

Rutland Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme - Consultation Report (March 2022)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

In March 2021 the Government launched a new National Bus Strategy: 'Bus Back Better' which sets out a fast-paced and ambitious vision to dramatically improve bus services in England outside London through making the bus a practical and attractive alternative to the car.

To help deliver this vision, on 27th May 2021, Rutland County Council (RCC) approved the development of an Enhanced Partnership (EP). Since then, RCC in collaboration with bus companies operating services across the county, have identified how bus provisions could be improved, taking into account the feedback received through a public consultation on bus services in 2021. These ambitions are outlined within the Rutland Bus Service Improvement Plan (**BSIP**) and will be delivered through an Enhanced Partnership Plan (**EP Plan**) and Scheme (**EP Scheme**).

The EP Plan and EP Scheme have been through a statutory 28 day Operator Objection period, during which no objections were received. As such, after publishing our 'notice of proposal to make an enhanced partnership plan and scheme', we moved forward to the next stage: formal consultation on the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme.

The statutory consultation ran for 4 weeks, starting on Wednesday 23rd February 2022 and closing at midnight on Wednesday 23rd March 2022.

1.2 ABOUT THE CONSULTATION

1.2.1 WHAT WAS BEING CONSULTED ON

We consulted on Rutland's Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme.

1.2.2 WHO WAS CONSULTED?

The following were consulted:

- All operators of local bus services that would be affected by the proposals
- Organisations representing local passengers
- Other Local Transport Authorities that may be affected by the proposals
- The Traffic Commissioner
- The Chief Officer of Police

- Transport Focus
- The Competition and Markets Authority
- Rutland Access Group and Rutland Disabled Youth Forum
- Voluntary Action Rutland and Uppingham First

1.2.3 WHERE COULD THE DOCUMENTS BE VIEWED?

A copy of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme document was available for download from the RCC website and online survey platform.

Hard copies of the document, along with copies in alternative formats, were also available on request by emailing: transportadmin@rutland.gov.uk

1.2.4 HOW WERE COMMENTS RECEIVED?

Feedback could be provided through the online consultation survey or via email to transportadmin@rutland.gov.uk

2 FEEDBACK

2.1 RESPONDENTS

2.1.1 RESPONSE METHODS

During the consultation feedback was received as follows:

- Email: 4 responses
- Online survey: 3 responses

2.1.2 THE RESPONDENTS

Feedback was received from the following:

- Leicestershire Police
- Transport Focus
- The Competition and Markets Authority
- A Bus User Panel member
- Public Health Rutland
- One member of the public

The following sections provide further detail on the feedback received.

2.2 SURVEY RESPONSES

2.2.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Appendix A provides a summary of the responses received via the online survey.

Appendix B outlines the key points raised through the survey along with RCC's response and any actions to be taken forward.

In summary however, all respondents to the online survey were supportive of the overarching vision and felt the EP approach would help deliver the objectives.

2 of the respondents felt the proposed obligations on RCC were appropriate, 1 respondent was unsure.

2 of the respondents felt the obligations on operators were appropriate, 1 skipped the question.

All respondents felt the governance arrangements, communication channels and range of stakeholders outlined would ensure successful delivery and monitoring of the EP Scheme and Plan.

2.2.2 ACTIONS RESULTING FROM FEEDBACK

Actions to take forward as a result of the feedback are as follows:

- Open up dialogue with Leicestershire Police regarding use of buses for travel and engagement.
- Promotion of services to the armed forces community to be considered through the actions outlined in 2.3.2.13 – 'Travel incentives and promotions'.
- Further engagement to take place with the public regarding Friday and Saturday evening services.
- Engagement with Public Health during the review of the existing bus network.
- Future iterations of the EP Plan and Scheme to provide further clarity that sustainable travel includes active forms such as walking and cycling.
- Should RCC receive additional funding then those elements listed under a bespoke variation will be given further consideration, with a view to prioritising elements. At this point, consideration will be given to the actions highlighted for prioritisation by survey respondents.
- Consideration will be given to the viability of bee friendly bus stops (should additional funding become available) – seeking advice from wider teams within the council.
- Consider through the Terms of Reference of the Enhanced Partnership Forum inviting additional representatives to the Forum for specific agenda items.

Additional representatives to be considered include: Parish and town council representatives and Integrated Care System/Clinical Commissioning Group.

- During future reviews of the Plan, the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy: The Rutland Place Based Plan, will be reviewed and considered for inclusion.
- Consider any changes to demographics as part of the review processes outlined within 1.2 of the EP Plan and Scheme.

2.3 COMPETITION AND MARKETS AUTHORITY (CMA)

2.3.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Appendix C provides a copy of the CMA response. The response provides generic advice for local authorities. Upon review of the generic advice it is felt there is nothing at present that impacts on the Rutland EP Plan and Scheme. However, potential future actions are noted in the following section.

2.3.2 ACTIONS RESULTING FROM FEEDBACK

The following actions may be required, and taken forward in response to the feedback received:

- Should any changes be considered to fares or ticketing, such as multi operator passes, thorough engagement will take place with all operators. Such action will be undertaken in accordance with the Scheme content. Legal advice may be sought to ensure that any scheme is compliant with competition law.
- When considering network identity ensure operator branding is clearly visible.

2.4 TRANSPORT FOCUS

2.4.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Transport Focus provided feedback in a number of areas. A copy of their feedback can be found in appendix D and a summary of this feedback, along with RCC responses to points raised, in appendix E.

In summary Transport Focus's concerns were around the following areas:

Detail within the document

Transport Focus highlighted they were concerned that *'so many of the measures in your Plan and Scheme are subject to funding and lacking in detail about how and when they would be delivered if funding were available'*.

Unfortunately, RCC has limited staff and financial resource to deliver significant improvements over and above those already outlined within the Scheme. Funding announcements from the Department for Transport have not yet been received and as the EP Plan and Scheme are legally binding documents, we cannot commit any further detail or actions without such knowledge. To do so would raise public

expectation and also pose a legal risk in the event of non compliance due to lack of funding.

Furthermore, due to the timescales within which the EP Plan and EP Scheme were initially required to be developed, it was not possible to identify all of the required detail for potential future schemes. To avoid committing to ill thought out plans, it was agreed that such matters would be carried out once the EP Plan and Scheme have been made – providing the necessary time to investigate options. Where such matters are not reliant on additional funding, timescales for these investigations have been outlined within the Scheme.

Passenger charter

Transport Focus outlined suggestions for inclusion with the Rutland Passenger Charter, which have been noted in the following section as actions to consider. It should be noted however that Rutland does not, historically or presently, have an issue with graffiti. Our existing Charter does not include this as it has focused on issues relevant to our county and passenger base.

Governance

Transport Focus outlined concern that it was unclear on how measures within the Plan would deliver target improvements and that some targets seem stretching.

Guidance provided by the DFT indicated that BSIPs and EP Plans and Schemes should be aspirational. As such, this approach was taken when setting targets. Table 10 within the Rutland EP Plan and Scheme outlines how the facilities, measures and standards specified within the Scheme will help us deliver against these targets.

Transport Focus also stated they had concern over bus user engagement and that *'We are not convinced that these plans will allow for sufficient passenger representation in scrutinising your EP nor in consulting users on its effectiveness.'*

It was not felt appropriate for Bus User Panel Members to be involved in all EP Forum Meetings as the EP Forum offers opportunities to discuss concerns and matters specific to Operators and RCC. Membership to the EP Forum itself has been tailored to ensure open and free conversations between parties. However, there is scope within the Terms of Reference for the Enhanced Partnership Forum for a representative/s from the Bus User Panel to attend the EP Forum for specific agenda items.

Having reviewed section 1.20 of the Rutland EP Plan and Scheme, we feel that the approach outlined provides a proportionate approach in light of the resource available, and that our approach meets the requirements of s.138A(8) of the Transport Act 2000.

Bespoke variation mechanism

Transport Focus raised concern regarding the use of bespoke variation mechanisms. However, in developing the EP Plan and Scheme RCC followed the guidance

outlined within the Transport Act 2000 and as provided by the Department for Transport, the latter of which outlined the use of bespoke variations as a key tool for making amendments.

However, an action point has been included in the following section to ensure the bespoke variation mechanism remains suitable.

Additional support

Transport Focus kindly offered support in a number of areas. This is noted within the actions list below.

2.4.2 ACTIONS RESULTING FROM FEEDBACK

The following actions may be required, and taken forward in response to the feedback received:

- Should additional funding become available in the future, the elements outlined under bespoke variation mechanisms will be considered for implementation. At this stage, detailed discussions will take place with operators and relevant stakeholders, where required – and a decision made as to how to proceed. It is at this stage detailed information on the proposals will be compiled.
- Review passenger charter and consider inclusion of the following:
 - commitment to keeping passengers on board informed on the occasions when there are delays and disruption.
 - commitment to provide alternative transport, such as a taxi, where the wheelchair space is in use and to customer service training.
 - enhanced cleaning regimes.
- Ensure review data is clear and transparent - with detail provided where collected (e.g. with regards to customer satisfaction).
- Consider via the Terms of Reference for the Enhanced Partnership Forum, attendance by representative/s from the Bus User Panel to the EP Forum for specific agenda items.
- Should additional funding be received, elements under the bespoke variations will be given consideration. At this point we will consider the suitability of using the bespoke variation mechanisms in place.
- Reach out to Transport Focus for support regarding the following areas, if required:
 - *designing and carrying out passenger satisfaction and other passenger research*
 - *advising on:*

- *development of a Passenger Charter*
 - *improvements to complaints procedures*
 - *methodology for monitoring performance against passenger growth, punctuality and reliability targets, with sufficient granularity to identify areas which require adjustment to plans*
 - *methodology for assessing performance against Passenger Charter commitments and on complaints handling*
 - *revisions to BSIP and Passenger Charter*
 - *consultation with passengers on how well the EP is working*
 - *passenger information improvements*
 - *reporting of performance to passengers.*
- Continue to liaise with Network Rail regarding any potential changes that may impact on freight and passenger rail traffic passing through Rutland, or the provision of services operating via Oakham station. Should there be any potentially detrimental changes, we will lobby for mitigation measures and/ or the retention of services beneficial to our residents.
 - Consideration to be given to level crossing closure times when looking at network design (outlined in 2.3.2.10 of the EP Plan and scheme).

2.5 LEICESTERSHIRE POLICE RESPONSE

2.5.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Alongside completing the online survey, Leicestershire Police provided the following additional response via email:

‘Thank you for forwarding the Rutland Enhanced Partnership Plan and scheme setting out improved provision and bus services in Rutland.

