Worcestershire County Council is committed to the provision of a comprehensive school transport network catering for both pupils entitled to free Home to School transport under the Education Act, and for the convenience of other pupils on a fare-paying basis.

The Council also provides transport arrangements for children and adults in relation to its Social Care responsibilities.

When securing subsidised passenger transport services, the County Council will seek, wherever appropriate, to integrate these with school transport and social care transport services and vice versa. In the interests of integration, the option of a multi operator concessionary ticket will be considered.

School Transport

Worcestershire County Council, as the Local Authority responsible for education provision, has agreed a policy for Home to School Transport and travel assistance. The policy has been prepared to take account of all legislative requirements including the most recent Education and Transport Acts. It also fits within the County Council's Local Transport Plan 4.

The intention is that this policy will enable the Authority to meet its statutory obligations and to address aspirations of 'Every Child Matters'. The aim of the policy is to provide high quality transport services as efficiently, economically and sustainably as possible to ensure that pupils get to school in a reasonable time, travel in a safe environment and arrive at school ready to learn, and are transported home safely at the end of the normal school day. The policy is to be used in conjunction with the County's School Admissions policy and the arrangements for the placement of pupils and students with Special Educational Needs. There are specific provisions within the 1996 Education Act relating to the provision of Home to School transport. The effect of these is that there are



circumstances where the County Council, as the Local Authority responsible for education, has a duty to provide Home to School transport. This duty only applies to those children for whom it is responsible; essentially these are children living within the county boundaries of Worcestershire.

Free Transport will be provided to those children of compulsory school age and attending the nearest, designated or re-designated school for the home address, provided the distance between home and school is in excess of the statutory requirement for the pupil's age.

Statutory walking distances to the nearest or designated school are:

- Up to 2 miles for pupils up to the age of 8;
- Up to 3 miles for older pupils.

In some circumstances, the Authority may provide free transport to children who do not live in excess of the statutory walking distances, particularly if the nature of the route is such that it is considered unavailable for a child, accompanied as necessary, to walk.

Pupils will be awarded transport assistance as appropriate for the needs identified within their Education Health and Care Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs. If determined, free transport or assistance with transport will be provided to the nearest suitable establishment indicated on the Statement or Plan on the basis of the individual child's needs.

This applies to Further Education establishments and High Schools where students are continuing at the Sixth Form of the designated school or attending the nearest establishment. Worcestershire County Council will no longer provide transport assistance to an alternative establishment, if the chosen programme level is available locally.

Transport assistance for post 16 students will comprise a place on the contracted school bus, or assistance with a multi-operator concessionary ticketing scheme.

If the Authority has spare capacity on a contracted coach or taxi service, then those students not eligible for free transport may be considered for a seat under the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme at the discretion of the Authority. Payment for a vacant seat is set out in the contributions schedule.

Social Care Transport

Worcestershire County Council has a duty under the Social Work Act (2017) to assess a person's community care needs and decide in light of that assessment, whether to arrange any services and, if so, which services. In doing so, any provision of assistance should be based on a detailed assessment of the individual's care needs and should take account of their preferences.

Under the National Health Service and Community Care Act, 1990, Local Authorities were given the responsibility for community care for older people, and services were to be provided on the basis of what the older person needed, rather than what was actually available. These Home Care, Day Care, and Respite Care needs are ascertained by means of a Community Care assessment, enabling people to live in their own homes wherever possible. This legislation also requires that the needs of carers are taken into account.

The Council operates a number of scheduled passenger transport services providing access to Adult and Older People's Day Services. Transport is also provided on a 'call out' basis for social care service users as and when required.

Home-to-Day Service transport will be provided to Adult Day Service users where: the distance involved is too long to walk independently without support; the service user is unable to access public transport; and, the service user has no, or insufficient, state benefits to support the cost of the transport required.

The Council will also provide, at the discretion of the Social Care Service:

- Home-to-Day service transport for users of Older People and Physical Disability Services, where a comprehensive needs assessment has identified that the user requires assistance with transport to access day services; and,
- appropriate transport for users of the Children's Services, where a comprehensive needs assessment has identified the need for assistance with transport.

