



LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

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28 January 2022

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend a meeting of **LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL** to be held on **Thursday, 3 February 2022 at 7.00 pm in the Burgage Hall, Church Lane, Ledbury**, for the purpose of transacting the business shown in the agenda below.

Yours faithfully

pp Angela Price PSLCC, AICCM
Town Clerk

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interests**

To receive any declarations of interest and written requests for dispensations.

Members are invited to declare disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests in items on the agenda as required by the Ledbury Town Council Code of Conduct for Members and by the Localism Act 2011.

(Note: Members seeking advice on this item are asked to contact the Monitoring officer at least 72 hours prior to the meeting)

- 3. To receive and Note the Nolan Principles (Standing Item)**
(Page 1567)
- 4. To approve and sign the minutes a meeting of an Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 6 January 2022**
(Pages 1568 - 1571)

5. Herefordshire Councillors' Reports (To Follow)

To receive reports from Ledbury Ward Members:

- i. Councillor Howells
- ii. Councillor Harvey
- iii. Councillor l'Anson

6. To consider questions/comments from members of the public in accordance with the provisions of Standing Orders 3(e) and 3(f)

"Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the Chairman of the meeting"

7. To Receive motions presented by Councillors in accordance with Standing Order 9 (Standing Item)

TO CONSIDER BUSINESS NOT CONSIDERED AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2021

8. Electric Buses – Potential for Ledbury to be considered as a pilot scheme (Pages 1572 - 1641)

9. Special Audit Report (Pages 1642 - 1675)

MINUTES

10. To receive and note the minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held on 6 January 2022 and the reconvened meeting held on 19 January 2022 and to give consideration to any recommendations therein (Pages 1676 - 1681)

11. To receive and note the minutes of meetings of the Planning Committee held on 9 December 2021 and 13 January 2022 and to give consideration to any recommendations therein (Pages 1682 - 1689)

12. To receive and note the minutes of a meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee held on 20 January 2022 and to give consideration to any recommendations therein (Pages 1690 - 1698)

13. To receive and note the minutes of a meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee held on 27 January 2022 and to give consideration to any recommendations therein (To follow)

WORKING PARTIES

14. Neighbourhood Development Plan update (Pages 1699 - 1702)
15. Events Working Party (Pages 1703 - 1706)

FINANCE

16. 2022/23 Draft Budget (To Follow)
17. Welcome Back Fund/Great Places to Visit update (Pages 1707 - 1715)

GOVERNANCE

18. To consider the appoint of external investigator to review the War Memorial processes and related issues (Verbal Report)

GENERAL

19. Outside Bodies Reports (If any) (Pages 1716 - 1719)
1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Carnival Association, held on 10 November 2021
20. Council Newsletter (Standing Item)
- To note that the date for submissions for the Spring edition of the Newsletter is the last week of March 2022, to allow for publication in early April 2022
21. Job Fair (Pages 1720 - 1721)
22. 3 Shires Stages Closed Road Rally – 18 September 2022 (Pages 1722 - 1756)
23. Recreational Ground – Children’s Play Area (Pages 1757 - 1769)
24. Rolling for Cancer (Pages 1770 – 1778)
25. Date of next meeting
- To note that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for 31 March 2022 at 7.00 pm

26. Exclusion of Press and Public

In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting

27. Ledbury War Memorial (To Follow)

Distribution: - Full agenda reports to all Councillors (13)
Plus file copy

Agenda reports excluding Confidential items to:
Local Press (2)
Library (1)
Police (1)
Councillor l'Anson (1)

**The Seven Principles of Public Life
(Nolan Principles)**

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Agenda Item
4

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY FULL COUNCIL HELD ON
6 JANUARY 2022

PRESENT: Councillors Chowns, Manns, Sinclair, Bradford, Knight, Whattler,
Bannister, Howells, Morris

ALSO PRESENT: Julia Lawrence – Deputy Clerk
Amy Howells – Minute Taker

C485 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Eakin, Harvey and Troy.

C486 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

**C487 TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF COUNCIL
HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2021**

Members were requested to receive and note the minutes of a meeting of Full Council held on 2 December 2021.

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 2 December 2021 were received and noted.

**C488 TO CONSIDER QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE
PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF STANDING
ORDERS 3(E) AND 3(F)**

RESOLVED:

None received.

It was proposed by Councillor Manns that items C491 and C492 be brought forward in the meeting. This proposal was seconded by Councillor Bradford and agreed by Members.

C489 TO GIVE CONSIDERATION ON HOW TO PROCEED WITH COUNCIL MEETINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT COVID GUIDANCE TO "WORK FROM HOME IF YOU CAN".

A proposal was put forward by Councillor Manns for Council members to continue with face-to-face meetings as opposed to reverting to zoom meetings, noting that no decisions would be able to be made due to legislation having been removed to allow this, in light of the revised Government guidelines in relation to Covid-19. This was seconded by Councillor Sinclair.

RESOLVED:

That Ledbury Town Council continue to hold all council and committee meetings face to face.

C490 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for 3 February 2022 at 7.00 pm.

C491 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting

C492 UPDATE ON WAR MEMORIAL

It was noted that there had been no correspondence from the Stone Workshop's Solicitors to Red Kite, Ledbury Town Council's Solicitors. Members considered mediation but agreed that this would be costly. Councillor Chowns suggested a further letter be sent by the Council's Solicitors with a deadline of 21-days for a response,

Councillor Bradford questioned why Red Kite Solicitors had been chosen to represent the Council as he believed that they did not have relevant expertise. Councillor Chowns confirmed that the solicitors are familiar with this type of work, i.e., litigation but were not experts in construction. Councillor Manns added that this choice of Solicitor had been approved through Full Council at a previous meeting.

Considerable discussion took place as to how the Council should proceed with this matter

Councillor Manns confirmed that an email had been sent to the Town Clerk from Mr Julian Wintle of Red Kite Solicitors today (6 January 2022) together with a proposed letter to be sent to Stone Workshop. Councillor Chowns read out the email received from Julian Wintle, together with a copy of the proposed letter to be sent to the Stone Workshop. Councillor Bannister considered that Ledbury Town Council should set in motion legal action against The Stone Workshop and agreed that the proposed letter should clearly set out precise instructions, requesting a substantive response within 21 days' thereby setting a deadline of 16.00 hours on 27 January 2022. Councillor Whattler agreed with the course of action but considered that the matter should also be taken to the Police as it was a criminal matter as the company had quoted for works and had subsequently invoiced for goods and services which had not been fully delivered.

A proposal was put forward by Councillor Bradford to take legal action against the Stone Workshop and that Council request the Clerk to instruct the Solicitor to take such action against the Stone Workshop and also send correspondence to the Police expressing the Council's concerns and asking them to investigate the matter, should no response be received from the Stone Workshop by the deadline date. Councillor Sinclair seconded the proposal put forward by Councillor Bradford with a unanimous vote.

Members of the Committee had been presented with a schedule detailing quotation that had been received in respect of the "Clerk of Works" role together with proposed fees for the architects, Caroe.

Committee members were asked to select and approve one of the three companies that Caroe had provide quotes from. Members felt that insufficient information had been supplied for each organisation and Councillor Howells proposed that the Council ask Caroe to provide more information about the companies so that the Council could make an informed choice out of the three companies who would undertake the work required. Councillor Manns seconded this proposal. Councillor Bradford proposed that the Council accept the architect fees. This was seconded by Councillor Sinclair.

Councillor Howells proposed that Council recommend additional costs to the budget. This was seconded by Councillor Chowns and unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Clerk be authorised to instruct the Council's Solicitor to send a letter to the Stone Workshop giving them 21 days to respond, and to then after these 21 days deadline if no response has been received, send correspondence to the Police expressing the Council's concerns and get them to investigate the matter.**
- 2. That the Clerk be instructed to inform Caroe acceptance of their fee's as provided within the report.**

- 3 That the Clerk ask Caroe to provide more information about the three structural engineering companies who had provide quotes in relation to the role of Clerk of Works.

The meeting ended at 7:06pm.

Signed Dated
(Town Mayor)

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Herefordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan

Creating an exemplar for
rural bus services



October 2021

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1. Herefordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan

*Creating an exemplar for
rural bus services*

October 2021

Produced by:



a company of Royal HaskoningDHV

with:
Herefordshire Council
and Herefordshire's bus operators

Contact:

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Notice

This report has been prepared for Herefordshire Council in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment. Integrated Transport Planning Ltd cannot accept any responsibility for any use of or reliance on the contents of this report by any third party.

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1. Overview

Introduction

- 1.1 Situated in the south west of the West Midlands region bordering Wales, Herefordshire has beautiful unspoilt countryside with remote valleys and rivers and a distinctive heritage. The River Wye winds through the county, flowing east from the Welsh border through Hereford city before turning south to flow through the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Malvern Hills border the east of the county, while the south west is dominated by the western reaches of the Black Mountains.
- 1.2 Whilst the landscape and setting make for an idyllic place to live, there are significant challenges for the operation of effective and viable bus services. Small overall population dispersed across the area limits the demand for bus travel. Furthermore, high car ownership results from necessity. Even so, bus services are vitally important for those who do not have access to a car, particularly older and young people, and those that want to move away from a reliance on private vehicles. Buses will play an important role in actions to address the declared climate emergency.
- 1.3 Hereford is a centre of activity and a focal point for the county to which people converge. With a single bridging point of the river and significant through traffic, the city suffers from congestion, which impacts on the ability to provide efficient bus services.
- 1.4 Despite these challenges, Herefordshire is uniquely placed to transform its bus network, to bring real benefit to its residents. There is much support for change and even before the publication of the Bus Back Better: National Bus Strategy, Herefordshire Council was looking at ways to revitalise public transport through various initiatives.

With relatively modest levels of support for the proposals contained in this Plan, significant transformation can take place, showing what can be achieved in a rural area

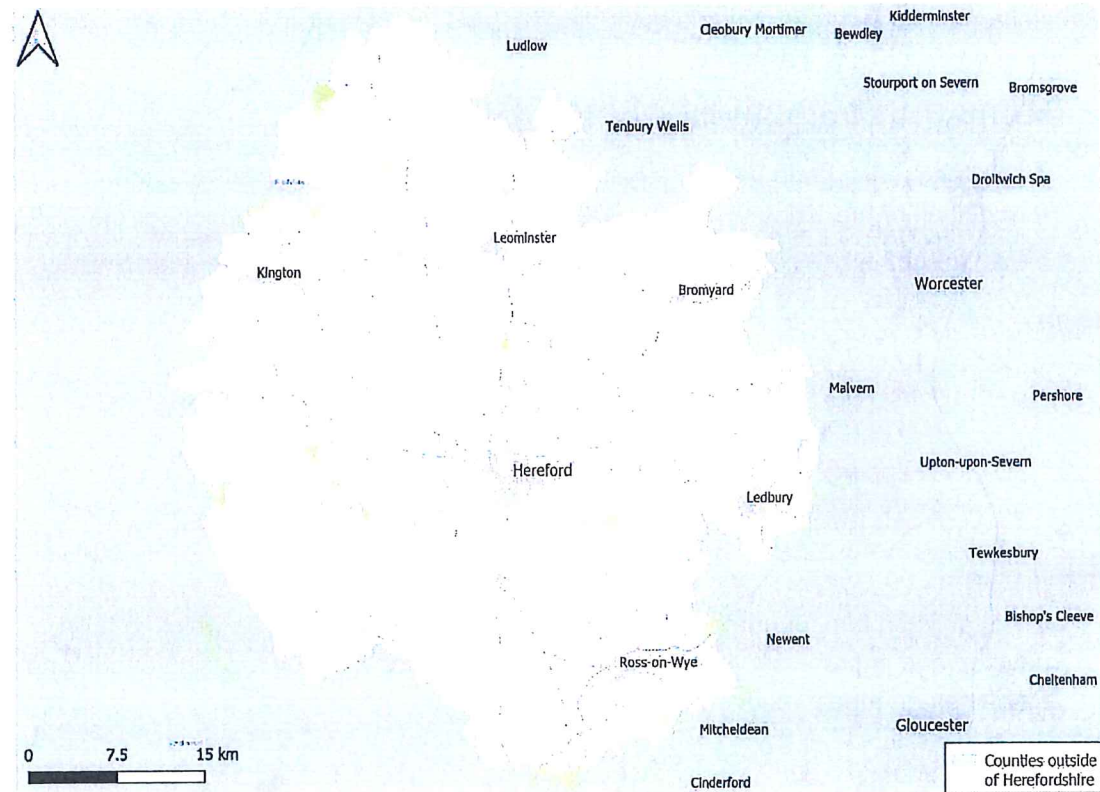
Development of the Bus Service Improvement Plan

- 1.5 The Herefordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) covers Herefordshire only, reflecting the largely self-contained, inward-facing nature of the bus network, which focuses on Hereford city (where key health and education facilities are located) and the county's market towns. There are several cross-boundary services that link to Worcester, Gloucester and into Wales, used by residents to reach further destinations,

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although to some extent these are duplicated by rail services that offer quicker journeys and links with the national rail network.