Leicestershire Police is fully supportive of the Rutland Enhanced Partnership Plan including the BSIP objectives.

The Force is encouraging the use of alternative forms of transport other than the car at every opportunity and with this in mind the scheme will impact favourably on the local population.

This document will be made known to the Neighbourhood Police Area personnel and the Force gives its best wishes to RCC during the implementation process.’

This positive feedback is welcomed and we will open up dialogue with Leicestershire Police regarding use of the buses for travel and engagement opportunities.

2.5.2 ACTIONS RESULTING FROM FEEDBACK

Actions to take forward as a result of the feedback are as follows:

- Open dialogue with Leicestershire Police regarding use of buses for travel and engagement purposes.

2.6 BUS USER PANEL MEMBER

2.6.1 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Feedback was received from a Bus User Panel member as follows:

'Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft BSIP, which is very comprehensive in its ambitions and hopefully will garner suitable funding from the DfT to enable a good start with progressing improvements to the county's bus services.

I have a few thoughts on the Objectives section at the beginning of the document.

1 (c) As an initial service for Friday and Saturday evenings, I suggest an hourly service between Oakham and Uppingham, operated by a minibus. I would suggest that taxi operators would be best placed to run the service, rather than bus companies. This would enable residents of the two towns to travel to the other for a drink or a meal and then return home.

1 (e) My view is that Demand Responsive Transport has limitations for commuters who need to arrive at work at a fixed time and go home at the end of the day. Consideration should be given to retaining timetabled journeys for commuting along with the first journeys in each direction after 09.30.

1 (g) I suggest either free or £1 flat fare promotions on Market Days to take the pressure off of car parking spaces on these days. Particularly on Saturdays.

2 (c) Passengers will not want to change buses alongside a main road junction, like in Lincs. All routes need to serve one or more town centres.

2 (q & r) Utilise funds to reduce child fares to 50% of the adult rate.

One other thought. I was unaware that the Oakham Hopper now operates as a free service and I suspect that only the regulars know about this. A free town service gives you a golden opportunity to push for modal switch away from driving. It needs strong marketing along with route branding and a catchy strapline on the sides and rear of the minibus to encourage drivers to give the bus a go.

Now that Covid restrictions have been lifted, could we have another Bus Users Forum, either the Panel, or better still, a public meeting at the Museum please?'

The above offers positive feedback along with suggestions for consideration when undertaking actions within the EP Plan and Scheme.

The points raised are covered through the actions identified in the following section.

2.6.2 ACTIONS RESULTING FROM FEEDBACK

Actions to take forward as a result of the feedback are as follows:

- Consider suggestion regarding Friday and Saturday evening services during actions outlined in 2.3.2.14. For consideration: hourly Oakham to Uppingham service using minibus or taxis.
- Should future funding enable us to consider the expansion of Demand Responsive Transport, give consideration to retention of timetabled journeys for commuting along with the first journeys in each direction after 09.30.
- Note comments regarding onwards connectivity (to towns) when undertaking actions in 2.3.2.10, relating to network design.
- Where applicable, under actions outlined in 2.3.2.12 (Fares and ticketing) and 2.3.2.13 (Travel incentives and promotions), consider the viability of reduced child fares and flat fare promotions on market days.
- Review Oakham Hopper marketing.
- Next Bus User Panel meeting to be scheduled for April onwards.

3 CONCLUSION

The majority of the feedback received provided positive support for the Rutland EP Plan and Scheme, both generally, but also with regards to the vision and the ability of our EP approach to deliver our objectives. There was also a good level of support for the obligations on operators and RCC as well as the Governance arrangements.

Where feedback received raised queries or concerns regarding the EP Plan and Scheme, these matters have been addressed within this report and the appendices.

Within the action lists we have however outlined some minor clarifications we will seek to make in future iterations of the Rutland EP Plan and Scheme.

Within this report we have also outlined actions that we will take forward alongside ongoing work relating to the EP Plan and Scheme.

Upon consideration of the above, it is not felt that there is a need to amend the EP Plan and Scheme as a result of the consultation and it is therefore proposed that the EP Plan and Scheme are formally 'made', without alterations, following due process.

Consultation questions

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

22 February 2022 - 23 March 2022

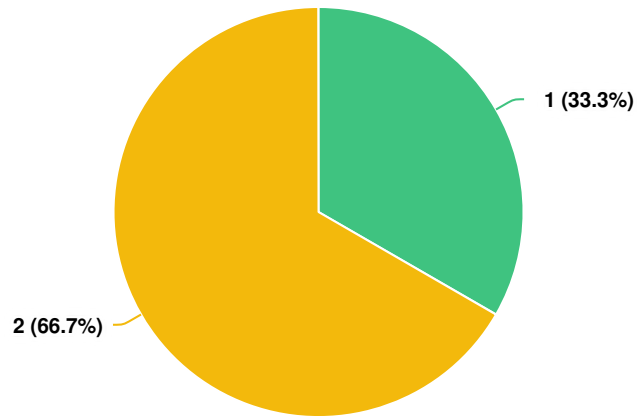
PROJECT NAME:

Consultation on the Rutland Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?



Question options

- As an individual
- As a representative of an organisation

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q2 Please state which organisation you represent:

Anonymous

2/28/2022 08:48 AM

Leicestershire Police

Anonymous

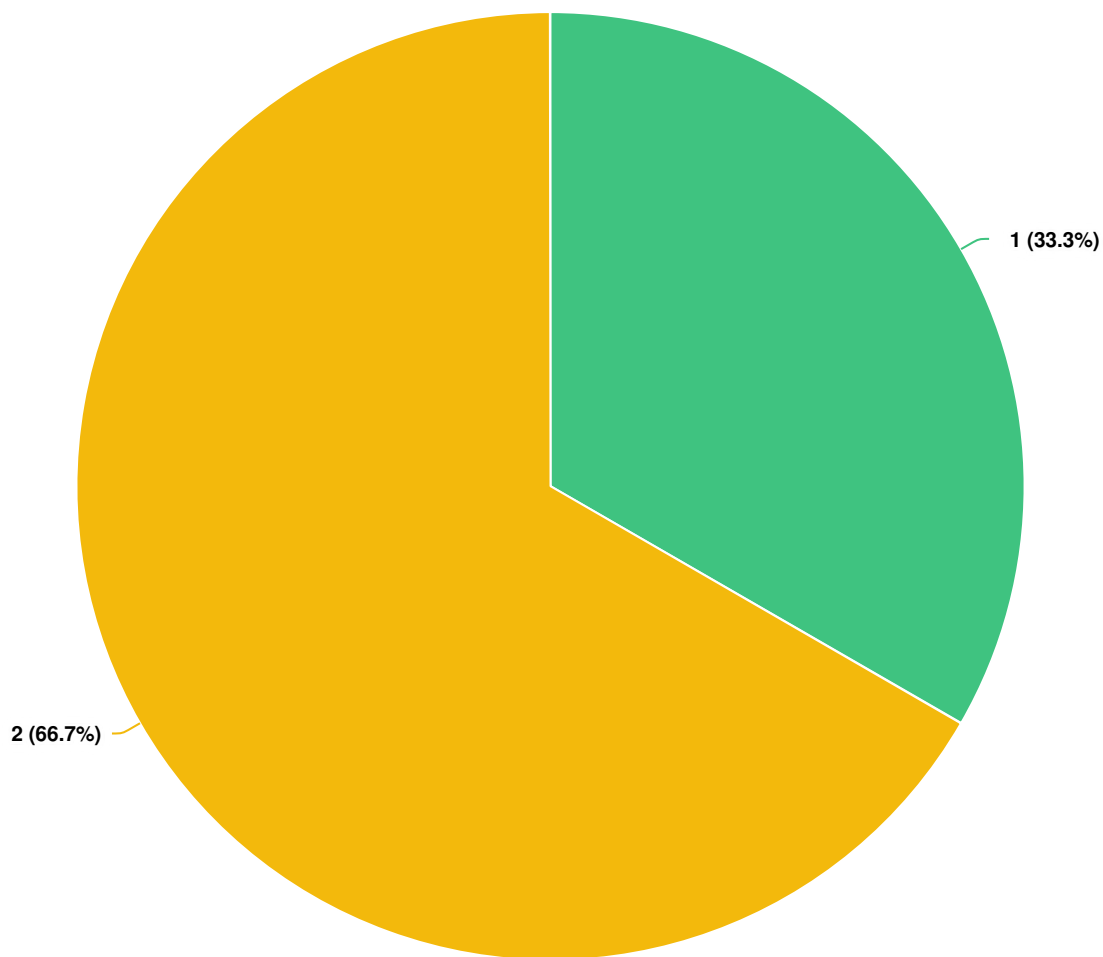
3/22/2022 12:10 PM

Public Health - Rutland

Optional question (2 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Single Line Question

Q3 Are you a bus user?