Performance Management Framework Model

A Performance Management Framework Model has been developed to appraise the relative performance of subsidised services and help analyse funding priorities. The Framework Model allows for fair comparisons to be made between services, and provides the Council with a robust methodology to appraise each service and determine which provide the best value for money whilst endeavouring to deliver the minimum service levels detailed below.

Worcestershire County Council aims to provide access to local services as defined within the Strategy and will consider supporting services, using this model, to achieve this. Limited funding and competing demands for resources means that there has to be a clear method of evaluating the benefits of supporting each service compared to other identified needs. There is also a requirement to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of existing subsidised services to determine whether support should be continued.

All services will be scored on seven categories in order to assess the benefit and value of the services provided. These are:

- The actual cost per passenger carried
- The average number of passengers on each journey (particular those with protected characteristics, e.g. the elderly)
- The deprivation index for the areas served by the service
- The car ownership level of the areas served
- The primary journey purpose
- The availability of alternative services for the journeys being made
- The number of concessionary journeys.

In terms of primary journey purpose(s), services will be ranked as outlined below:

- Employment
- Education and Training
- Healthcare
- Shopping
- Social and Leisure Activities

The scores for each category will also be weighted to give greater importance to the cost per passenger category, followed by deprivation and availability of other services. This methodology will also be applied to new services.

The weighted scores for each service will be added together to produce the overall Key Performance Indicator. This figure can then be used to rank services objectively to determine the most appropriate provision, including alternative delivery models.

Those subsidised passenger transport services with the worst performance index will, by definition, be the least well used, least needed and most expensive per passenger to provide, and thus most likely to be delivered by an alternative model.

Reliability and Punctuality

Passenger transport services provide an alternative to car travel and should offer passengers high levels of service reliability and punctuality.

In terms of bus service reliability and punctuality, the Council will also, where practicable, work with and assist the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency and the Traffic Commissioner, as the regulator of local bus services.

Customer Satisfaction

Quality of service and perception of passenger transport services is a key element in terms of its usage.

Worcestershire County Council is committed to ensuring that customers' views are taken into account and will work in partnership with operators to improve areas of concern.

Alternative Service Provision

Given the rural geography and low population density across the county, traditional timetabled and/or fixed route services may not always be the most effective way of providing passenger transport.

Worcestershire County Council will endeavour to encourage and/or make available alternative services for people in areas where traditional public transport is not the most appropriate solution. Such situations include passengers with mobility problems who cannot reach their local bus route, or people who live in remote areas with limited timetabled services. Alternative services may operate as an additional layer to complement traditional passenger transport.

Community Transport

Community Transport is a term used to describe services that are established and operated by community groups on a not-for-profit basis. These services are commonly, but not necessarily, operated by groups of volunteer drivers.

Community Transport provides a valuable service for everyone in the county, particularly those from vulnerable groups, helping them access key services and

activities that they cannot reach using traditional passenger transport. It plays a very important role in Worcestershire with numerous schemes covering the whole of the county. Car schemes are available in most areas of the county and accessible minibuses operate in all areas.

We will continue to support a countywide provision of Community Transport through:

- Technical and operational advice to Community Transport operators to include funding opportunities
- Working with Community Transport operators to enable them to become an integral part of the transport network.
- Facilitation of local solutions; bringing stakeholders together to develop the most appropriate solution for their area.

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Fares & Ticketing

Bus fares for commercial services and Community Transport fares are primarily a matter for the operators of those services. As part of our partnership working with operators, we will encourage them to keep fares as low as possible within commercial viability. We will also encourage operators to offer discounted fare products to help grow the overall passenger transport market.

Worcestershire's Connecta scheme offers one ticket, at one price, for unlimited travel on buses in defined areas, regardless of the operator of those services; the ticket is currently in paper form. A review of the Connecta scheme will be undertaken to identify changes to enhance the scheme to reach its full potential.