Figure 1 Herefordshire BSIP Area



- 1.6 In developing the BSIP, there has been dialogue with neighbouring authorities. Many of the issues facing Herefordshire are also to be found in Shropshire, reflecting their rural geography, main centre of activity and surrounding market towns. With few cross-boundary services and largely different operators, there is little common ground for a joint BSIP. However, there will be opportunities to share experience and knowledge in delivering similar bus service improvements. With other neighbours, continued dialogue and collaboration will be important to maintain and develop existing cross-boundary services, including those into Wales
- 1.7 Following the publication of the National Bus Strategy, Herefordshire Council convened an all-operator group that has come together as a Partnership. Terms of Reference were agreed and monthly meetings held, chaired independently to allow authority officers and operators to discuss things freely on equal terms. The Group supported the proposal for an Enhanced Partnership (EP) and the Council published a notice of intent to develop an EP on 25 June 2021. All operators are invited to attend meetings and contribute to its work. There has been good representation at the meetings to date.
- 1.8 The Partnership Group has overseen the development of the BSIP and will ultimately be responsible for the EP Plan and Schemes that are established in 2022.

Herefordshire Council has committed to expand the Group to include wider interests such as user representation.

- 1.9 The BSIP will be maintained as a living document that is regularly reviewed and updated, at least annually. Monitoring reports will be produced every 6 months to demonstrate progress towards the objectives and targets set.

Aims and objectives of the BSIP

- 1.10 All partners have been fully engaged in the development of the BSIP and the formulation of the vision and objectives set out below. Letters of support for the BSIP have been received from the majority of operators and are included at appendix b.

Vision

Buses in Herefordshire play a significant role in meeting travel needs, having a positive impact on the lives and wellbeing of those who use them and making a positive contribution to the county's economy and environment.

BSIP goal

To establish a firm foundation for the Herefordshire bus network on which to build, develop and improve service provision. This will be achieved by focusing efforts and resources on measures that maximise benefits.

Objectives

- 1) Establish a coherent, consistent and integrated bus network that is well understood and easy to use.
- 2) Offer a quality service that is attractive to use and portrays a positive image.
- 3) Provide a service that offers value for money.
- 4) Contribute positively towards Herefordshire's ambitions for decarbonisation and environmental improvement.
- 5) Support the wellbeing of Herefordshire residents, enabling people to access key services and live independently

2. Current offer to passengers

Introduction

- 2.1 The expectation on BSIPs is for local authorities to deliver a fully integrated bus service, with simple multi-operator tickets, more bus priority measures, the same high-quality information for all passengers in more places, and better turn-up and go frequencies that keep running in to the evening and at weekends. By delivering these, the expectation is that patronage growth will follow.
- 2.2 This chapter summarises the existing position regarding the delivery and use of bus services across Herefordshire. It takes account of the evidence gathered from stakeholders and residents during summer 2021. By considering the gap between the current position and ambition, areas for improvement have been identified, along with targets, approaches to delivering change and reporting structures. These are set out in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Herefordshire in context

- 2.3 With a population of 192,100 (2018), Herefordshire is the fourth least populated county in England, with 221 people per square mile. One third of the population lives in Hereford, one third in the five market towns and the remaining third distributed across the villages and hamlets. Most of the county (95%) is classed as rural and **53% of the population live in rural areas**. In the DfT's Index of Accessibility, it is the **lowest ranking local authority in terms of access to key services**.

Herefordshire at a glance

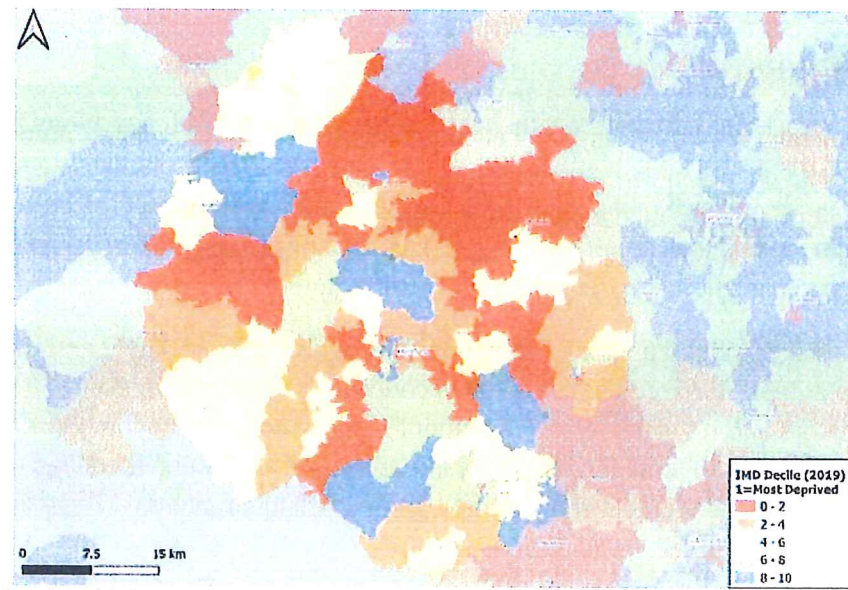
Median age - 44.3 years compared with national average 40.4

23% of the population is aged 65+ compared to 19% nationally

17% of people aged 0-15 compared to 23% nationally

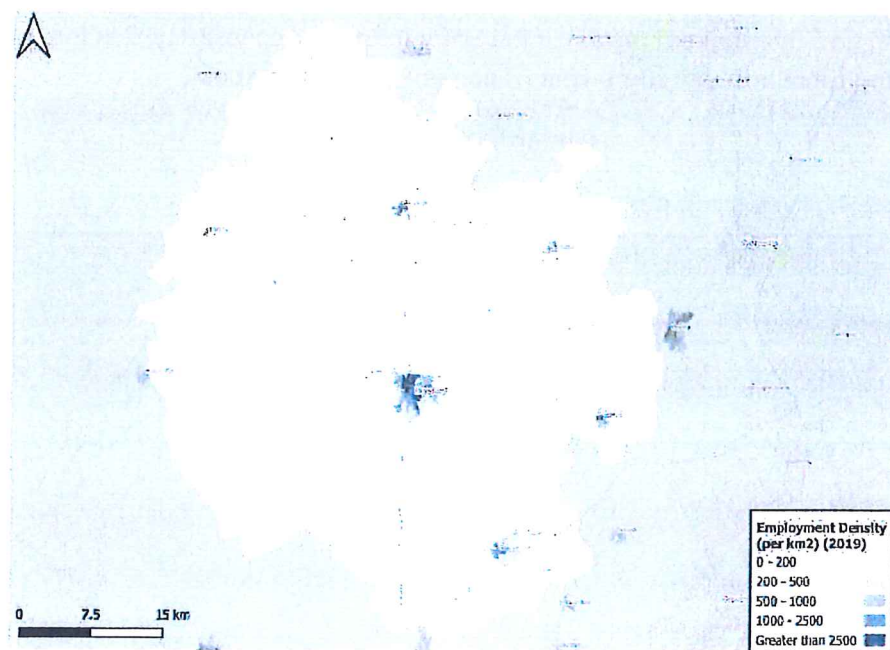
Herefordshire has limited ethnic diversity – 2% of the population is non-white

Figure 2 Levels of deprivation across Herefordshire



- 2.4 Despite having higher than average life expectancy, Herefordshire has areas of high deprivation. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019) highlight that **31% of the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in the county are in the top 20% most deprived areas.**

Figure 3 Employment density in Herefordshire (2019)

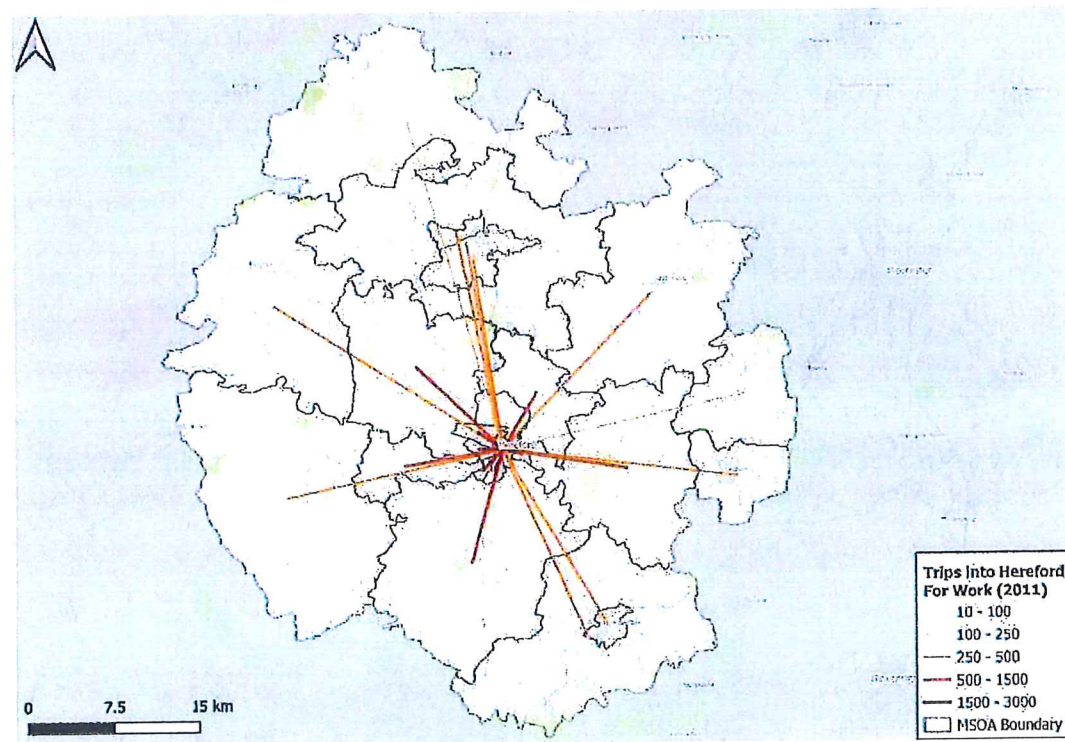


- 2.5 Herefordshire's economy is predominantly rural. In 2018, 90% of enterprises registered in the county employed less than 10 people, with only 0.1% of companies in the county classified as 'large employers' and employing more than 250 people. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (24%), 'construction' (11%) and 'professional and

technical activities' (11%) sectors employed the largest share of people. Employment density, according to the 2019 Business Register and Employment Survey, is shown in Figure 3.

- 2.6 Hereford has the largest concentration of employment in the county, with an estimated 29,000 jobs located in the city in 2019. As such, the city is a major trip generator for journeys to work. Figure 4 shows the relative flows into the city for work from all parts of the county. Other important centres of employment include Ross on Wye, Leominster and Ledbury and, to a lesser extent Kington and Bromyard.