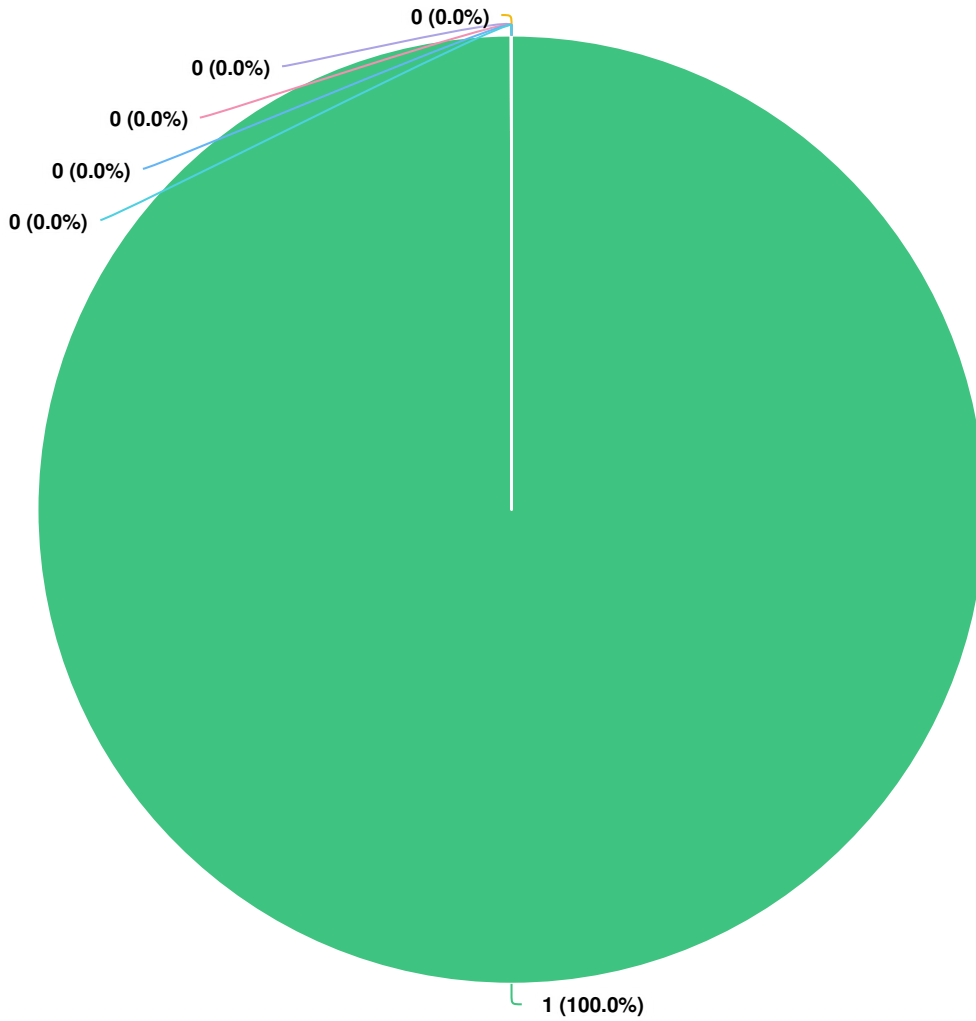


Question options

- Yes
- No

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q4 How often do you use a bus?

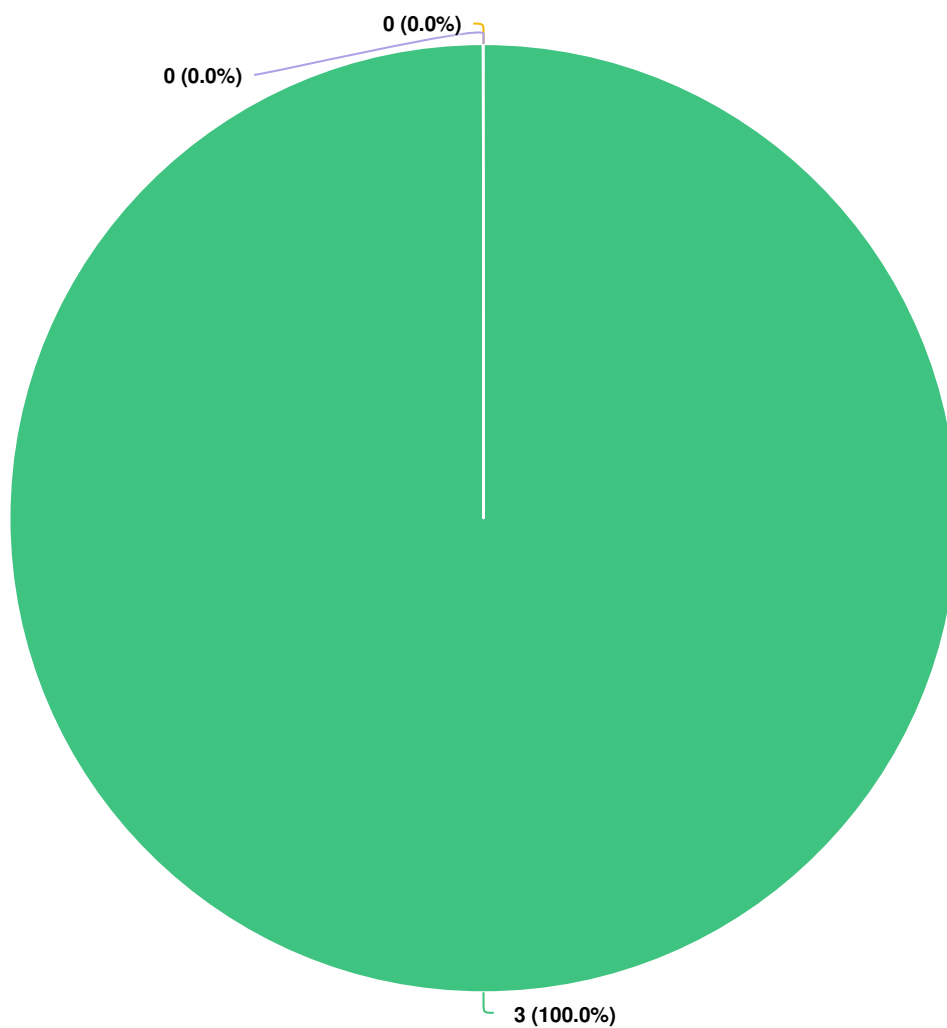


Question options

- About once a month
- Five or more days a week
- Two to four days a week
- Once a week
- About once every two weeks
- A few times a year

Optional question (1 response(s), 2 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q5 Do you support the overarching vision?

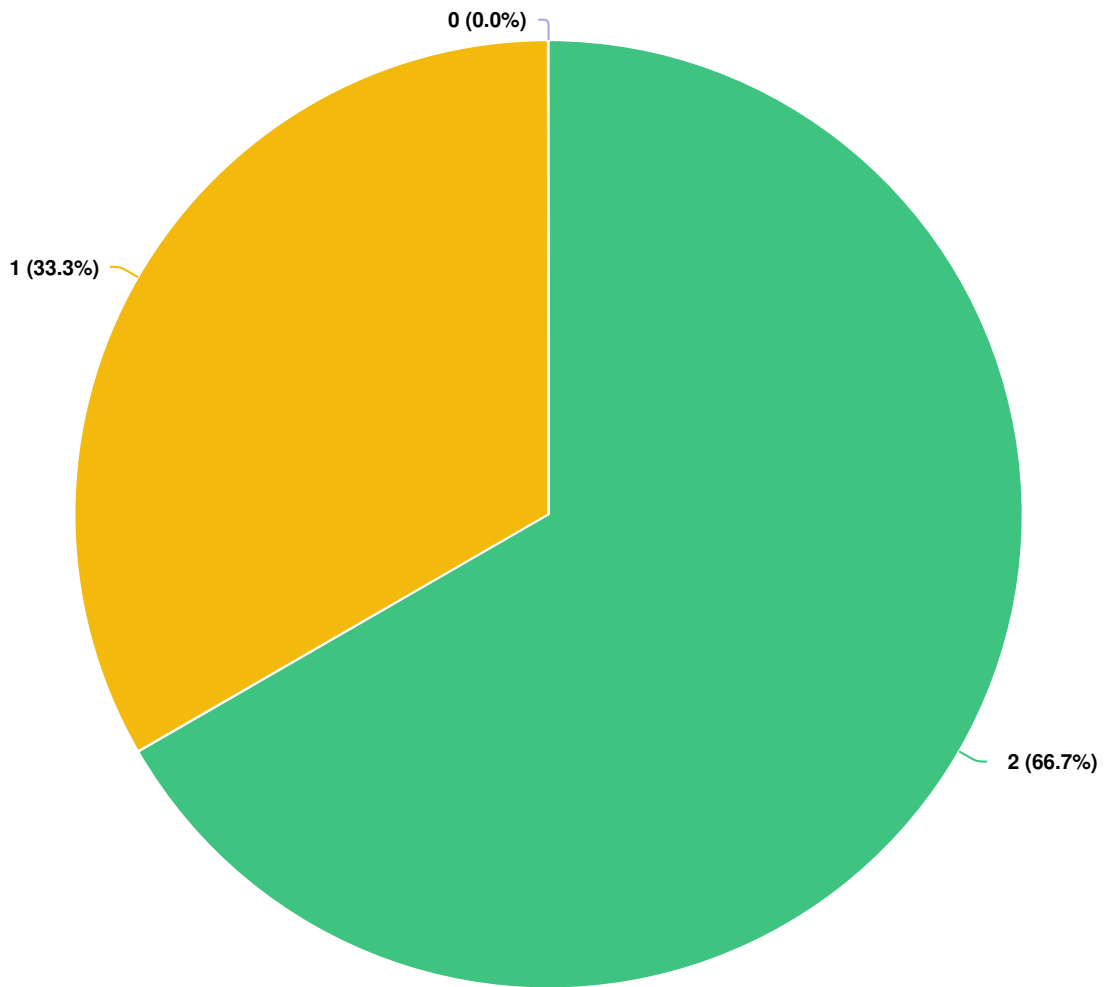


Question options

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q7 Are there any objectives you feel should be considered in order to help us deliver our vision?



Question options

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q8 Please tell us what other objectives you feel should be considered:

Anonymous

3/22/2022 12:10 PM

Ensure bus stop locations provide onward connectivity, safety and accessibility to local communities promoting walking, cycling and disability access.

Optional question (1 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q9 Please provide any further comments you may have on the BSIP vision and objectives:

Anonymous

2/28/2022 08:48 AM

Support the frequency of services to meet the needs of the residents, this could also be supported by our Community Support officers using the service to get around the beat and as an engagement tool with users