Worcestershire's Severn card is a student bus pass, valid 24/7 on any bus service in Worcestershire included within the scheme. It is available for students aged under 19, or mature students of sponsor colleges. Passes are available on an annual/term/half term basis. A contribution is required for all students who are not eligible for Home to School transport.

A full review of the scheme will be undertaken to identify any changes required to ensure that the scheme is still meeting its objectives.

Smart ticketing is where a ticket is stored electronically on a microchip rather than printed on a paper ticket. This microchip can be embedded in a smart card or on a smart phone. Smart ticketing is also achievable using contactless Europay, Mastercard and Visa bank cards (rather than dedicated transport smartcards).

Smart ticketing and contactless payment opens up alternative ways of buying, collecting and using tickets that are often easier for passengers and also reduce boarding times at bus stops.

We recognise the benefits of intelligent and innovative ticketing and payment solutions, such as smart ticketing and contactless payments, and support wider introduction of these into the County through a managed service.

All services subsidised by the County will support any countywide ticketing schemes and methods of payment. Fares and fare structures on subsidised services will be set in line with commercial services in the area of operation. On subsidised local bus contracts, children's fares will be available at all times; children are defined by age as being 5 to 15 inclusive.

Concessionary Travel

It is a statutory requirement to reimburse operators, so they are no better or worse off as a result of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Although there is a duty to reimburse on the statutory scheme (free travel on any local bus service in England at all times on Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays and between 0930 and 2300 on any other day), the Council can use its powers under the 1985 Transport Act to offer discretionary enhancements. Currently, Worcestershire County Council offers companion travel, pre-0930, on some services, and discounted travel on some Community Transport services as discretionary enhancements. Worcestershire County Council will continue to offer these discretionary enhancements provided they remain affordable.

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Information & Infrastructure

Worcestershire County Council recognises that the provision of service information, marketing, and safe, comfortable infrastructure can encourage residents to use passenger transport, which in turn sustains services and supports network enhancements. We also have a statutory duty to determine what local bus information should be made available.

Information

Accurate information will be provided in a variety of formats to ensure everyone has the ability to access this.

Consideration will be given to the variety of ways to disseminate information, ensuring that the most efficient, cost effective methods are adopted whilst maintaining accessibility for all user groups. This will include Real Time Information, printed and digital material, bus stop information, audio announcements, websites, and access through phone apps.

One of the objectives of this Strategy will be to develop and deliver a Bus Information Strategy, building on key elements outlined in Local Transport Plan 4 namely:

- To develop a clearly defined and understood “brand” for the Worcestershire passenger transport network, used consistently across Worcestershire’s infrastructure and services
- Ensure that information on passenger transport meets recognised best practice guidelines in terms of design, content and distribution and in line with requirements within the Bus Services Act
- Pursue progressive digitalisation of passenger transport information including the development of a comprehensive travel information app for Worcestershire
- Provide a consistent quality of digital information, at interchanges, rail and bus stations and roadside information

- Co-ordinate and limit to a minimum the number of timetable changes for passenger bus services
- Improve the quality of map-based digital passenger transport network information
- Provide Real Time Information displays at high demand areas of passenger transport networks, such as at rail and bus stations, strategic bus stops and destinations (for example public buildings).

Bus Services Act (2017)

The Bus Services Act has placed legislative obligations on operators and Local Transport Authorities in relation to provision of Open Data. This includes information in relation to routes and timetables, as well as fares and tickets. Provision of Real Time Information (live and disruption data) will also be required as well as up to date information about bus stop locations.

Worcestershire County Council is committed to delivering requirements set out in the Act as well as exploring the benefits this may bring to operators and residents.

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Infrastructure

High quality bus stop infrastructure is an essential component in providing a high quality service for passengers.

We will work with local councils and operators to progress to a consistent, uniform and quality provision of infrastructure that facilitates passenger transport use. This includes bus stop poles/flags and shelters, information display cases at stops, and interchange facilities. The selection of locations for any new bus stops and shelters will follow good practice and will particularly consider accessibility for people with impaired mobility.