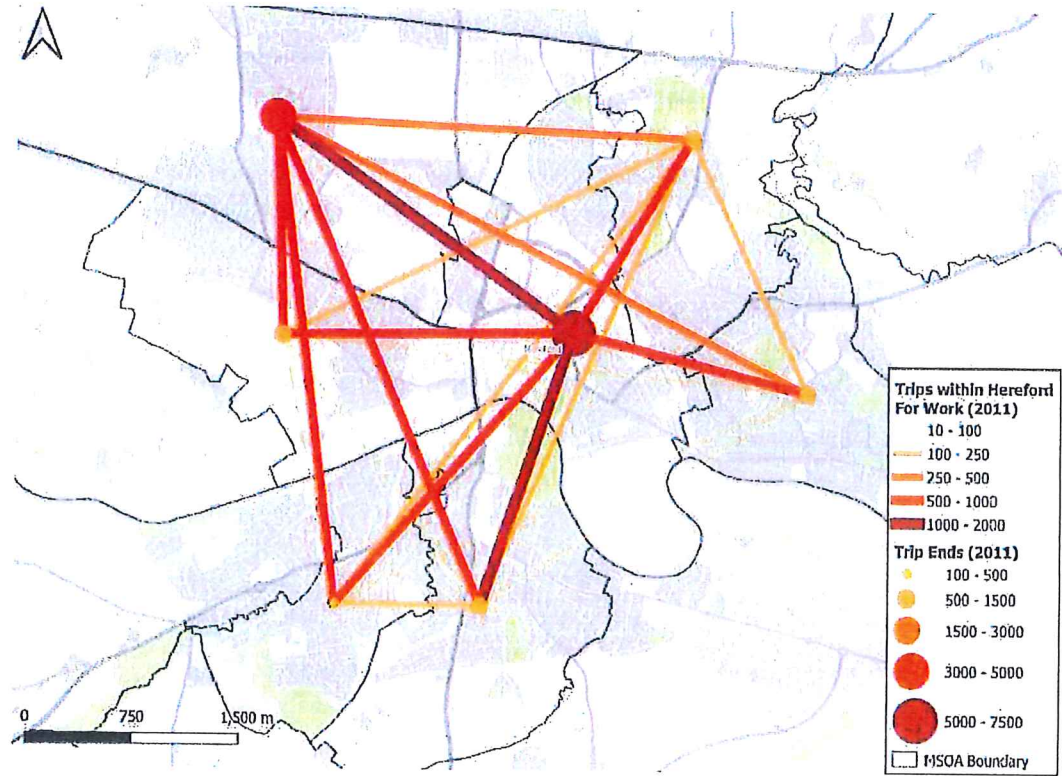
Figure 4 Travel to work in Herefordshire (Census 2011)



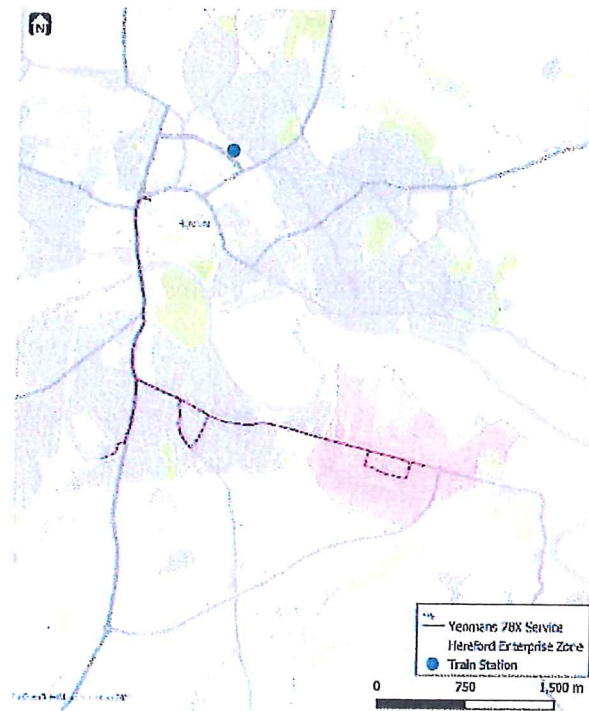
- 2.7 Within Hereford itself there are significant movements in and around the city for work, as illustrated in Figure 5.

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Figure 5 Travel to work within Herefordshire (Census 2011)



2.8 Recent years have seen the development of large employment areas in Hereford, most notably the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) located to the south-east of the city.



Herefordshire Enterprise Zone - Why is the site important?

Skylon Park is the 72-hectare Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) - the largest employment area in Hereford. It is intended that further highly skilled jobs will be created and investment encouraged into the area. There are currently around 4,000 people employed across the HEZ. The site is served by a new two-mile long access road directly onto the A49, and the M50 is around a 25-minute drive from the site. Shift times vary, with most operations between 07:00 and 19:00, with a few 24/7 operations.

Current public transport access

Bus service 78X, operated by Yeoman's, links the HEZ and Hereford city centre. It operates every 30 minutes for much of the day, with some longer gaps at times.

296 passengers of the service were surveyed in 2018. People commented on the large gaps in the timetables in the morning (for instance between 08:00 and 08:45), which was not conducive for travelling to work. Furthermore, people noted that the service was often late with variable punctuality in the late afternoon due to traffic. There were calls for the service to be extended to the railway station to improve connectivity.

Whilst some improvements were made in response to the feedback, including updated timings and amendments to the route around the estate, the service continues to run only to the city centre and not beyond to the railway station.

Transport barriers for employees

In May 2019, 392 staff from 92 different businesses across the HEZ responded to a Herefordshire Council survey. 19% of respondents lived within 2 miles of Skylon Park and 49% within 5 miles. 68% of respondents travelled alone by car (72% in 2018), 14% cycled (12% in 2018) and 1% used the bus (2% in 2018). A reasonable number of employees occasionally cycled (22%), walked (14%) or car-shared (17%). Only 4% of respondents occasionally used the bus.

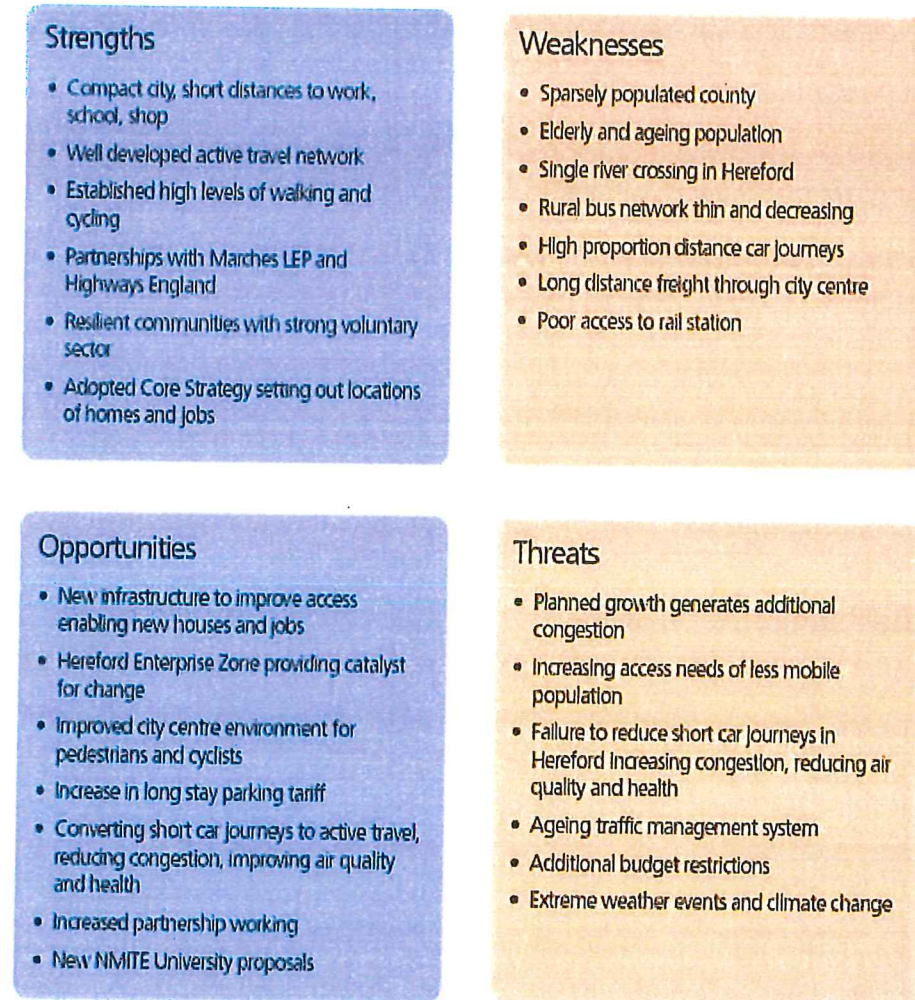
When asked what would encourage them to start, or continue using the bus, the most common measures were discounts on tickets (19%), better bus information (8%) and bus stop closer to the workplace (5%). Of those respondents who generally drove alone to work, two thirds indicated that none of the suggested changes would encourage them to use the bus.

People further commented on the inconvenience and expense of having to get connecting buses in Hereford city centre. A number highlighted that there was no suitable bus service close to their home. The main reasons for using the car were that it was quicker, easier and more convenient (54%), the distance of the journey (38%) and lack of suitable public transport services from where they live (37%).

Challenges and opportunities

- 2.9 Herefordshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) Strategy 2016-2031 outlines the main challenges relating to travel and transport in Herefordshire, summarised in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 LTP analysis of travel and transport in Herefordshire

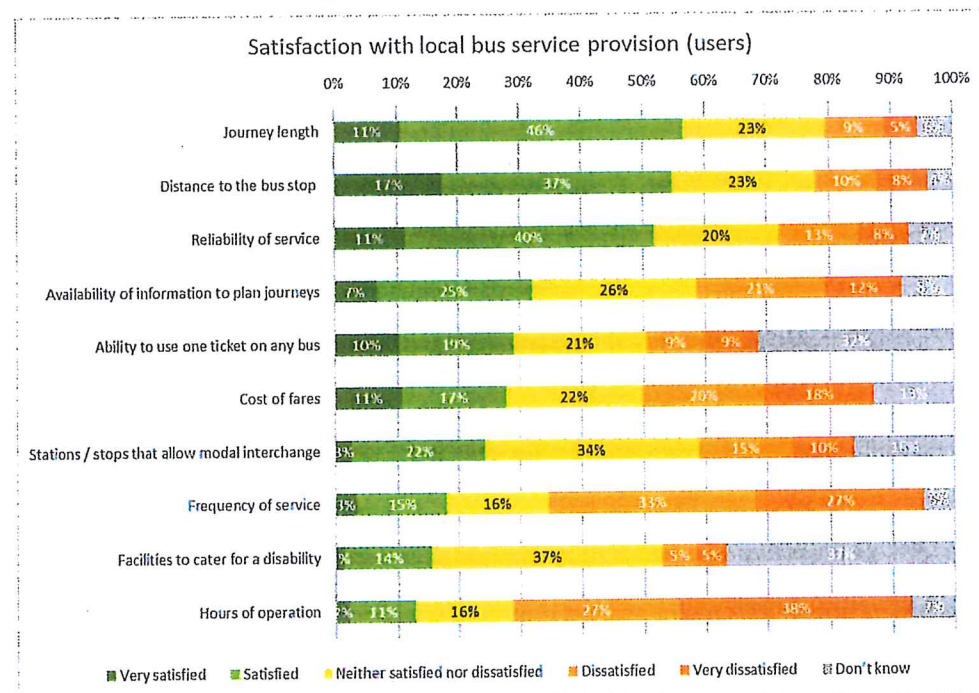


What do people think about buses in Herefordshire?