Anonymous

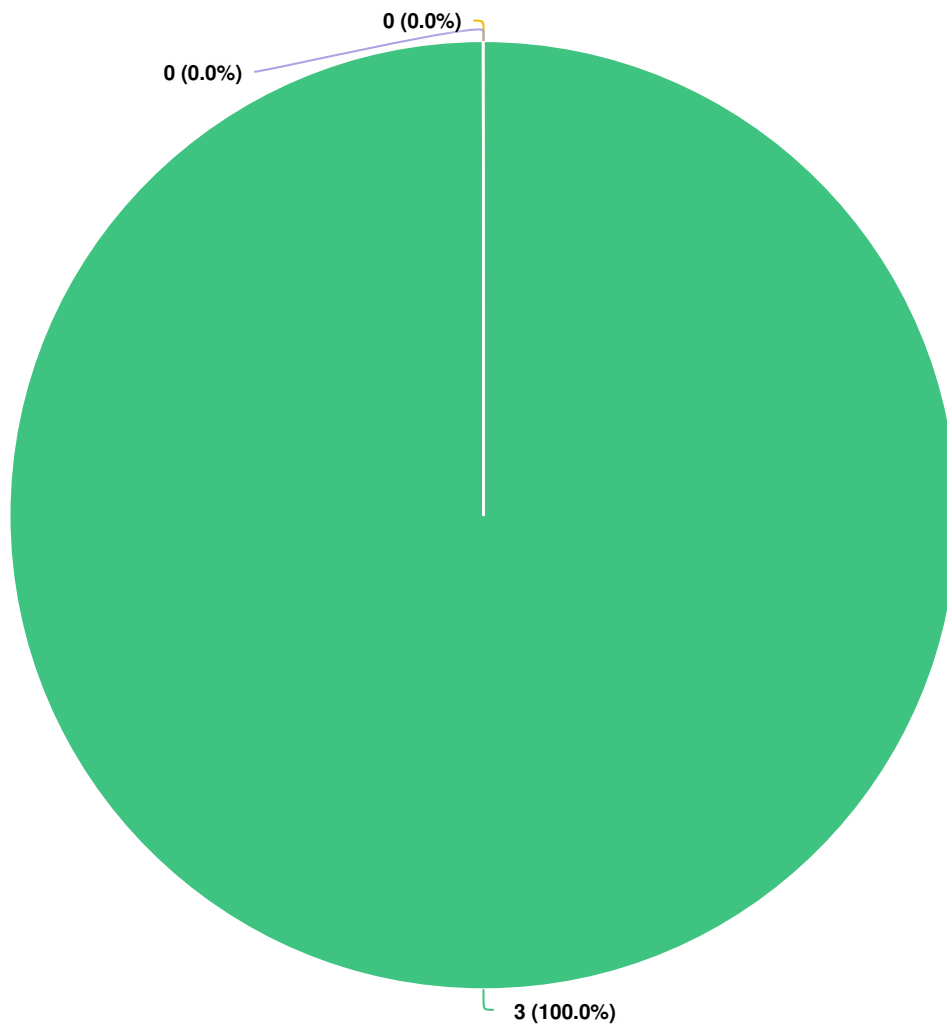
3/07/2022 04:03 PM

Improvement to the Uppingham bus interchange; and possibly re route buses to Oakham to stop at train station as well as bus station

Optional question (2 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q10 Do you feel that the EP approach will help deliver the objectives?

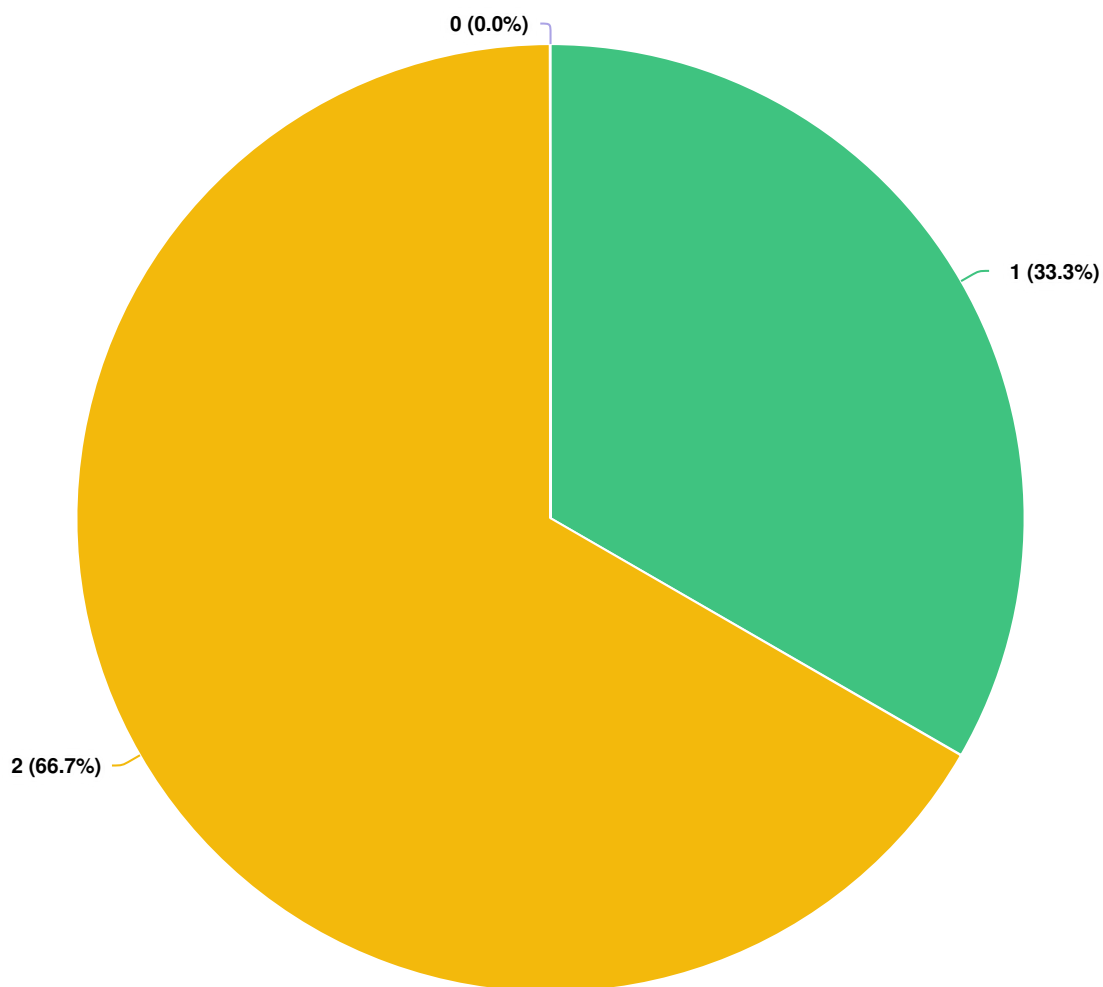


Question options

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q12 | Is there anything you feel is missing from the EP approach?



Question options

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q13 Please tell us what you think is missing:

Anonymous

3/22/2022 12:10 PM

Objective 1 - Consider further incentivisation for armed forces community – families of armed forces personnel who may not know the area well and/or be confident engaging in the local community. This could lead to isolation and poor health outcomes in the armed forces community.

Optional question (1 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q14 Please provide any further comments you may have on the EP approach:

Anonymous

2/28/2022 08:48 AM

The Service on a Friday and Saturday evening would enhance people to the town and also provide the facility for people to get home and utilise the night time economy. Ideal to use discounted travel promotions to enhance usage.

Anonymous

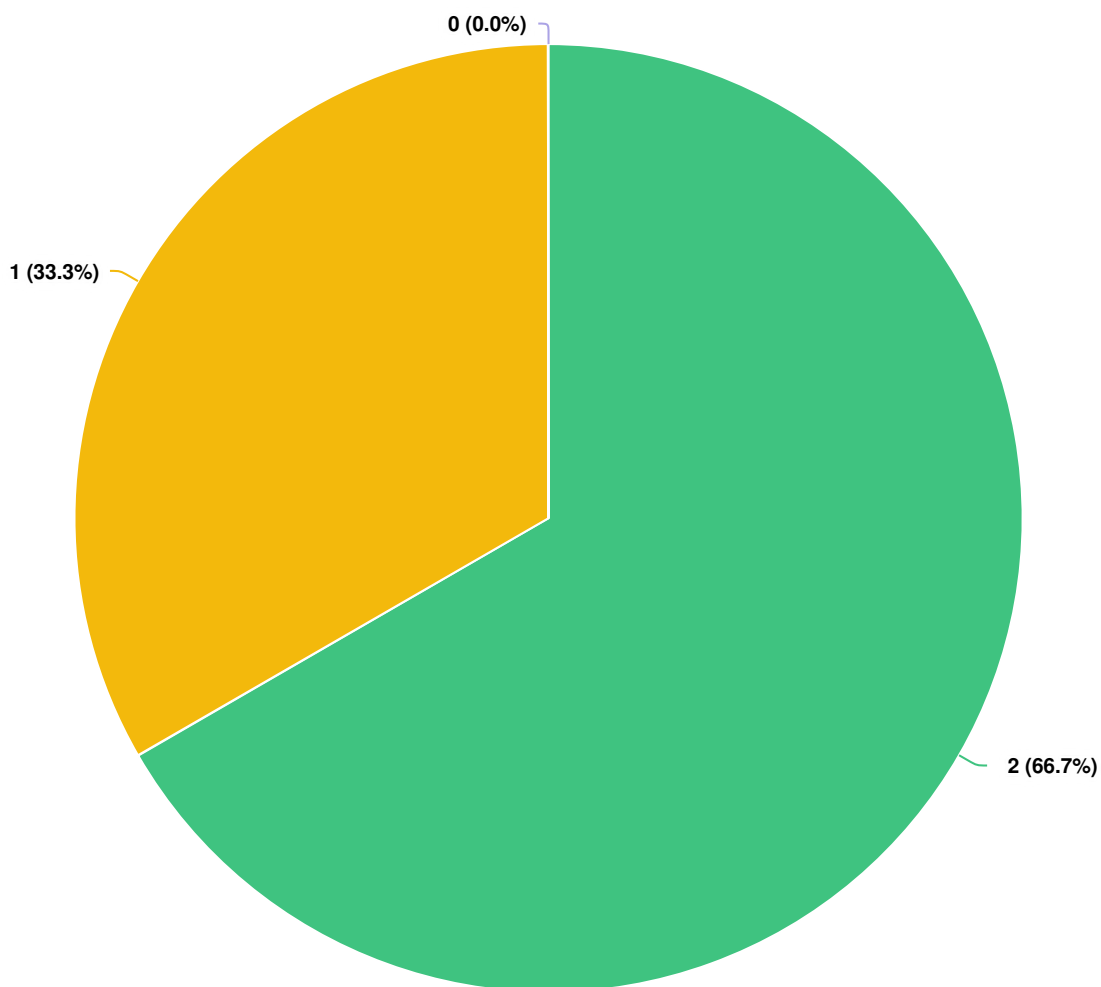
3/22/2022 12:10 PM

Objective 2 – ensure engagement with the Clinical Commissioning Group/Integrated Care System/Primary Care Network on timetables to ensure healthcare service timings are factored into considerations.

Optional question (2 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q15 Do you think the proposed obligations within the scheme are appropriate?