In line with Local Transport Plan 4, we will work with local councils to review the requirements for each bus stop, along with responsibility for maintenance. Worcestershire County Council will consider provision of new or replacement bus shelters where the following minimum criteria are met:

- A regular weekday bus service operates
- Evidenced long-term passenger demand, particularly where this involves a disproportionately high level of elderly users
- Where the environment is suitable for the installation of a bus shelter
- Opportunities to minimise vandalism have been considered (CCTV, metal lower panels, public art installation etc.)
- Where funding for the supply, cleaning and maintenance is identified over a defined period.

The current location of infrastructure will be reviewed, with consideration to accessibility, usage and safety. The current need for bus stops will also be considered, particularly those within close proximity to others, as a high number of stops along a route can increase journey times. The removal of stops, particularly those with very low usage, will also be considered.



Modal Integration

When planning transport, our focus will be on providing an integrated passenger transport network, with buses and trains providing transport along key commuter corridors and smaller buses and Community Transport feeding into this network at the closest appropriate point. Safe, comfortable interchange hubs will be considered at these locations.

We will take a holistic approach to planning transport, to ensure we gain efficiencies across sectors, whilst at the same time sustaining the commercial network. We will work with different establishments to spread the peak demand where possible, in order to reduce the number of vehicles required, and will look at options to utilise vehicles in their downtime.

For transport users, integrated transport is about the availability of a co-ordinated transport service across transport modes and operators that provide a seamless journey, minimising the impact of interchange and providing clear information on when, where and how the service may be used. This is particularly important for users in areas of rural isolation and social exclusion, where flexibility in transport options brings considerable potential for benefit in areas of low demand.

The provision of a well-integrated network of services, providing the opportunity for 'seamless' travel, can also enhance the travel experience of existing passengers, including those with no alternative means of travel. This will support the strategic goal of improved social inclusion.

Worcestershire County Council will, therefore, continue to work in partnership with operators and other relevant organisations to integrate passenger transport services wherever possible. This will include:

Department of Health and Department for Transport guidance document 'Providing Transport in Partnership' for English health agencies and Local Authorities, available at

- passenger transport connections to mainline bus corridors
- passenger transport services connecting to rail services
- maintaining dedicated 'in-street' interchange facilities at key locations
- providing comprehensive passenger information
- promoting multi-operator integrated ticketing products
- promoting the development of 'mini-interchange hubs'

Vehicle Utilisation

Worcestershire County Council also commits to achieving best value for money to make the most of its assets. The planning and management of service provision by in-house vehicles will be co-ordinated within the County's Transport Operations Unit.

The County Council will strive to achieve co-ordinated commissioning and/or procurement of services both within the County Council and externally with other organisations where such an approach can bring efficiencies and synergies. As such, the County Council will continue to integrate services and vehicles where possible to maximise the use of its vehicle fleet and minimise the number of vehicles required.

Such arrangements may include running conventional passenger transport services with school transport, and using the same vehicles for both Demand Responsive Transport and Social Care services.



Delivery

Working with our partners towards supporting and providing excellent passenger transport services and facilities for our customers across Worcestershire.

The delivery of the Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy will be led by Worcestershire County Council Transport Operations Unit, which sits within the Directorate of Economy & Infrastructure.

Service delivery will be guided by the Passenger Transport Strategy.

Partnership Working

Worcestershire County Council is committed to continued partnership working to secure the best service delivery for the County and the Bus Services Act 2017 provides the platform to do this.

Community Involvement

Engagement with customers to identify current and emerging travel patterns and needs is essential if an effective integrated service delivery is to be achieved. The views and opinions of the public, service users and non-users, are vital to ensuring that the passenger transport services provided meet the needs of the community. In introducing new services, the Council will, whenever practicable, communicate directly with the local community via their democratically elected County Councillor.

Procurement

In procuring passenger transport services and facilities, Worcestershire County Council follows strict tendering procedures in accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulations and The Public Contracts Regulations 2012.

The Council will explore all procurement options at its disposal to ensure that best value is achieved, competition between suppliers is maximised and local suppliers are not disadvantaged.