- 2.10 Herefordshire Council has carried out a number of public consultation exercises over the last few years, gauging opinion on bus and community transport services. Whilst providing useful insights, these have tended to focus on guiding future spending priorities on bus services, rather than transformational enhancements to the network. Therefore, in summer 2021, an on-line survey was undertaken to better understand people's views of the current bus network and what they considered should be the priority actions for inclusion in the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

- 2.11 Appendix A contains a summary of the public consultation.
- 2.12 The survey received 753 responses, mainly from residents and with a few from representatives of organisations. 32% of respondents were non-users of bus. 33% were regular bus users and 35% occasional users of bus. Overall, 25% of respondents expected that their journey patterns would change because of the pandemic.
- 2.13 Bus users were most satisfied with journey length, distance to the bus stop and service reliability. They were least satisfied with service frequency, facilities to cater for those with disabilities and hours of operation.
- 2.14 In terms of reasons for using the car rather than bus, similar patterns existed for both bus users and non-users. Most cited were the lack of available buses and the frequency of services.

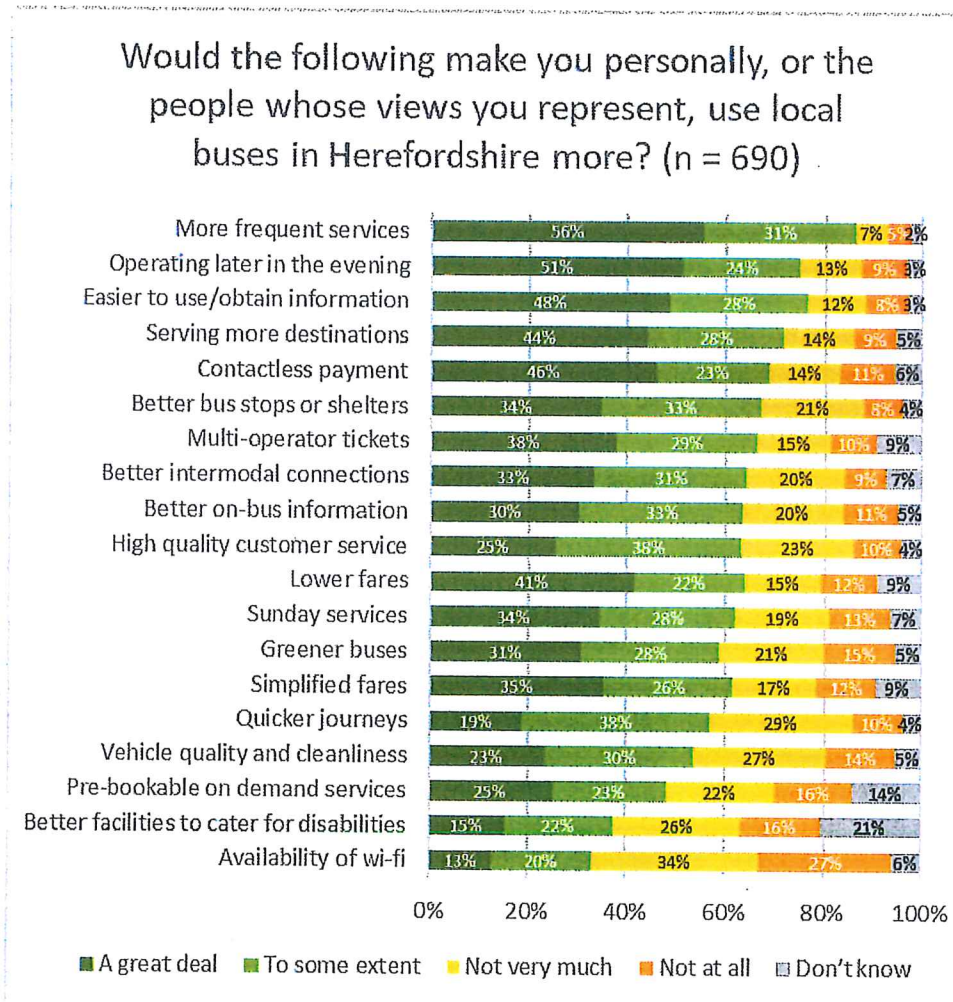
Figure 7 Bus users' satisfaction



2.15 When asked what they considered to be the priorities for the BSIP, the following were highlighted:

- More frequent services (87%)
- Evening services (75%)
- Information that is easier to obtain and use (76%)
- More destinations reached by bus (72%)

Figure 8 Views on which improvements would encourage bus use



2.16 In terms of fares and ticketing, the provision of a multi-operator ticket was considered more important than lower fares. Meanwhile, improved bus stops were mid-ranking and rated above better vehicles. The priorities expressed by users and non-users were aligned and expressed almost in the same order, as highlighted in Figure 9.

Figure 9 BSIP priorities for bus users and non-users

Bus users	Non-bus users
More frequent services (88%)	More frequent services (83%)
Information easier to find/use (79%)	Information easier to find/use (74%)
Contactless payment (78%)	Contactless payment (73%)
Serving more destinations (72%)	Serving more destinations (71%)
Multi-operator ticket (69%)	Operate later in evening (68%)
Operate later in evening (68%)	Multi-operator ticket (67%)

2.17 For businesses and groups, priorities were:

More frequent services (100%)

Information that is easier to obtain and use (100%)

Multi-operator ticketing (91%)

2.18 Two workshops were held to gauge the views and thoughts of elected members and wider stakeholder interests (business, Department of Work and Pensions, bus user representatives, community groups; disability groups). Both groups expressed a poor perception of the existing bus network, although bus users highlighted some positive points of services, including examples.

2.19 The main points to emerge were:

- Desire to see more consistent provision and improved frequencies on core routes (operating 07:00 – 22:00) and with a service 7 days per week
- Important to recognise the leisure/tourism potential of bus services
- More links between market towns, such as Kington – Leominster
- Concerns around the operation and image of City Bus Station
- Herefordshire Council should coordinate the provision of information

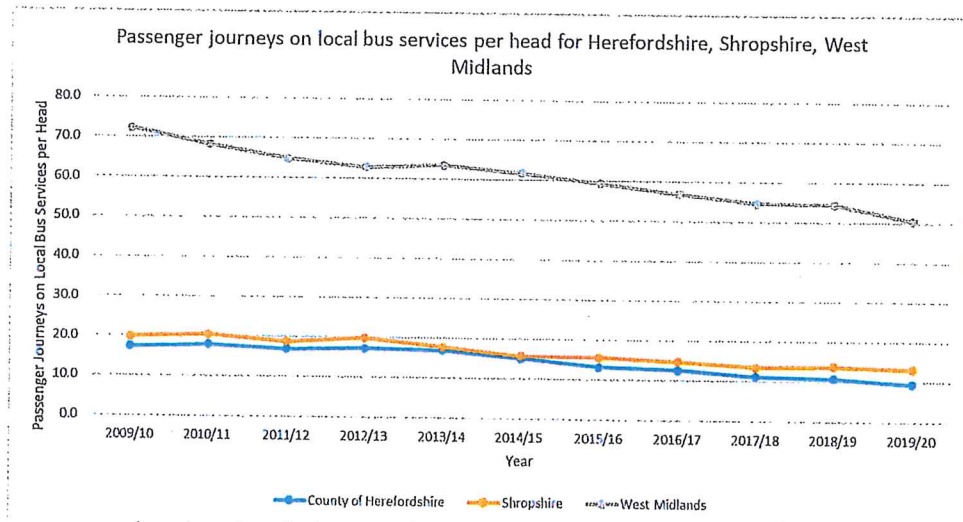
Current offer to passengers

The network

2.20 Just over 2 million passenger journeys were undertaken on local bus services in Herefordshire in 2018/19. The network has seen patronage decline over the past decade. Between 2009/10 and 2018/19, total local bus patronage fell by 35%. Concessionary travel use fell by 29%, suggesting that there has been a more significant fall in fare-paying passengers.

2.21 Between 2009/10 and 2019/20 passenger journeys per head of population fell by 46%, more than in neighbouring Shropshire (down 33.6%) and the West Midlands region (down 30.1%).

Figure 10 Passenger journeys on local services per head of population



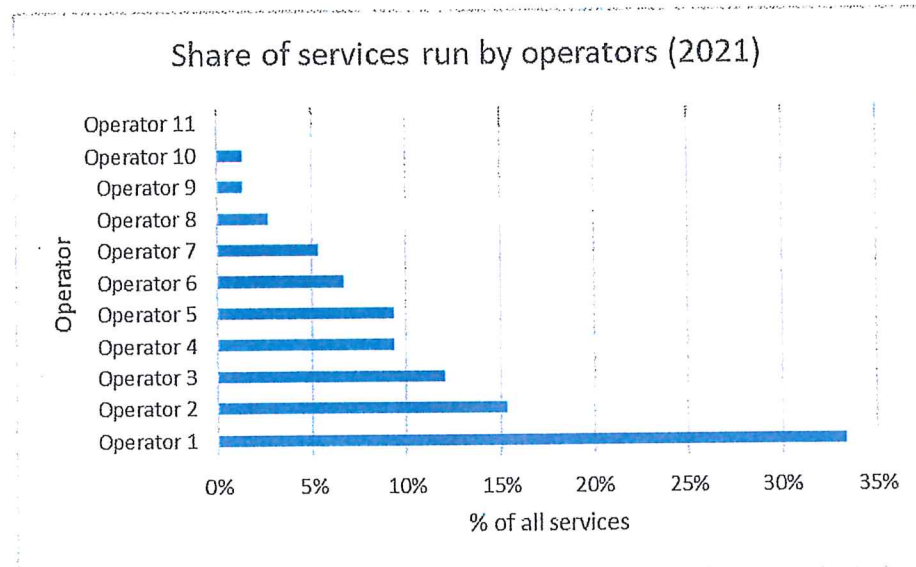
- 2.22 The bus network is focused on Hereford, with services radiating out to the market towns. These operate with varying frequencies, which are at best hourly. From those towns, some services continue into neighbouring areas, running on to Gloucester, Worcester and Ludlow. There are a number of services that cross into Wales, including the X3 to Cardiff and TrawsCymru T14 service via Hay-on-Wye to Brecon, Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff. There are also more local links to Llandrindod Wells and Monmouth.
- 2.23 There are a number of other rural bus services linking larger villages to Hereford. Across the county there are more occasional services, many only operating on certain days of the week, that provide links from rural hinterlands into the nearest market town or to Hereford.
- 2.24 Within Hereford itself is a network of local city bus services, linking the main residential areas to the city centre. These provide quite a complex pattern of loops and route variations and operate, with most offering a 30-minute frequency. The city network converges on the City Bus Station, whilst other bus services use the County Bus Station.
- 2.25 Several community transport operators offer a range of minibuss and volunteer car services to residents in each of their areas. Between them, the entire county is covered. These benefit people who either are unable to use conventional public transport services or those for whom no other service is available.
- 2.26 The bus network is shown in Figure 15, with more detailed local maps available on [our website](#).

Operators

- 2.27 Herefordshire's bus network is unique in being dominated by local independent companies. Eleven operators provide services. Whilst three of the large national

operators run services into Herefordshire, they have no base in the county and have a relatively small share of services.