Question options

- Yes
- Unsure
- No

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q17 | Please provide any further comments you may have on the obligations on Rutland County Council:

Anonymous

3/07/2022 04:03 PM

It's a balance between aspiration and realism

Anonymous

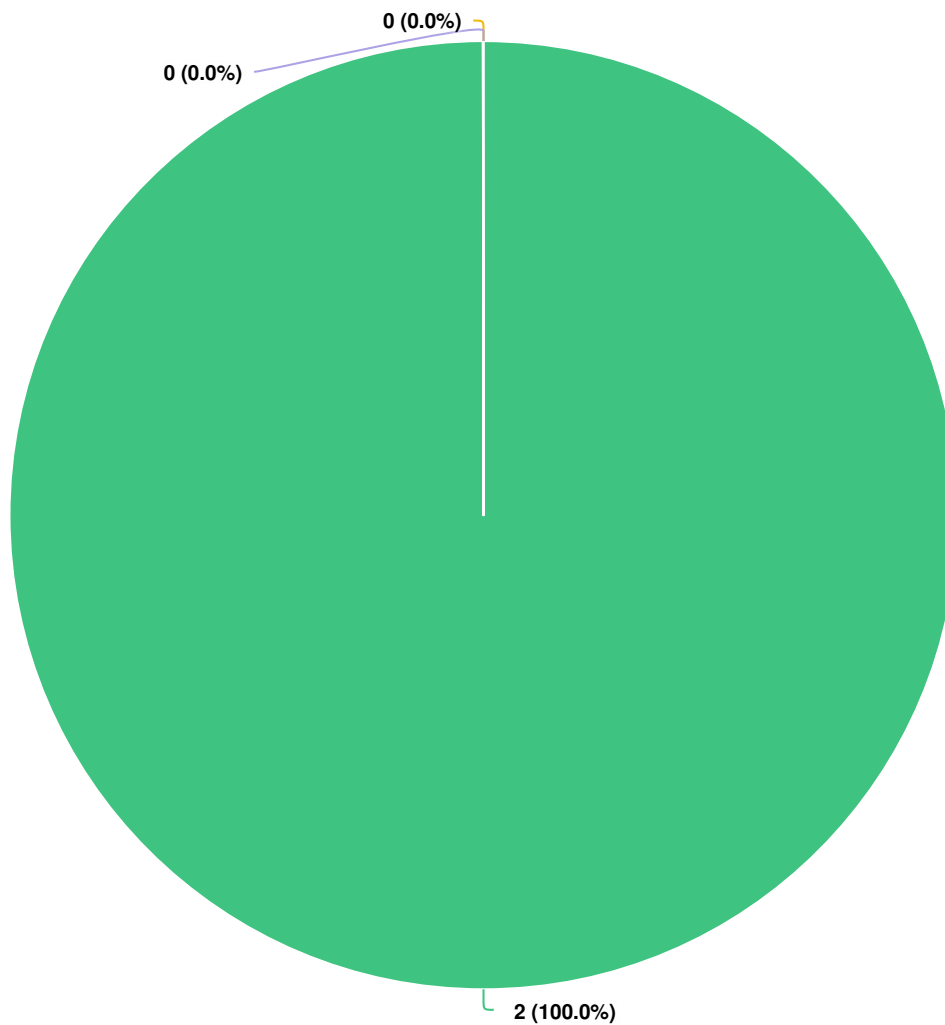
3/22/2022 12:10 PM

2.3.2.7 – Opportunity for this section on behaviour change to encourage schools to promote active means of travel to school as a priority. Whilst still sustainable, active travel offers additional mental health, physical activity and reducing obesity benefits. Although active travel isn't within scope of the EP, encouraging other forms of sustainable travel at the same time as bus promotion offers further opportunity.

Optional question (2 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q18 Do you think the proposed obligations within the scheme are appropriate?



Question options

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional question (2 response(s), 1 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q19 | Please tell us why you don't think the proposed obligations with the scheme are appropriate:

Anonymous

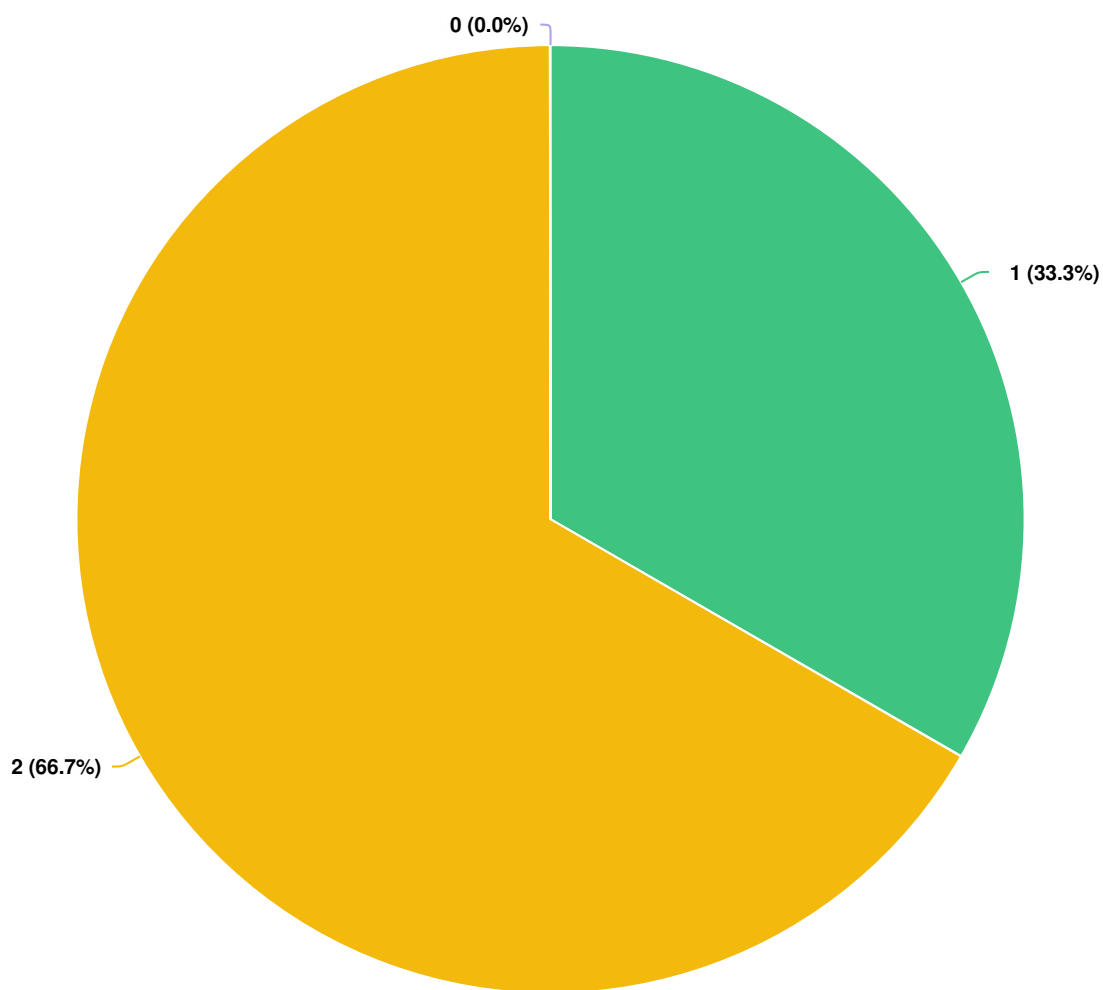
2/28/2022 08:48 AM

There is the need to allow free travel for the RCC bus inspectors to maintain the standard required for residents to be happy with the service.

Optional question (1 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q21 Are there any potential future obligations (those outlined under the 'Bespoke Variation' header) that you feel should be prioritised above others?



Question options

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q22 | Please tell us which you feel should be prioritised and why:

Anonymous

3/22/2022 12:10 PM

Section 2.3.2.1 – consider additional bus stop improvements to tackle wider agendas such as biodiversity. Case studies including Leicester’s bee friendly bus stops or the inclusion of planters to make it a more attractive place to wait. <https://news.leicester.gov.uk/news-articles/2021/may/new-network-of-living-roof-bee-friendly-bus-stops-springing-up-in-leicester/>

Optional question (1 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q23 | Please provide any further comments you may have on the elements outlines under Bespoke Variation headings:

Anonymous

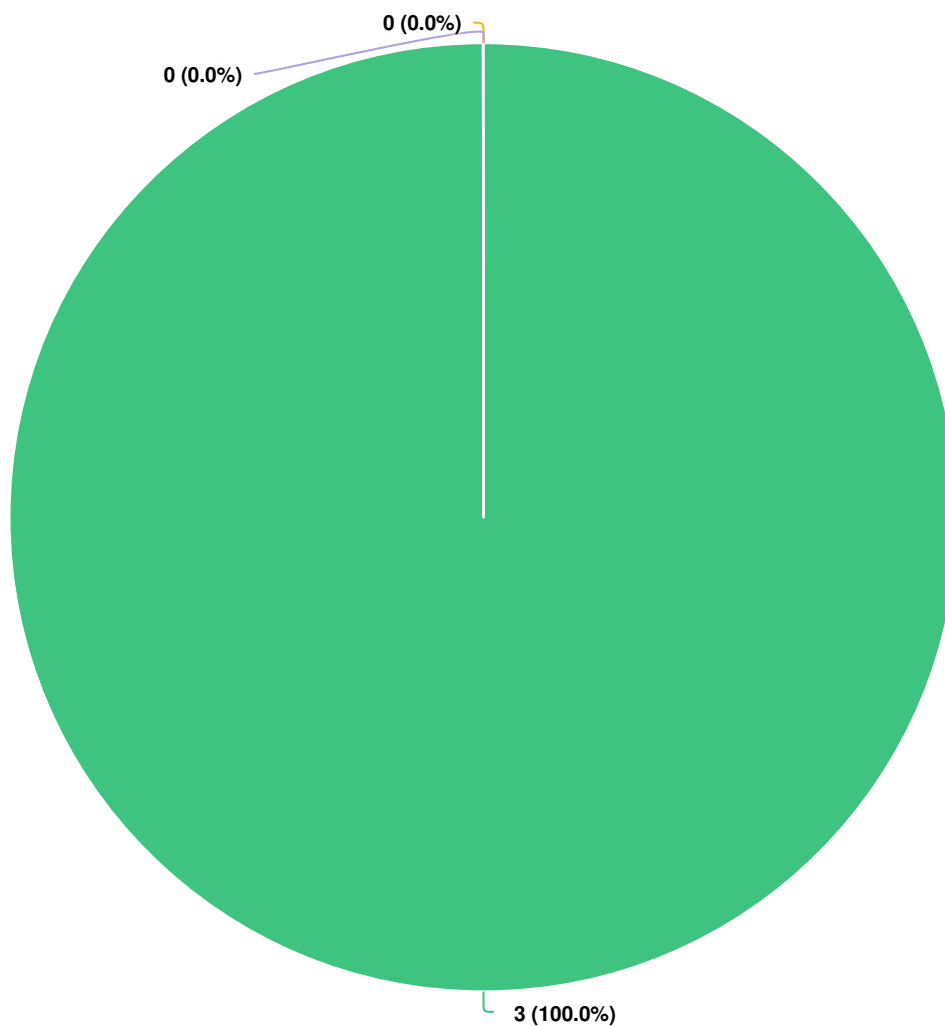
3/22/2022 12:10 PM

2.3.2.2 - Bespoke variation under transport hubs is encouraging to support active travel which has many physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits. Evidence suggests signage with walking/cycling times and distance can increase likelihood of choosing an active travel mode.