The Council remains committed to providing the highest level of service possible to the people of Worcestershire and expects all of its operators to deliver professional, safe and reliable services.

Glossary of Terms

Best Value	Ensuring that there is good governance and effective management of resources, with a focus on improvement, to deliver the best possible
Bus priority	Various techniques used to improve service and reduce delay for buses at intersections or junctions
Capacity	The maximum amount that roads can contain
Commercial	Services operated without financial assistance of any kind. Services of this kind are entirely dependent on its passengers to provide sufficient funds in the form of fares for it to sustain a profit
Community Transport	Provision of flexible and accessible community-led solutions in response to unmet local transport needs. This often represents the only means of transport for many vulnerable and isolated people e.g. community minibuses and voluntary car schemes
Competitive Tender	Common method of procuring (buying in) a service. Operators submit a price and proposal (tender) to deliver a particular service; those with the highest score win the contract
Congested	So crowded with traffic or people as to hinder or prevent freedom of movement
Corporate Plan 'Shaping Worcestershire's Future'	This sets out Worcestershire's Vision and Priorities and will help guide the work of the Council and its relationship with individuals, families, communities and partners from 2017 – 2022
Conventional Bus Service	A bus service which operates on a fixed-route and with a fixed-schedule and stopping points

Corridors	The route the service operates along
Demand Responsive Transport	This is a form of transport where vehicles alter their routes based on particular transport demand rather than using a fixed route or timetable
Digitalisation	The conversion of text, pictures, or sound into a digital form that can be processed by a computer
Frequency	Time between two arrivals (or departures) of buses or trains
Infrastructure	Fixed installations e.g. bus shelters, poles, information screens
Integration	Combination of different modes of transport to maximise ease and efficiency for the user in terms of time, cost, comfort, safety, accessibility and convenience
Interchange	A place where services meet, often where passengers change from one service to another
Inter-Urban	A route between two urban areas e.g. Worcester to Malvern
Key Performance Indicator	A measurable value that demonstrates how effectively key objectives are being delivered
Local Transport Plan	The Worcestershire Local Transport Plan focuses on attracting and supporting economic investment and growth, by delivering transport infrastructure and services to tackle congestion and improve quality of life
Modal Integration	Using a variety of travel options to reach a destination, e.g. bus, train, cycle, walk

Modal shift	Replacing a saturated means of transport with another to make the first less congested, normally from the car to another mode
Mode	The means by which a person travels, e.g. bus, train, cycle, walk
Multi-modal	Various forms of transport
Open Data	A requirement for operators and Local Authorities to ensure more centralised sources of information about bus times, routes and fares are available
Operating Costs	The costs incurred by a transport operator in running a service, e.g. fuel, drivers' wages, maintenance
Passenger Transport	Any form of transport which carries members of the public (as opposed to private transport)
Patronage	The number of people using the service
Performance Management	A planning framework ensures that overall partners and organisations know what they should be doing, how they should be doing it and take responsibility for what they achieve
Population Density	The number of people living within a defined area
Procurement	The act of buying goods or services
Punctuality	The ability of a bus service to be on time
Quality Partnership	Agreements between the Council and local bus operators to improve the quality of services and facilities within the scheme area
Real Time Information	Information which provides the actual time of the service as opposed to the scheduled time.

Reliability	The ability for a service to operate consistently and to the times that it is scheduled to
Rural	Relating to villages and the countryside
Section 106	A legal agreement between an applicant seeking planning permission and the local planning authority, which is used to mitigate the impact of your new home on the local community and infrastructure
Stakeholder	Residents, partners, businesses and community who may be potentially affected by decisions made relating to the Passenger Transport Strategy
Statutory	Required by an act of statute (a formal written enactment of a legislative authority that governs a city, state, or country)
Strategic Grant	A sum of money given to an organisation to deliver a service with specific objectives
Subsidised Services	
	Services which require financial support to enable them to cover the cost of operation, normally where the fares obtained on the services are not enough to cover the costs
Sustainable	Able to be maintained at a certain rate or level
Urban	Relating to towns and cities