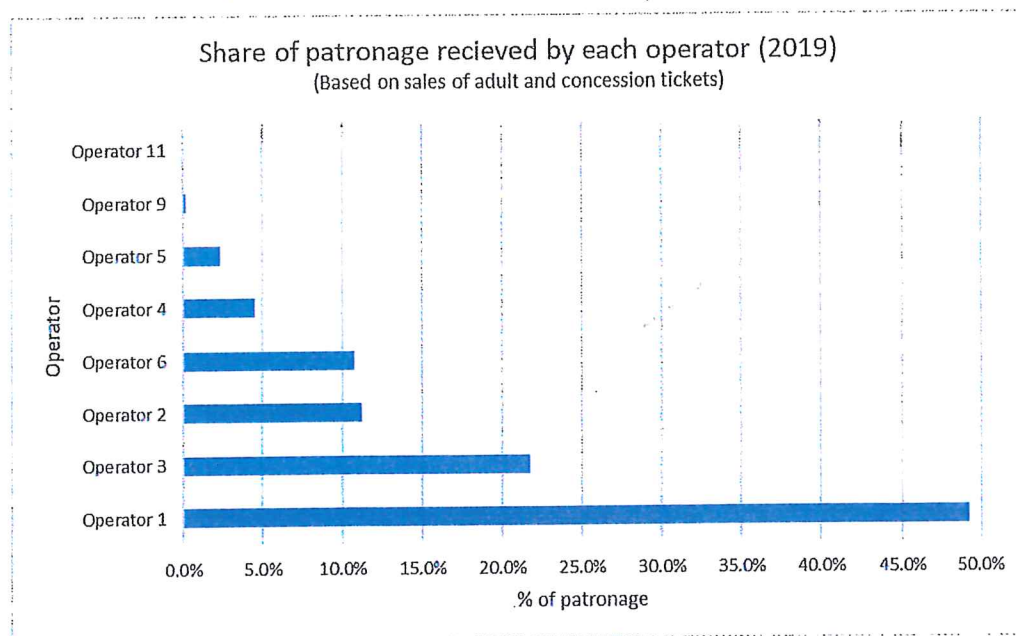
Figure 11 Share of services run by each operator



2.28 115 different registered local bus services operate, for at least some of their length, in the county. The largest operator provides a third of all registered services. The top five operators between them run just 75% of the registered services.

2.29 The largest operator accounts for a greater proportion of all patronage, an indication of the higher levels of usage on services in Hereford city.

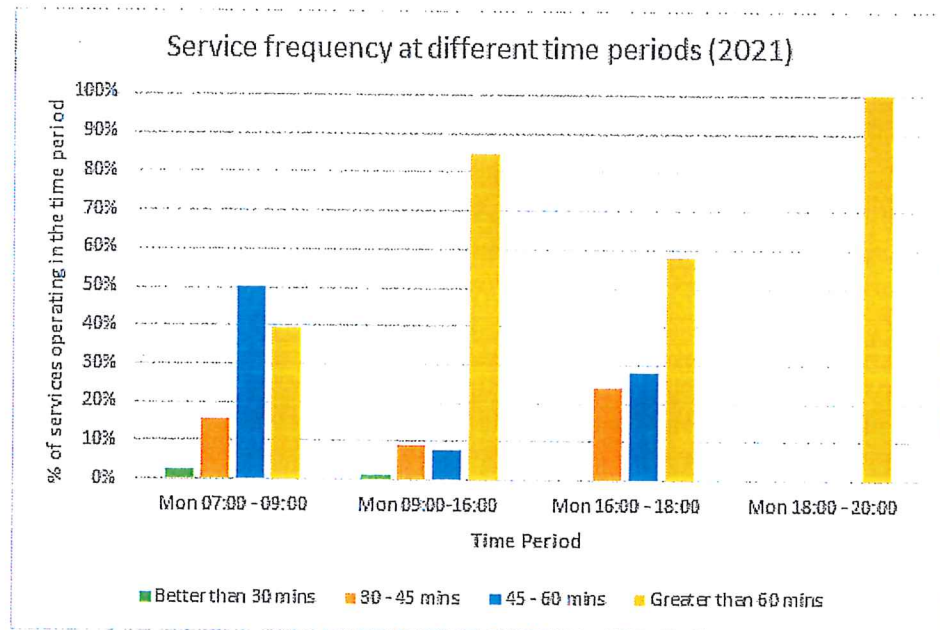
Figure 12 Share of patronage by each operator



Service Frequency

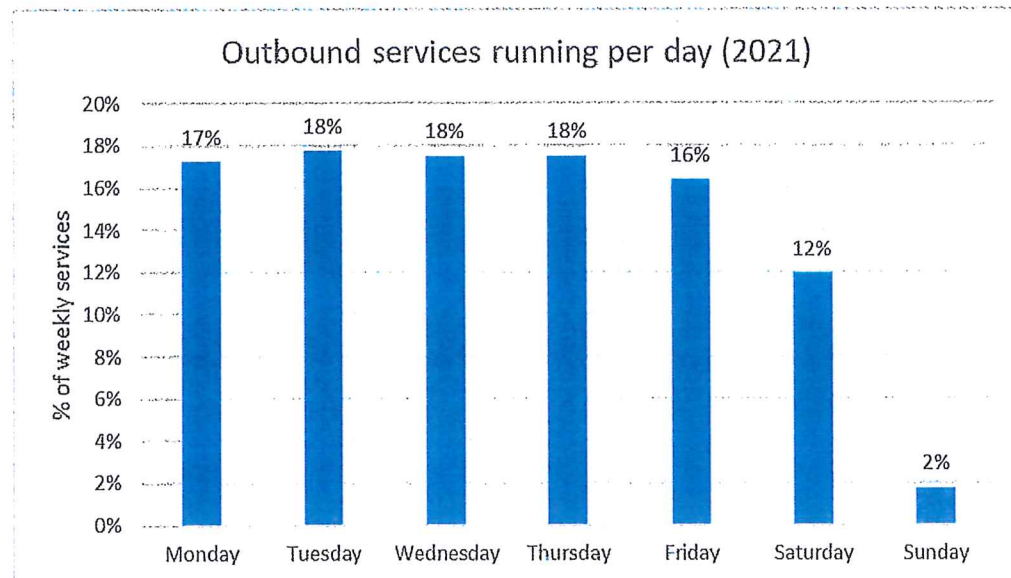
- 2.30 Much of the current bus network is designed around meeting the travel requirements of young people travelling to and from school and college. This results in journeys that fall out of regular service patterns. Equally, where buses carry large numbers of young people, it can deter other users.
- 2.31 The variability in service frequencies is shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 Service frequency at different time periods (2021)



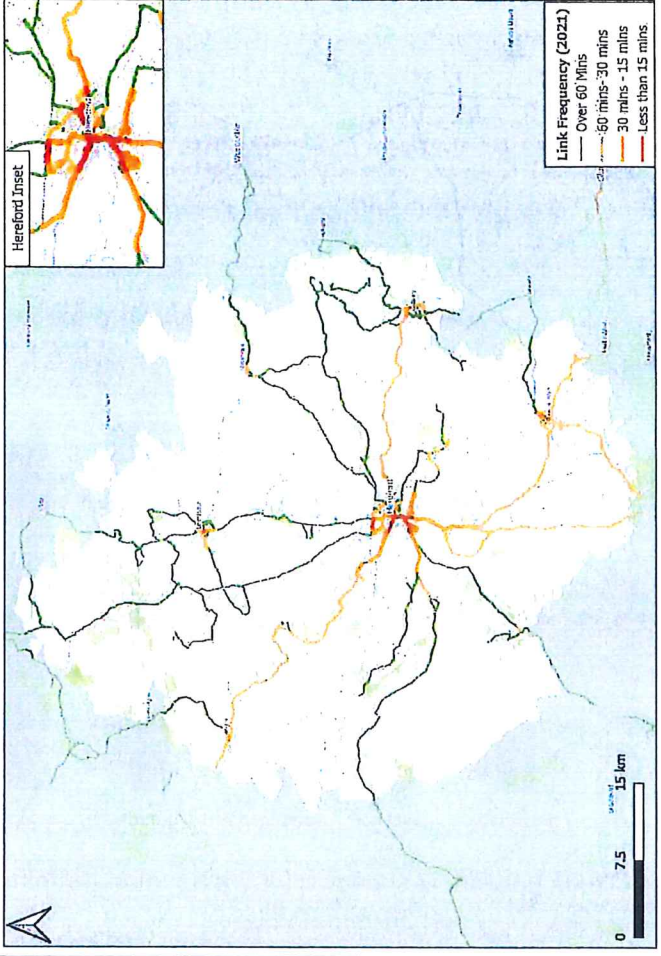
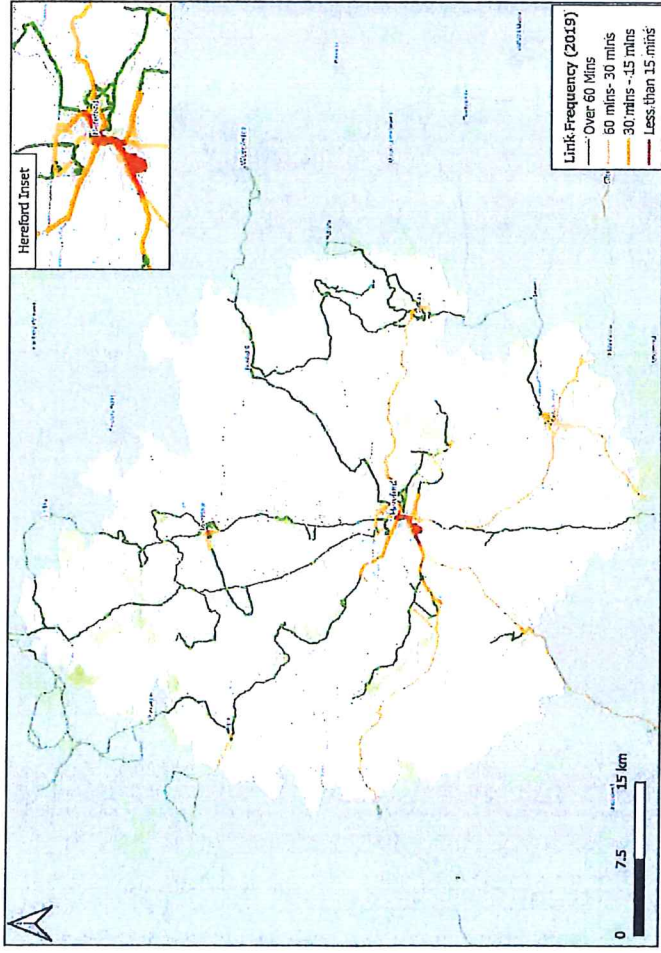
- 2.32 Levels of service also vary by day of the week, with less provision on Saturday than weekdays and significantly less on Sunday.

Figure 14 Outbound services running per day (2021)



2.33 The overall bus network is shown in Figure 15, along with maps showing the relative frequencies both now and pre-pandemic.

Figure 15 Herefordshire Bus Network Link Frequency 2019 and 2021



1593

14

Herefordshire Council Support

In 2020/21 the Council spent over £3.5 million supporting bus services in Herefordshire. £800,000 secured 13 contracts with operators, which account for more than a quarter of total patronage across the County. Over £1.2 million was spent reimbursing operators for carrying concessionary passholders. The remaining expenditure was on student passes, publicity, Covid-19 recovery and staffing costs

- 2.34 A team of 2 officers have prime responsibility for overseeing the support of the network, concessionary travel, information and liaising with operators.

The impact of Covid-19

- 2.35 Although there has been some uplift in service frequency on certain corridors between 2019 and autumn 2021 (notably the Hereford - Monmouth and Hereford - Kington routes), operators have not returned to full Pre-Covid levels on some services, due to caution surrounding demand.
- 2.36 Herefordshire Council is using Covid recovery funding to provide more Sunday buses and free weekend travel for a year (September 2021 – August 2022).

Free weekend bus travel scheme – September 2021

Free weekend travel on all bus journeys in Herefordshire was launched on 4th September 2021 as one of the council's Covid-19 recovery schemes. The initiative has been positively received by bus operators and the public.

In the first full month since launch, there has been a positive effect on the numbers of passengers traveling by bus to Hereford and the market towns.

In addition to free weekend travel, several new Sunday bus services have been introduced to maximise the opportunities for weekend travel.