Optional question (1 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q24 | Do you feel the governance arrangements, communication channels and range of stakeholders outlined will ensure successful delivery and monitoring of the EP Scheme and Plan?



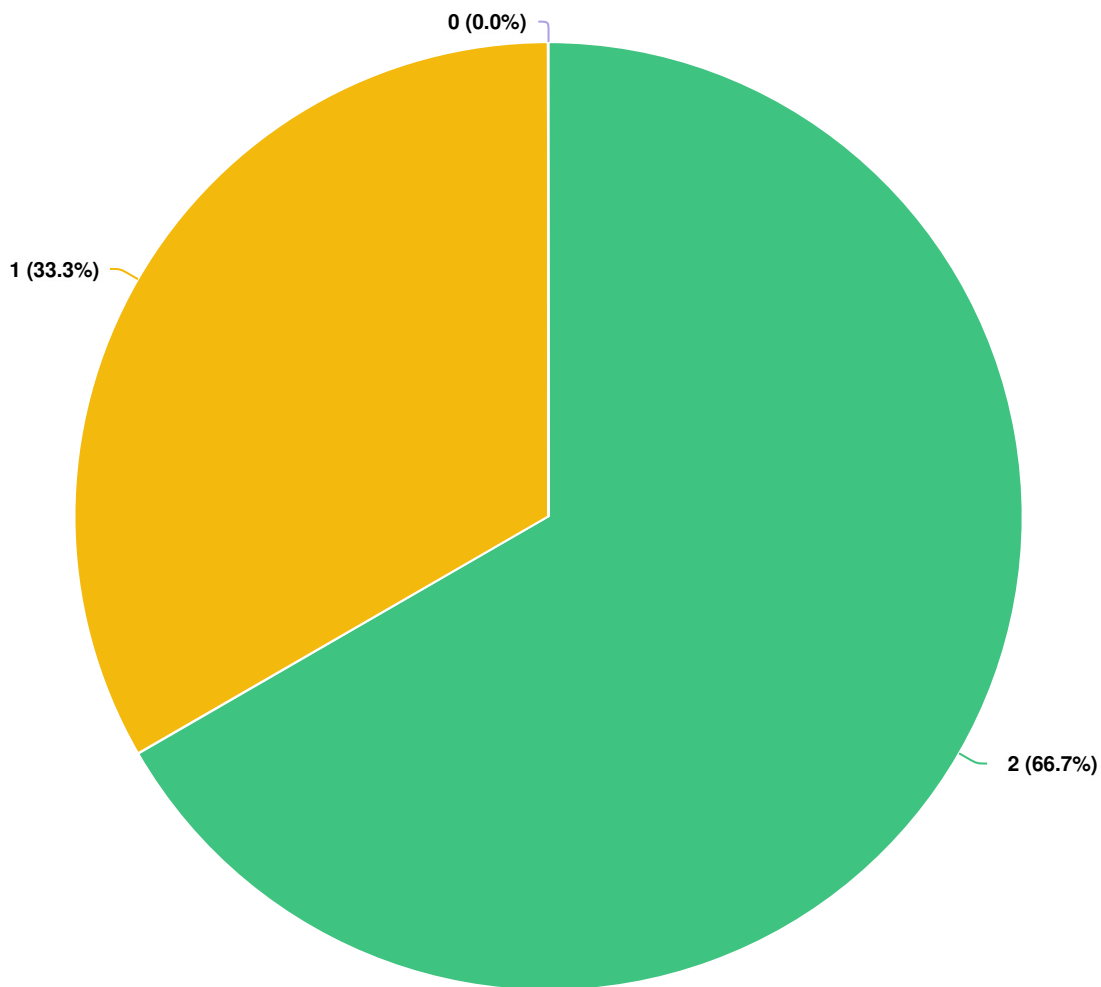
Question options

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q26 Are there any additional arrangements or stakeholders that you feel should be considered?



Question options

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Optional question (3 response(s), 0 skipped)
Question type: Radio Button Question

Q27 | Please tell us what additional arrangements and/or stakeholders you feel should be included and why:

Anonymous

3/07/2022 04:03 PM

Uppingham and Oakham town council s

Anonymous

3/22/2022 12:10 PM

Integrated Care System/Clinical Commissioning Group

Optional question (2 response(s), 1 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Q29 | Please add any additional comments you have on the Rutland Enhanced Partnership Plan and / or Enhanced Partnership Scheme:

Anonymous

3/22/2022 12:10 PM

Section 1.18.6 – opportunity to include health promotion/campaign messages including benefits of taking the bus over the car (reduce carbon emissions, social benefits, walking/cycling from bus stops, less congestion). Also to align with wider campaigns including clean air day. Public Health can help here. Section 1.5 – consider including further reference and alignment to the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy: The Rutland Place Based Plan. Access to healthcare and the community is a key part of the strategy and for a rural area like Rutland, poor access can lead to health inequalities. Social isolation can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing and the measures proposed within the EP plan aim to address elements of this. The priorities in the strategy are: The Best Start for Life; Staying Health and Independent: Prevention; Ensuring equitable access to services for all Rutland residents; Preparing for significant population growth and change; and Ensuring people are well supported in the last phase of their life. Transport access for the most vulnerable populations is key to addressing health inequalities, especially within rural areas. Transport health inequality can disproportionately impact on low income families, living with disabilities, inclusion health and vulnerable populations. Reference to supporting and ensuring the EP plan is constantly reviewing the changing Rutland demographic is important to ensure adaptability throughout the duration of the plan. External factors can also have significant impacts on the level of inequality relating to bus access, for example Covid-19 and the significant increases in cost of living.

Optional question (1 response(s), 2 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question

Online survey responses to the EP Plan and Scheme Consultation

This report summarises the results from the online survey for the EP Plan and Scheme consultation that took place between 23rd February and 23rd March 2022.

Who were the respondents

3 responses were received via the online survey platform. Of these, 1 was received from an individual and 2 as representatives of an organisation.

Organisations represented through the online survey were:

- Leicestershire Police
- Public Health – Rutland

Vision and objectives

Feedback provided

All respondents supported the overarching vision (q5).

2 respondents felt there were additional objectives that should be considered to help us deliver our vision. One example was provided:

- *Ensure bus stop locations provide onward connectivity, safety and accessibility to local communities promoting walking, cycling and disability access.*

The following further comments were provided on the BSIP vision and objectives:

- *'Support the frequency of services to meet the needs of the residents, this could also be supported by our Community Support officers using the service to get around the beat and as an engagement tool with users'.*
- *'Improvement to the Uppingham bus interchange; and possibly re route buses to Oakham to stop at train station as well as bus station'.*

RCC response to feedback

The suggested additional objective has sound reasoning, however upon review it is felt that the existing objectives (in particular objectives 2 and 4) cover these points. With further coverage included as follows:

- Onwards connectivity is considered through 2.3.2.10
- The bus stop audits, outlined in 2.3.2.1, will identify any accessibility issues at bus stops.
- Although not within the scope of the current Scheme, there may be opportunities, in the event of receiving funding, to consider the actions outlined under bespoke variations as outlined in 2.3.2.2 and 2.3.2.8.

Appendix B

Suggestion regarding use of buses by Community Support Officers is noted and we will open up dialogue on this matter directly.

The design of Uppingham bus interchange has recently undergone review by highways, however the findings of the study did not provide justification for use of the funding being considered (Integrated transport capital programme funding). As such this matter was not included within the EP Plan or Scheme.

EP approach

Feedback provided

All respondents felt the EP approach would help deliver the objectives.

1 respondent felt there was something missing from the EP approach, as detailed below:

- *'Objective 1 - Consider further incentivisation for armed forces community – families of armed forces personnel who may not know the area well and/or be confident engaging in the local community. This could lead to isolation and poor health outcomes in the armed forces community.'*

The following further comments were provided on the EP approach:

- *The Service on a Friday and Saturday evening would enhance people to the town and also provide the facility for people to get home and utilise the night time economy. Ideal to use discounted travel promotions to enhance usage.*
- *Objective 2 – ensure engagement with the Clinical Commissioning Group/Integrated Care System/Primary Care Network on timetables to ensure healthcare service timings are factored into considerations.*

RCC response to feedback

Promotion of services to the armed forces community will be picked up for consideration through the actions outlined in 2.3.2.13 – 'Travel incentives and promotions'.

Comment noted regarding Friday and Saturday evening services. Further engagement will take place with the public regarding demand for such services.

Comment regarding engagement noted. RCC will ensure appropriate engagement takes place during the review of the existing bus network.

Obligations on RCC

Feedback provided

2 of the respondents felt the proposed obligations on RCC were appropriate, 1 respondent was unsure.

The following comments were received regarding the obligations on Rutland County Council:

- *It's a balance between aspiration and realism*

Appendix B

- *2.3.2.7 – Opportunity for this section on behaviour change to encourage schools to promote active means of travel to school as a priority. Whilst still sustainable, active travel offers additional mental health, physical activity and reducing obesity benefits. Although active travel isn't within scope of the EP, encouraging other forms of sustainable travel at the same time as bus promotion offers further opportunity.*

RCC response to feedback

Both comments have been noted. Section 2.3.2.7 refers to sustainable travel. As noted within the comment provided, sustainable travel also includes walking and cycling – active forms. The original wording was intended to cover all forms of sustainable travel – including walking and cycling. However, in any future iterations of the EP Plan and Scheme further clarity shall be provided on this point.

Obligations on operators

Feedback provided

2 of the respondents felt the obligations on operators were appropriate, 1 skipped the question.

The following comment was provided on this matter:

- *There is the need to allow free travel for the RCC bus inspectors to maintain the standard required for residents to be happy with the service.*

RCC response to feedback

Operators currently permit free travel for RCC bus inspectors, however, the EP Plan and Scheme formalises this arrangement.

Potential future obligations

Feedback provided

1 respondent felt there were particular future obligations that should be prioritised over others. They felt the following should be prioritised:

- *Section 2.3.2.1 – consider additional bus stop improvements to tackle wider agendas such as biodiversity. Case studies including Leicester's bee friendly bus stops or the inclusion of planters to make it a more attractive place to wait.
<https://news.leicester.gov.uk/newsarticles/2021/may/new-network-of-living-roof-bee-friendly-bus-stopsspringing-up-in-leicester>*

A further comment was also provided on the bespoke variation elements as follows:

- *2.3.2.2 - Bespoke variation under transport hubs is encouraging to support active travel which has many physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits. Evidence suggests signage with walking/cycling times and distance can increase likelihood of choosing an active*

Appendix B

travel mode.

RCC response to feedback

At present, there has been no decision from the Department for Transport with regards to whether RCC will receive any funding to support any of the proposals within Rutland's EP Plan and Scheme.

However, should RCC receive additional funding then those elements listed under a bespoke variation will be given further consideration, with a view to prioritising elements.

The suggestions for prioritisation will be considered at this point.

In the meantime, consideration will be given to the viability of bee friendly bus stops (should additional funding become available) – seeking advice from wider teams within the council.

Governance arrangements

Feedback provided

All respondents felt the governance arrangements, communication channels and range of stakeholders outlined would ensure successful delivery and monitoring of the EP Scheme and Plan.

2 respondents felt additional arrangements or stakeholders should be considered as follows:

- Uppingham and Oakham town council
- Integrated Care System/Clinical Commissioning Group

RCC response to feedback

To ensure the Enhanced Partnership Forum remains focussed on its core objective, it is not felt that widening the general membership of the Forum would be suitable. However, there is scope within the Forum's terms of reference, to invite external stakeholders to future meetings for specific agenda items that may be of relevance. As such, this will be noted and duly actioned where appropriate.

General feedback

Feedback provided

The following additional comment was provided on the Rutland Enhanced Partnership Plan Scheme:

- *Section 1.18.6 – opportunity to include health promotion/campaign messages including benefits of taking the bus over the car (reduce carbon emissions, social benefits, walking/cycling from bus stops, less congestion). Also to align with wider campaigns including clean air day. Public Health can help here.*
- *Section 1.5 – consider including further reference and alignment to the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy: The Rutland Place Based Plan. Access to healthcare and the community is a key part of the strategy and for a rural area like Rutland, poor access can lead to health*

Appendix B

inequalities. Social isolation can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing and the measures proposed within the EP plan aim to address elements of this. The priorities in the strategy are: The Best Start for Life; Staying Health and Independent: Prevention; Ensuring equitable access to services for all Rutland residents; Preparing for significant population growth and change; and Ensuring people are well supported in the last phase of their life. Transport access for the most vulnerable populations is key to addressing health inequalities, especially within rural areas. Transport health inequality can disproportionately impact on low income families, living with disabilities, inclusion health and vulnerable populations. Reference to supporting and ensuring the EP plan is constantly reviewing the changing Rutland demographic is important to ensure adaptability throughout the duration of the plan. External factors can also have significant impacts on the level of inequality relating to bus access, for example Covid-19 and the significant increases in cost of living

RCC response to feedback

Comment regarding 1.18.6 noted and support on wider campaigns welcomed. There may also be further opportunities under 2.3.2.2.

Section 1.5 – The points you raise here are very pertinent. Rutland’s Local Transport Plan 4 also identifies these the points – including access to healthcare, social isolation and deprivation. During future reviews of the Plan, the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy: The Rutland Place Based Plan, will be reviewed and considered for inclusion.

Changing demographics can be considered as part of the review processes outlined within 1.2.

Feedback from the Competition and Markets Authority

Good afternoon,

Thank you for keeping us informed on your Enhanced Partnership (EP) plans. As you will appreciate, given the number of partnership documents we are receiving we are reviewing all relevant documents that are provided to the CMA by authorities but we will not be providing detailed individual feedback. We have however set out some high-level points from our review of an initial tranche of documents.

The CMA has a statutory function within the Transport Act 2000 (as amended). Should the CMA consider that a partnership agreement does not meet the 'Competition Test', the CMA may open an investigation. The Act recognises that while an agreement might have a significant adverse effect on competition it may still pass the Test if it is a proportion means to delivering improvements to bus services. The act does not require the CMA to provide an opinion on whether the partnership proposals meet the requirements of the Test.

Any comments provided in the course of the CMA's review should not be interpreted to provide legal assurances that there will be no adverse impact for competition or that a proposed agreement is compliant with competition law. We ask that EP plans and documents, reflect this position (by avoiding references that imply that EP plans have been cleared by the CMA).

From the draft EP plans we have reviewed so far, we can share the following overall feedback points:

- To fully satisfy themselves, authorities should consider the state of competition under the counterfactual (ie absent the EP) and how it will be impacted by new requirements on operators. Appropriate transition periods may mitigate some of these impacts. The use of non-prescriptive/outcome based objectives may give greater flexibility to operators to deliver your objectives, but it is for the authority in partnership with operators to consider the policy objectives that are to be delivered.
- Some EPs include proposals for encouraging flexible business models, like Demand Responsive Transport, though the level of thinking and evidence base that has gone into those business models across the EP plans varies. We would encourage you to explore existing trials of these models and learn from best practice in other authorities, where it exists.
- The removal of single operator tickets will have a potentially significant impact on the incentives of operators to compete against each other. We encourage careful consultation with operators, so that operators who are uncertain about the legal risks of offering multi-operator tickets are not excluded. We would recommend seeking legal advice to ensure that any scheme is compliant with competition law as the CMA as the UK's lead competition enforcement agency cannot provide this.
- If you have plans for introducing refund guarantees on certain routes, again we would encourage careful consultation with operators, so new schemes do not create the unintended consequence of providers not wanting to service routes or enter the market.

Appendix C

- Where an authority wishes to require buses to adopt a standard livery or branding scheme we would recommend that operator brands should be clearly visible, particularly where operators are competing on overlapping routes. Care should be given to the impact on operators of cross-border routes.
- Where governance arrangements do not include individual representation for each bus operator, we advise that there is some form of shared representation (or similar arrangement) for smaller operators that might otherwise be excluded. Where larger operators have greater representation in governance arrangements, this should be defined by contestable criteria (eg total mileage) rather than fixed, named operators.
- Should you include exemptions, these should be clearly defined with objective criteria to give confidence the exemptions will be applied appropriately.

We would be happy to provide informal advice on any of the above points as plans develop – and you can message us directly at [REDACTED]

Thank you,

Consultation on the Rutland County Council Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme: Transport Focus response

Overview

The Plan references all the areas that are most important to passengers and many of the high-level aspirations could deliver passenger benefits. However, there is work to do to convert these aspirations into real change on the ground.

We recognise the challenges presented by Rutland's geography and by the decline in bus patronage that had started before the pandemic and appreciate your open, honest assessment of current provision. However, it is disappointing that at this stage so many of the measures in your Plan and Scheme are subject to funding and lacking in detail about how and when they would be delivered if funding were available.

Introduction

The questions used in your consultation do not provide sufficient scope for Transport Focus to explain our position, so we have chosen to respond via a separate document.

We have compared your draft Plan and Scheme with our document *What passengers want from BSIPs* which reflects our national research into bus passenger priorities for improvement with its robust methodology and samples. We sent this document to Rutland during the BSIP development process. We would expect your Plan and Scheme to reflect these passenger priorities, as well as those identified through your local engagement and research. It was good to see your Plan was informed by local analysis, the 2016 council travel survey and recent engagement with local residents.

We do understand that the bus industry faces multiple challenges in competing with the car as it seeks to recover from the slump in patronage caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and that the uncertainty over Government funding may make it more difficult to make firm commitments which cannot be delivered without it. However, it is clear that bus patronage must increase and passenger satisfaction must improve, so proposals must be up to the task and we will judge them accordingly.

Core measures – what passengers want

Buses running more often

Local engagement highlighted 'availability and accessibility' as one of the areas where improvement could increase bus patronage. The Plan recognises this with a high-level aspiration to increase daytime weekday and Saturday service frequencies and work with local residents and operators to identify any gaps in existing provision and demand for weekend evening services. While these seem like the right aspirations and approach, they are all subject both to review and funding. We would need to await the outcome of reviews and see firm commitments before we could judge the likely benefit for passengers and residents.

Buses going to more places

The Plan refers to the existing successful DRT system in the east of the county and the potential to expand that to other areas. This seems like a sensible approach to get local people to the places they want to go and, again, responds to the desire for improved access to recreation and leisure highlighted by local residents. Broad plans for identifying areas that could benefit, working with users and stakeholders to identify community need, carrying out trials, using digital technology to widen appeal and bring improvements all seem well thought out. However, there is no firm commitment and it is all subject to funding at this stage.

We welcome the intention to set a schedule to coordinate timetable changes but, as that process won't be agreed until later this year, we can't judge whether it will offer passengers the stable network they prefer.

More buses on time/faster journey times

Local data demonstrates that congestion is not a significant problem in Rutland and therefore your light-touch approach is appropriate. Your Passenger Charter might usefully include a commitment to keeping passengers on board informed on the occasions when there are delays and disruption. The Plan recognised a potential future challenge from increased rail freight and level crossing down-time; it would be good to know what actions are being considered to limit the impact.

Better value for money

The Plan references many measures that could offer better value for money including implementing electronic ticket machine systems, standardised age categories for child and youth tickets, multi-operator and mode ticketing, value for money fares, daily price caps, frequent traveller incentives and weekly or monthly ticket options. However, none of the reviews or discussions with operators appear to have taken place yet and all are subject to funding. We would need to await the outcome of reviews and see firm commitments before we could judge the likely benefit for passengers and residents.

More effort to tackle anti-social behaviour

The Plan draws on local data and feedback and demonstrates good recognition of the importance of passenger safety, actual and perceived. We note the aspirations to consider CCTV and lighting at stops, carry out increased monitoring of Oakham bus station and Uppingham interchange to deter anti-social behaviour and install CCTV on buses. However, this is all subject to funding and there is no detail about how and when it might be delivered.

Better quality of information at bus stops

There is a firm commitment to audit the current information provision at all bus stops by December 2022. This audit covers the right areas including timetables, fares information, route and network maps, and onward journey information. There is also a commitment to carry out a review of available RTI systems and their viability for use in the Scheme area. However, any improvements would be subject to funding and there is no detailed plan as

to how these would be delivered were funding available so it is impossible to judge at this stage.

The intention to upgrade information provision at Oakham bus station, Uppingham Interchange and bus shelters across the wider scheme area to include onwards travel information is welcome.