Highlights for September 2021

- Introduction of 8 new Sunday services, in addition to the 6 existing)
- 14,004 free bus journeys were made
- A further 7,153 weekend journeys were made by concession holders
- Patronage grew by 32% from the first weekend of the month to the last
- Patronage on Saturdays increased by 993 journeys (26%)
- Patronage on Sundays increased by 473 journeys (72%)
- Taking Covid-19 recovery scheme journeys in isolation, patronage grew by 1288 journeys (46%) over the month, with Saturdays increasing by 862 journeys (39%), and Sundays by 426 journeys (78%)
- 1227 journeys were made on the 8 new Sunday services

Network density

Much of the population does not have access to a frequent service. Based on 2021 service level, 43% of the county's population had access to at least an hourly bus service (measured during the morning peak). This reduced to just 8% that could access services with frequencies of 30 minutes or better, with these residents living exclusively in Hereford city.

- 2.37 Service frequency falls after 18:00, and there are no services operating after 20:00. Sunday service frequency is also low, with only five services operating, each with a frequency of less than hourly.

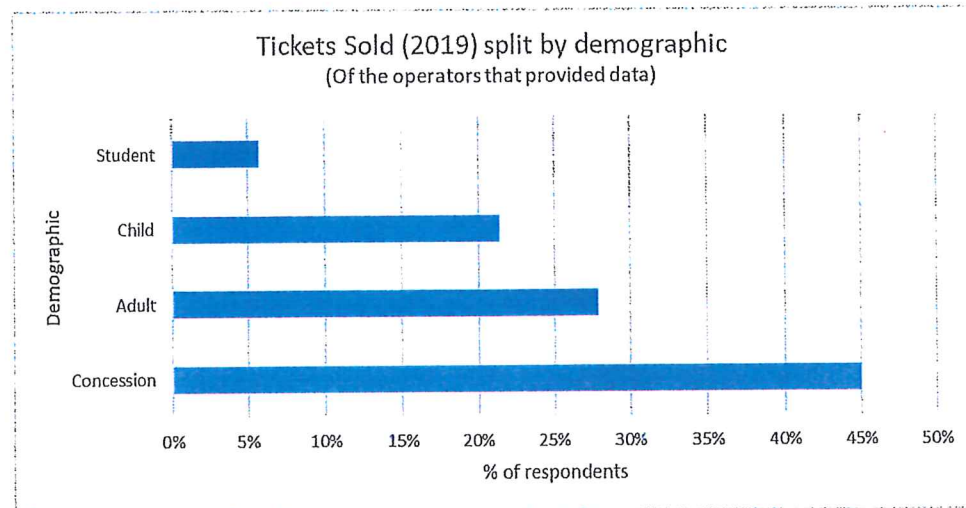
Table 1 Proportion of population with access to different levels of service

Service frequency	% of population within 400m of a service	% of population within 400m of a service	% of population within 400m of a service	% of population within 400m of a service
	Monday (07:00 - 09:00)	Monday (after 18:00)	Monday (after 20:00)	Sunday daytime
Less than 30mins	8%	No services	No services	No services
30 mins - 60 mins	43%	No services	No services	No services
All Services	56%	40%	No services	25%

- 2.38 There are over 1800 bus stops across Herefordshire, approximately one for every 104 residents. This compares to one bus stop per 101 residents in Shropshire, 133 residents in Worcestershire and 90 in Gloucestershire.

Users

- 2.39 Between 2009/10 and 2018/19, total local bus patronage fell by 35%. Concession use fell by 29%, suggesting that there was a more significant fall in fare-paying passengers.
- 2.40 The network is failing to attract fare paying adults. The largest single user group on the network in Herefordshire in 2019 was concessionary fare pass holders, making up approximately 45% of tickets sold (of operators that provided data). Full fare paying adults represent 28% of tickets sold whilst the remaining share was made up of children and student tickets.



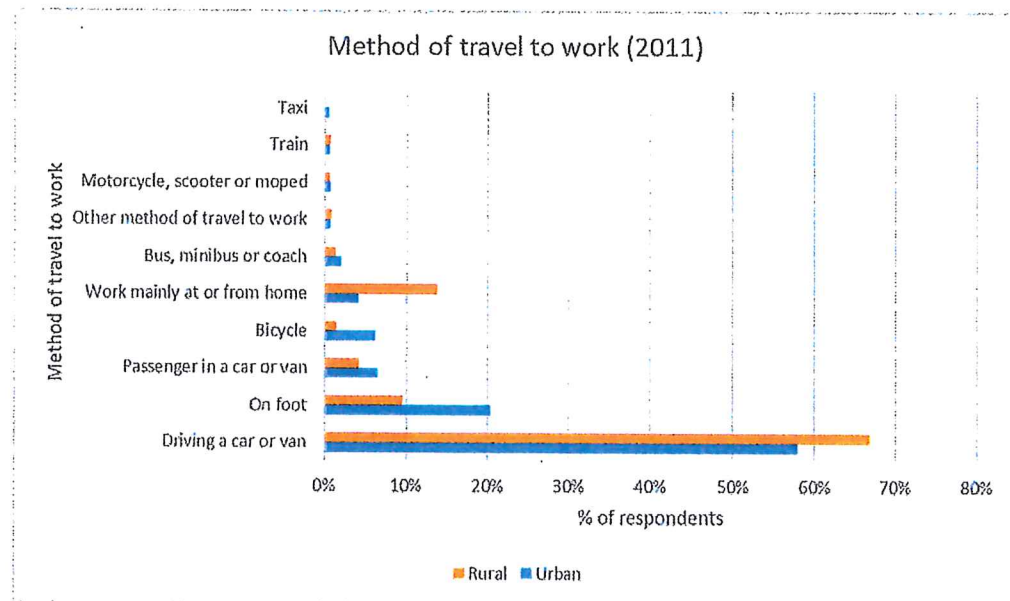
Ticketing and patronage data was provided from five operators. To obtain a more holistic view, concessionary fare returns were used to determine patronage on routes where data was not available. Action is underway to obtain data from the remaining operators, some of which do not hold the technology or expertise to provide the full range of data requested for the BSIP.

Modal share

- 2.41 With high car ownership, much of the population relies on the car as the main form of transport. The most recent available modal share statistics are from the 2011 Census, at a time when bus passenger journeys were 44% higher than in 2019/20.
- 2.42 In 2011, 62% of all journeys to work were by car and just 1.5% by bus (1% in rural areas, 2% in urban areas). 85% of households had a car, compared to 74% for England as a whole. The decline in bus patronage is likely to have increased the modal share towards car further, and when data is made available from the 2021 census, full analysis will be undertaken.

14.

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Reliability

- 2.43 High car use is one factor that contributes to poor network reliability, particularly in Hereford. Bus reliability and punctuality are key concerns for the operators. Over time, timetabled journey times have increased to manage falls in reliability, affecting service frequency, service regularity and operating costs. In Herefordshire, the percentage of non-frequent bus services running on time has decreased from 92% in 2015/16 to 78% in 2018/19¹.
- 2.44 Leading to longer journey times and unreliable journeys, congestion directly increases operating costs, therefore potential capital for investment in service improvements and better levels of services is lost by operators having to maintain headways.

Pinch Points

Bus vehicle speed and congestion by route and by time of day – using GPS vehicle data from operators was not possible as the operators in Herefordshire do not have the technology to collect this data at present. Instead, consultation has been undertaken with operators to identify pinch points, with supplementary secondary analysis undertaken to inform the BSIP goals.

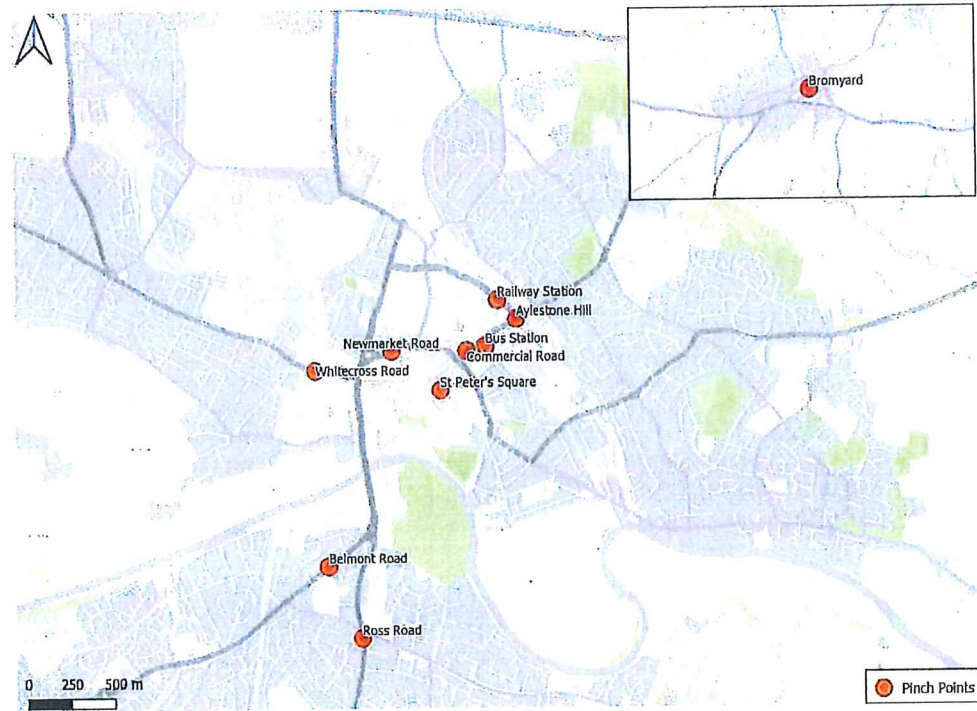
- 2.45 Operators were asked to identify sections of road and junctions where delays to their services occurred. Central Hereford is the main area for delays at locations including:
- Entry to the City and Country Bus Stations.
 - Major roads into the city, including Belmont Road, Whitecross Road, Commercial Road and Aylestone Hill.

¹ DfT stats Table BUS0902 - Non-frequent bus services running on time¹ by local authority: England, annual from 2004/05

- Newmarket Road (a key link between major roads in the city).
- St Peter's Square (a narrow road located in the historic city centre).

2.46 Only one location outside of Hereford was identified, which was in Bromyard (Broad Street into Pump Street). The locations of pinch points identified is shown in Figure 17.

Figure 16 Pinch points in Herefordshire identified by operators



2.47 Operators were also asked about desirable interventions at these pinch points. Bus priority at junctions and bus lanes were considered to offer the best solutions.

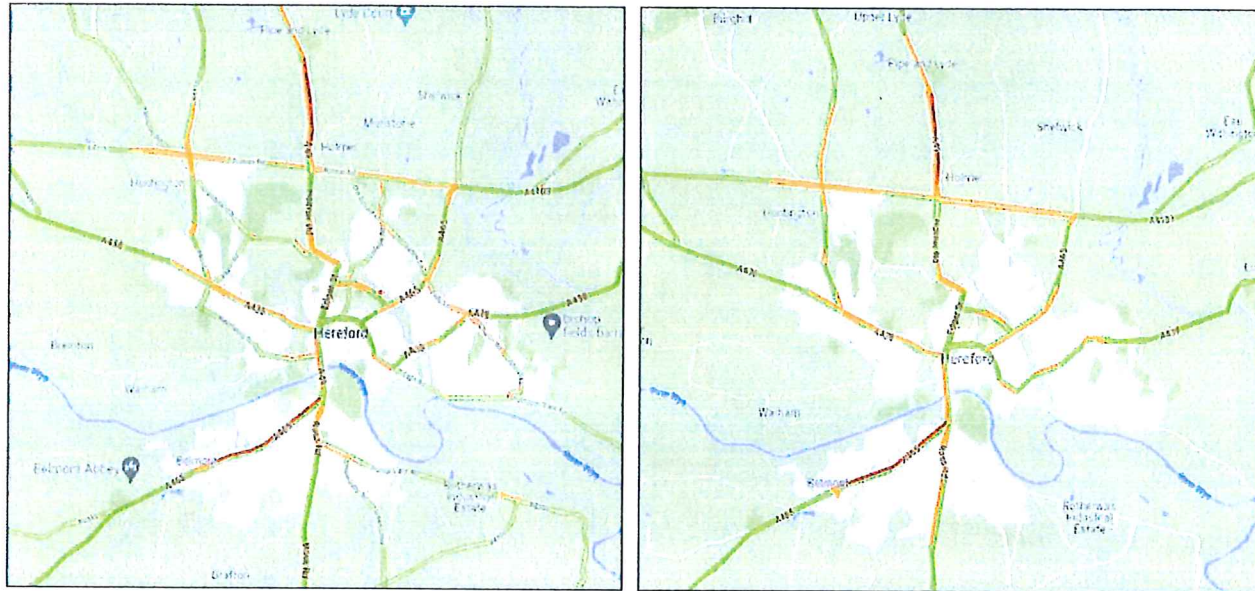
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Congestion

Traffic levels and a lack of priority are the cause of the problems at the identified pinch points. The maps below show typical congestion in Hereford city according to the Google Maps predictive model at 08:00 (left) and 17:00 (right). Virtually all major roads in the city are congested at these times, delaying buses and reducing the competitiveness of the bus compared to private vehicles.