Accessible buses

We note broad suggestions that, subject to funding, consideration could be given to installing audio-visual information on existing vehicles and making bus stops more accessible. Your Passenger Charter might usefully include a commitment to provide alternative transport, such as a taxi, where the wheelchair space is in use and to customer service training.

Cleaner buses

We note that when replacing or re-procuring vehicles merit will be given where operators are able to offer enhanced vehicle cleaning protocols. Our research following the pandemic shows the importance of on-board cleaning for passengers. We would want to see commitment to enhanced cleaning regimes and regular removal of graffiti in your Passenger Charter.

Governance

There are targets to make a modest improvement to journey time and a more ambitious improvement to reliability, but it is not clear how measures within the Plan will deliver these improvements. We note that passenger numbers were already in decline and then fell sharply during the pandemic. The passenger growth targets of 25 per cent and 40 per cent increase on the new 2021/22 baseline appear stretching but it is hard to judge until we see what that baseline is and how it compares to pre-pandemic patronage. There appears to be a very stretching target for customer satisfaction and no real indication of improvements to services that might deliver that. It would be interesting to know whether this will be driven in part due to an alternate survey methodology than that used in 2016 which did return an unusually low level of satisfaction. We note that various satisfaction elements will be combined into a single indicator to be published very six months. It is worth remembering that passengers value the transparency of seeing detailed results for underlying factors so we would like to see a commitment to publish the results against each satisfaction indicator.

Progress reports will be reviewed by the council and shared at the existing bus users panel and forum meetings. You indicate that the panel has bus user representation but we are not clear about who or which organisation this involves. A new EP forum has been created with the council and local bus operators; however, there is no regular user representative on this forum. We note that you will invite individuals from other LTAs, groups representing those with disabilities, walking and cycling groups etc to meetings with specific points of interest.

We are not convinced that these plans will allow for sufficient passenger representation in scrutinising your EP nor in consulting users on its effectiveness. A Plan for consulting users on how well the Enhanced Partnership is working as required by s.138A (8) of the Transport Act 2000. We would like to see such a Plan identify a process for seeking input from relevant organisations, elected representatives and a wide range of end users and to say something about the questions you intend to ask and the information you intend to provide.

We note that Rutland proposes to adopt a bespoke mechanism should you need to vary your Scheme. While this is indeed less onerous than the full consultation which would otherwise be required by s.138K of the Transport Act 2000, we are concerned that it may be used as an alternative to making additional Schemes, which would require consultation with Transport Focus and other statutory consultees; it should only be used for relatively minor modifications to what is already included in the very limited Scheme on which you are consulting now. We would be grateful for reassurance on this point.

How Transport Focus can help the Partnership to improve bus services

We believe we can play a useful role helping the Partnership to improve bus services by designing and carrying out passenger satisfaction and other passenger research and by advising on the following matters:

- development of a Passenger Charter
- improvements to complaints procedures
- methodology for monitoring performance against passenger growth, punctuality and reliability targets, with sufficient granularity to identify areas which require adjustment to plans
- methodology for assessing performance against Passenger Charter commitments and on complaints handling
- revisions to BSIP and Passenger Charter
- consultation with passengers on how well the EP is working
- passenger information improvements
- reporting of performance to passengers.

March 2022



www.transportfocus.org.uk

Appendix E

Transport Focus – summary of feedback and RCC response

This document provides a summary of the feedback received from Transport Focus, along with a response from RCC to any concerns raised.

Detail within the documents

Transport Focus highlighted they were concerned that *‘so many of the measures in your Plan and Scheme are subject to funding and lacking in detail about how and when they would be delivered if funding were available’*.

This concern is echoed throughout their response in relation to a number of the core measures.

Unfortunately, RCC has limited staff and financial resource to deliver significant improvements over and above those already outlined within the existing Scheme. Funding announcements from the Department for Transport have not yet been received and as the EP Plan and Scheme are legally binding documents, we cannot commit any further detail or actions without such knowledge. To do so would raise public expectation and also pose a legal risk in the event of non compliance due to lack of funding.

Furthermore, due to the timescales within which the EP Plan and EP Scheme were initially required to be developed, it was not possible to identify all of the required detail for potential future schemes. To avoid committing to ill thought out plans, it was agreed that such matters would be carried out once the EP Plan and Scheme have been made – providing the necessary time to investigate options. Where such matters are not reliant on additional funding, timescales for these investigations have been outlined within the Scheme.

Should additional funding become available in the future, the elements outlined under bespoke variation mechanisms will be considered for implementation. At this stage, detailed discussions would take place with operators and relevant stakeholders, where required – and a decision made as to how to proceed.

Passenger charter

Within the feedback provided, there were also a number of suggestions for consideration within the passenger charter as follows:

- Your Passenger Charter might usefully include a commitment to keeping passengers on board informed on the occasions when there are delays and disruption.
- Your Passenger Charter might usefully include a commitment to provide alternative transport, such as a taxi, where the wheelchair space is in use and to customer service training.
- We would want to see commitment to enhanced cleaning regimes and regular removal of graffiti in your Passenger Charter.

The Rutland Passenger Charter will be reviewed in light of the above suggestions, and amendments made if required. It should be noted however that Rutland does not, historically or presently, have

Appendix E

an issue with graffiti. Our existing Charter does not include this as it has focused on issues relevant to our county and passenger base.

Governance

Transport Focus outlined concern that it was unclear on how measures within the Plan would deliver target improvements and that some targets seem stretching.

Guidance provided by the DFT indicated that BSIPs and EP Plans and Schemes should be aspirational. As such, this approach was taken when setting targets. Table 10 within the Rutland EP Plan and Scheme outlines how the facilities, measures and standards specified within the Scheme will help us deliver against these targets.

Transport Focus also queried whether increased customer satisfaction may be in part due to an alternate survey methodology than that used in 2016. The survey methodology used will be different to that used in the 2016 survey, as the 2016 survey was very detailed and is not easily replicable on a regular basis. However, the reasons for improved satisfaction are outlined within table 10.

A further comment outlined the need for transparency in data and a request that data is published against each satisfaction indicator. This request is acknowledged and supported.

Transport Focus had a number of additional specific queries relating to Governance – these are covered below:

Transport Focus: *'You indicate that the panel has bus user representation but we are not clear about who or which organisation this involves'.*

RCC response: The Bus User Forum is open to all Rutland residents. Rutland residents may apply to join the Bus User Panel, which is also attended by: Portfolio Holder for Transport (Chair), Transport Operations Manager, Rural Transport Officer and the Transport Inspector.

Transport Focus: *'A new EP forum has been created with the council and local bus operators; however, there is no regular user representative on this forum...We are not convinced that these plans will allow for sufficient passenger representation in scrutinising your EP nor in consulting users on its effectiveness. A Plan for consulting users on how well the Enhanced Partnership is working as required by s.138A (8) of the Transport Act 2000. We would like to see such a Plan identify a process for seeking input from relevant organisations, elected representatives and a wide range of end users and to say something about the questions you intend to ask and the information you intend to provide'.*

There is scope within the Terms of Reference for the Enhanced Partnership Forum for a representative/s from the Bus User Panel to attend the EP Forum for specific agenda items.

It was not felt appropriate for Bus User Panel Members to be involved in all EP Forum Meetings as the EP Forum offers opportunities to discuss concerns and matters specific to Operators and RCC. Membership to the EP Forum itself has been tailored to ensure open and free conversations between parties.

Having reviewed section 1.20 of the Rutland EP Plan and Scheme, we feel that the approach outlined (as detailed below) provides a proportionate approach in light of the resource available, and that our approach meets the requirements of s.138A(8) of the Transport Act 2000.

Appendix E

Section 1.20 of the Rutland EP Plan and Scheme: *Progress against outcomes and interventions will be reported on publicly every 6 months, commencing from the adoption of the EP Plan and Scheme. The first review is provisionally scheduled for October 2022 – with this, and all future progress updates, published online: <https://www.rutland.gov.uk/mycommunity/transport/transport-strategy/> Internally, the findings of the 6 monthly progress reports will be presented to the Council's Highways and Transport Working Group prior to publication online. Data from the progress reports will be used to identify additional areas for improvement and/ or promotion and will be considered when undertaking the annual BSIP and EP Scheme review. To help ensure data collection remains on track and operators and passenger groups remain consulted on progress, outcomes and interventions will be standing agenda items of the EP Forum, Bus Users Panel and Bus Users Forum meetings detailed below.*

Bespoke variation mechanism

Transport Focus have outlined the following concern:

We note that Rutland proposes to adopt a bespoke mechanism should you need to vary your Scheme. While this is indeed less onerous than the full consultation which would otherwise be required by s.138K of the Transport Act 2000, we are concerned that it may be used as an alternative to making additional Schemes, which would require consultation with Transport Focus and other statutory consultees; it should only be used for relatively minor modifications to what is already included in the very limited Scheme on which you are consulting now. We would be grateful for reassurance on this point.

In developing the EP Plan and Scheme RCC followed the guidance outlined within the Transport Act 2000 and as provided by the Department for Transport, the latter of which outlined the use of bespoke variations as a key tool for making amendments.

Should additional funding be received, elements under the bespoke variations will be given consideration. At this point we will consider the suitability of using the bespoke variation mechanisms in place.

Additional support

Transport Focus have offered help in the following areas:

- *designing and carrying out passenger satisfaction and other passenger research*
- *advising on:*
 - *development of a Passenger Charter*
 - *improvements to complaints procedures*
 - *methodology for monitoring performance against passenger growth, punctuality and reliability targets, with sufficient granularity to identify areas which require adjustment to plans*
 - *methodology for assessing performance against Passenger Charter commitments and on complaints handling*
 - *revisions to BSIP and Passenger Charter*
 - *consultation with passengers on how well the EP is working*
 - *passenger information improvements*
 - *reporting of performance to passengers.*

Appendix E

RCC is grateful for this offer of support and will reach out should assistance be required in these areas.

Rail freight

Transport Focus raise the following point: *The Plan recognised a potential future challenge from increased rail freight and level crossing down-time; it would be good to know what actions are being considered to limit the impact.*

Within our local transport plan 4 we outline the following: *We will continue to liaise with Network Rail regarding any potential changes that may impact on freight and passenger rail traffic passing through Rutland, or the provision of services operating via Oakham station. Should there be any potentially detrimental changes, we will lobby for mitigation measures and/ or the retention of services beneficial to our residents.*

There is unfortunately limited that can be done to avoid level crossings on some routes, however consideration will be given to closure times when looking at network design (outlined in 2.3.2.10 of the EP Plan and scheme).