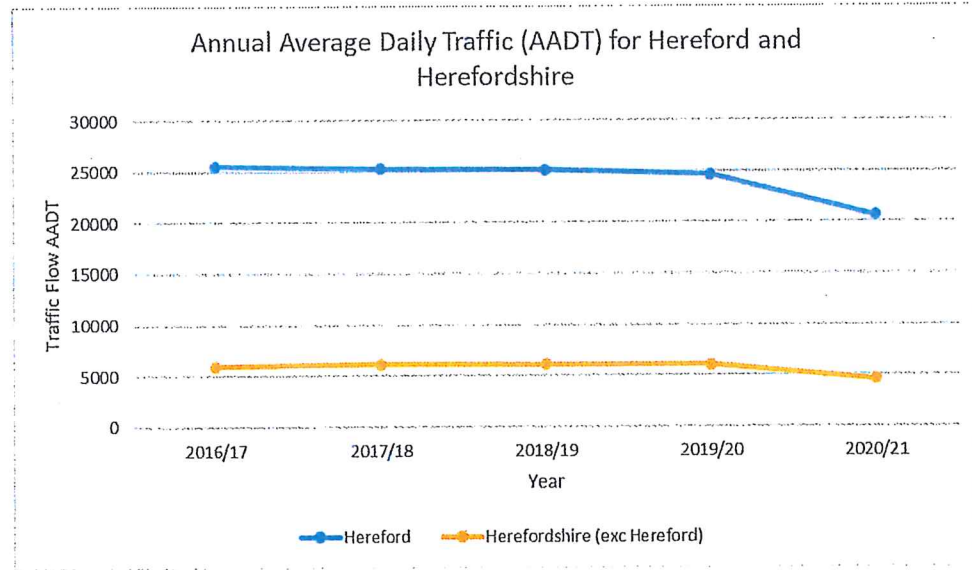
Figure 17 Typical congestion in Hereford city in the am (left) and pm (right)

Source - Google Maps, 2021



2.48 Overall Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in Hereford fell by 1.6% between 2016/17 and 2019/20.² During the same period for Herefordshire county (excluding Hereford), AADT rose by 1.3%.

2.49 During the Covid-19 pandemic, traffic levels fell across Hereford and Herefordshire, offering an opportunity to 'lock in' improvements to bus priority and promote a sustained decrease in traffic in the years ahead.



Existing bus priority

2.50 Delays caused by congestion are exacerbated by the lack of bus priority. There is only one bus lane in Herefordshire currently, with an approximate length of 15m (pictured). Otherwise, there are no specific bus priority measures, with buses left to queue with other general traffic.



Bus vehicle speed and journey times

2.51 Congestion in Hereford slows down vehicle speeds and impacts on bus journey times. In the absence of location or service-specific speed and journey time information, basic analysis has been undertaken using the timetabled journey time for the 33

² The last full year without the pandemic influencing traffic levels

14 - 17
24
1600

services that operate in Hereford city for at least part of their journey. This analysis indicated that:

- End-to-end average speed of services in the morning peak is 14.7mph (23.7 km/h)
- End-to-end average speed of services between the peaks is 15.5mph (25km/h).

2.52 Almost 65% of services have timetabled speeds slower in the morning peak than between the peaks, indicating the impact of congestion.

Information, branding and ticketing

2.53 There is no central or integrated system for information, branding and ticketing in Herefordshire, and therefore, no consistency for customers. Users and Non-Users considered this their second most common priority for improvement.

Information

2.54 Information is provided through separate sources, with no central point available online where a person can access information for the entire network. Although operators make best efforts to ensure information is available to their passengers, some operators lack resource or skills to develop information provision in accessible and user-friendly formats.

2.55 A summary of information available through different sources is provided below.

Table 2 Summary of available bus information

Source of information	Availability
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each operator has a website where timetable information from their services can be accessed. • Fares information can be accessed via websites for only one operator • Herefordshire Council uploads data files to Traveline.info, where timetable information can be obtained.
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each operator has an individual Facebook page. Timetable changes and other urgent information such as road closures are given on these sites. • Some operators have other social media such as Instagram or Twitter. • A central twitter site 'Hereford Buses' provides updates on bus travel for all services in the county.

Apps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only the national operators, Stagecoach and First, provide individual apps where passengers can access information and buy tickets.
Real-Time Passenger Information (RTPI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RTPI screens are provided at main stops in Hereford city centre, with QR codes provided at other bus stops so passengers can access this information. Herefordshire Council uploads the relevant data files to support this service.
Roadside information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herefordshire Council funds the provision of timetables and publicity at stops and shelters.
Paper timetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each operator produces individual paper timetables. There is no central resource available for all timetables.

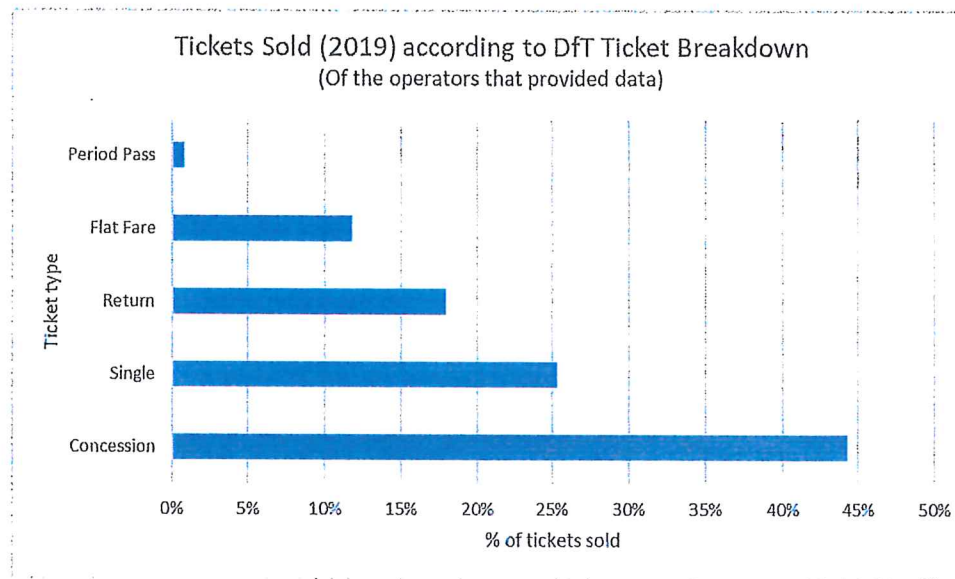
Branding

- 2.56 Aside from bus stop signage, which is managed by the council and is consistent, all branding is undertaken by operators, meaning there is no one brand for bus services in Herefordshire.

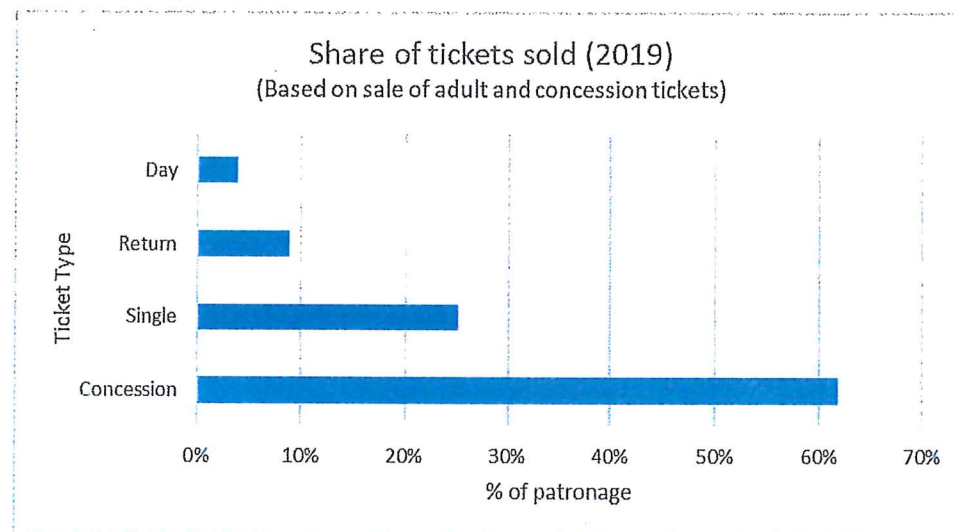
Tickets

- 2.57 There is no multi-operator ticketing agreement in Herefordshire, with each operator offering its own range of singles, returns, daily, weekly and monthly tickets. Multi-operator tickets were cited by residents as one of the top 5 reasons that would encourage bus use.
- 2.58 Analysis of ticket sales, split according to the breakdown specified by the DfT, was undertaken. This breakdown was only possible for the operators that provided full set of data; therefore, it does not represent all journeys.
- 2.59 Concessionary fares accounted for the greatest proportion of ticket sales in 2019 (44%), followed by singles (25%), and then returns (17%).

1. 2. 3.



Alternative data was taken from the forms submitted by operators for concessionary travel reimbursement. This gives a split of ticket types for all services.



In terms of payment, operators were not able to provide data about the split of electronic and cash payments. Card and contactless payment is available on all buses apart from those of one operator. By the end of 2021, all operators will offer contactless payment methods.

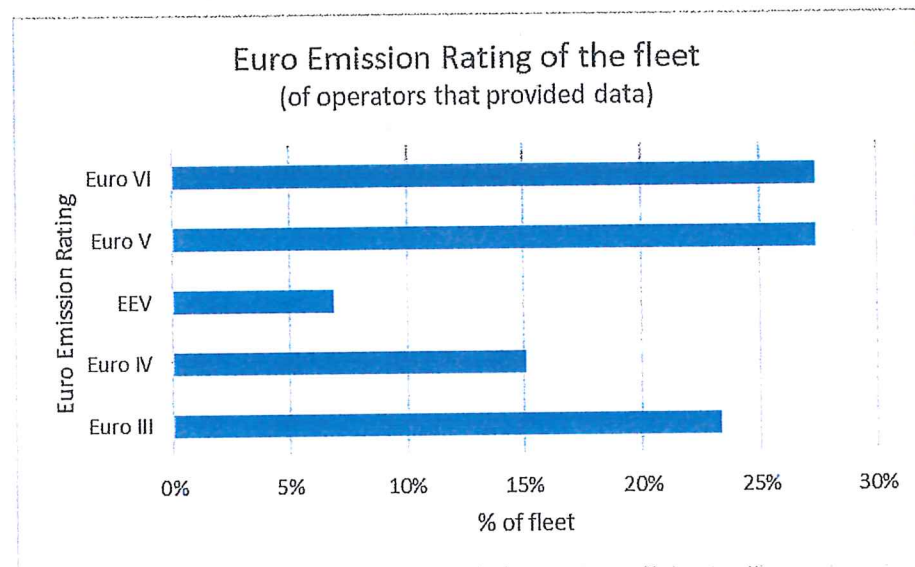
The split of electronic and cash payments was not possible to obtain from operators. The project team will work to obtain this data as soon as possible.

Decarbonisation and support

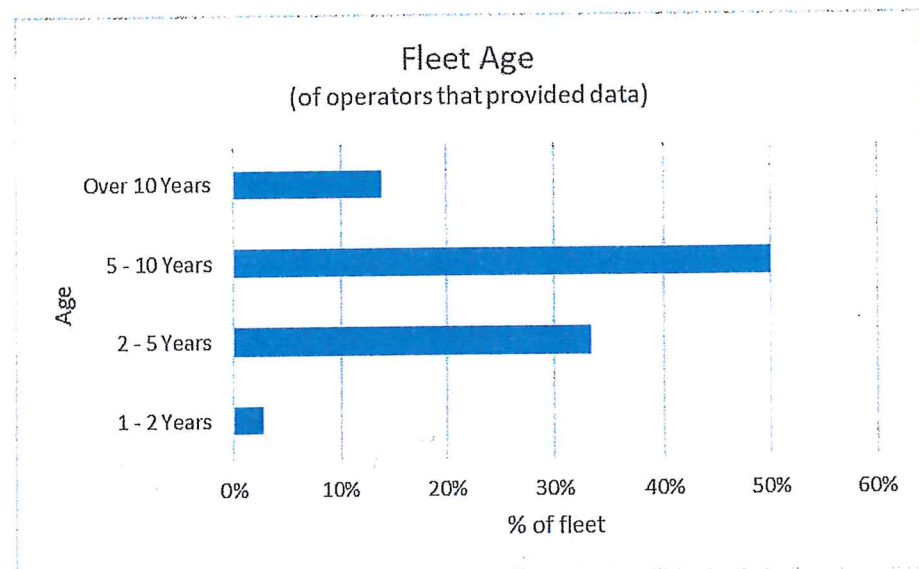
- 2.60 Herefordshire declared a climate emergency in 2019, which committed the authority to become climate neutral by 2030/1 and reduce carbon emissions by 75% by 2025/6.

2.61 Transport is estimated to contribute 36% of emissions in Herefordshire and whilst the bus network offers a low-carbon alternative to driving, the bus fleet itself contributes to local air pollution and CO₂ emissions.

2.62 Fleet information was provided by five operators. Whilst 27% of the fleet met the highest standard, Euro VI, nearly 40% of vehicles meet only Euro III and IV emission standards.



2.63 The lower standards for emissions reflect the age profile of the fleet. Almost 50% of the fleet is aged between 5 and 10 years, with less than 5% of the fleet less than 2 years old.



Fleet data was not provided by certain operators. The project team will seek to obtain this data.

Public transport and local policy

Herefordshire County Plan 2020-2024

"Respecting our past, shaping our future – we will improve the sustainability, connectivity and wellbeing of our county by strengthening our communities, creating a thriving local economy and protecting and enhancing our environment."

Ambition for Herefordshire to be "an exemplar of 21st Century rural living where market towns and rural communities are properly valued and recognised for the contributions they make to the success of the county"

2.64 The Council's ambitions for the role public transport can play in reducing congestion and carbon emissions, and contribute to enhanced wellbeing, is recognised in the County Plan:

"We will enable more healthy low carbon travel options, including walking, public transport and cycling, to reduce congestion, improve local air quality and enhance health and wellbeing."

2.65 The plan is supported by the ambition to improve and extend active travel options throughout the county. Capital schemes are already progressing, which will support public transport and integration, including the Transport Hub project at Hereford rail station and public realm improvements that will consider improved access to rural and city-based services in Hereford.

2.66 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2016-31 centres on a transport network that supports growth, enables development and provides safe conditions for active travel. Its 5 objectives are to:

- Enable economic growth
- Provide a good quality transport network for all
- Promote healthy lifestyles
- Make journeys safer, easier and healthier
- Ensure access to services for those living in rural area

2.67 The role of public transport was assessed and developed through the Hereford Transport Strategy Review, 2020. Whilst the review focused on the Hereford urban area, it identified a series of priorities for public transport that impact the wider network and have been taken into account in the development of this BSIP. These include increased frequency and hours of operation of services, bus priority to increase the efficiency and attractiveness of services, electrification of the fleet and greater provision for school access. Further development work will be undertaken on these proposals during 2021/22.

2.68 The wider transport strategy recognises the importance of demand management for car-based travel (focusing primarily on parking charges and supply) in combination with positive measures to support bus use and active travel modes. The strategy and proposals are being developed further as part of a master plan for the city which will ensure coordination with land use planning proposals (the council is currently updating its adopted local plan), economic development strategy (the council is developing the Big Plan 2050 which will set out the strategy for long term economic growth and the Pathway to Carbon Neutral, the carbon management plan 2020-26.

2.69 The important role improved bus services and better integration with rail could play in supporting tourism is reflected in the priorities of the [Herefordshire Sustainable Destination Management Plan 2018-22](#). This includes an action to encourage sustainable accessibility under the key priority to Grow Herefordshire as a Visitor Destination. This is further supported by the County Plan 2020-2024 that includes ambitions to:

- Protect and promote our heritage, culture and natural beauty to enhance quality of life and support tourism

Performance of Herefordshire's current bus network against the ambitions of the National Bus Strategy and Herefordshire BSIP

National Bus Strategy ambition	Herefordshire BSIP Ambition	Herefordshire BSIP Workstream	Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>More frequent</p> <p>More comprehensive</p> <p>Better integrated</p>	<p>Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive, coordinated bus network • Service hierarchy • Regular, clockface times • Evening and Sunday services • Commercially viable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued financial support from HC for bus services • Good cross-boundary services to key destinations • Additional Sunday services provided with Covid recovery funding • Bus operators locally based and focused • HEZ support for service 78X • Stakeholder/member support for network enhancements • Planned growth could increase demand • Potential to convert car journeys in Hereford to bus • Hereford Transport Strategy Review (HTSR) supportive of public transport initiatives and DRT development • Policies and strategies support sustainable travel modes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small overall and sparse population • High car ownership • Decreasing bus usage • Local bus operation is not the only focus for operators • Fragmented and inconsistent levels of service network • Irregular timetables • Uncoordinated headways • Lack of evening bus services • Operators struggling to find drivers • Cross-boundary services are the responsibility of multiple authorities and so at risk of changes in funding • Pressures on revenue funding have led to reduced financial support • Network highly dependent on concession use, which is slowest to return post-pandemic

National Bus Strategy ambition	Herefordshire BSIP Ambition	Herefordshire BSIP Workstream	Strengths	Weaknesses
Faster and more reliable	Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable, unhindered operation of buses Shorter journey times for passengers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus priority and dealing with school run traffic are work packages to emerge from the HTSR, with feasibility work underway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congestion in Hereford city Congestion resulting in weakened peak running time and frequency Worsening situation with planned growth Little road space to improve bus without worsening car
Cheaper	Fares and ticketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy to use/understand single system More affordable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free weekend travel being provided with Covid recovery funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comprehensive ticketing (multi-operator) across the network Fares viewed as expensive and not value for money Few off-bus/mobile options within current operator resources Mixed technology/hardware
Easy ticketing More understandable	Information and branding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Umbrella branding Centralised information provision Different media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HC produces county and city bus map HC maintains information at bus stops Real time information at city centre stops Pre-Covid operators adhered to a Code of Service Stability with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of comprehensive information provision Variable provision of information by different operators Uncoordinated route numbering Uncoordinated service change dates at present (during covid)

1608

National Bus Strategy ambition	Herefordshire BSIP Ambition	Herefordshire BSIP Workstream	Strengths	Weaknesses
Better to ride (comfortable; safe; accessible)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrification of fleet • Better buses • Passenger charter • Accessible/inclusive • Waiting infrastructure improvements 	<p>Changes on 4 fixed dates in the year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hereford City Council's Hereford Zipper electric bus trial, secured funding through Stronger Towns Fund • New interchange being developed at Hereford Railway Station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of investment in vehicles and infrastructure • Variable quality of passenger waiting infrastructure • City Bus Station inadequate • Two bus stations with limited connectivity and interchange opportunity
Greener	Decarbonisation and support			

1609

3. Targets

3.1 The core targets for measuring the success of the BSIP are set out below, and supported in more detail by the table provided in Annex B.

Table 3 Core targets for measuring the success of the BSIP

Targets	Description	2018/19	2019/20	Targets for 2024/25
Journey time	Average bus speed (am peak)	-	14.7mph	5% increase in bus speed
Reliability	Non-frequent bus services running on time (within 1min early, 5mins late)	78%	79%	86%
Passenger numbers	Total passenger journeys on the whole bus network	2.05 million	1.79 million	2.4million
Average passenger satisfaction	% of surveyed users who we dissatisfied with elements of the current networks	-	34%	27%

3.2 At present the availability of data is limited, especially regarding bus operation and passenger satisfaction. As data provision improves, through the Bus Open Data Service, it will be necessary to reset some of the targets. Going forward, the above targets will be refined and measured using the following approaches:

- **Passenger satisfaction** will be measured through participation in the Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey, allowing comparisons with other areas. Five specific areas of satisfaction will be measured and targets developed:
 - Overall passenger satisfaction with bus journey
 - Satisfaction with value for money
 - Satisfaction with bus punctuality
 - Satisfaction with on-bus journey time
 - Satisfaction with bus information
- **Passenger growth** will be measured by reviewing operator patronage data on a route-by-route basis, which is currently submitted to the Local Transport Authorities as part of their returns to the DfT. Growth will be monitored on an area

and corridor basis to understand the impact of specific BSIP measures, which will be used to inform the development of the BSIP in future years.

- **Reliability** will be measured by monitoring non-frequent bus services running on time, as submitted to DfT, and supported by local surveys. BODS data will be utilised to measure services running on time. Reliability will be monitored on an area and corridor basis to understand the impact of specific BSIP measures, which will be used to inform the development of the BSIP targets in future years.
- **Journey time.** Average speed has been estimated using the timetabled journey time for the 33 services that operate in Hereford city for at least part of their journey. Going forward it will be measured using a combination of timetable information and data supplied through BODs. Journey time will be monitored on an area and corridor basis to understand the impact of specific BSIP measures, which will be used to inform the development of the BSIP targets in future years. In addition to this

Supporting monitoring, targets and evaluation

- 3.3 In addition to measuring the above, a number of other measures will be monitored, and targets set, to help steer BSIP implementation. It will be important to monitor the impact of specific interventions, in order to learn from experience and adapt to maximise success.

Journey time improvements

- Ratio of bus journey time compared to car journey time for the core network

Passenger growth

- Number of passenger journeys by bus per head of population
- % of passenger journeys made by concessionary travel holders
- % of passenger journeys made by fare-paying passengers
- % of total passengers boarding after 19:00 Monday – Saturday
- % of total passengers boarding on Sundays

Network improvements

- Proportion of Hereford city population within 400m of a bus service operating at least every 15 minutes (M-S daytime)
- Proportion of Herefordshire population within 400m of at least an hourly bus service (M-S daytime)
- Proportion of Herefordshire population within 400m of at least a half hourly bus service (M-S daytime)

- Proportion of Herefordshire population within 400m with an evening service
- Proportion of Herefordshire population within 400m with a Sunday service

Infrastructure

- Number of bus stops upgraded each year
- Number of bus shelters upgraded each year
- Number of Park and Choose sites connected directly to the bus network

De-carbonisation

- % of overall fleet that is zero emission and/or ultra-low emission
- Of diesel fleet, the % of fleet that is Euro VI or better

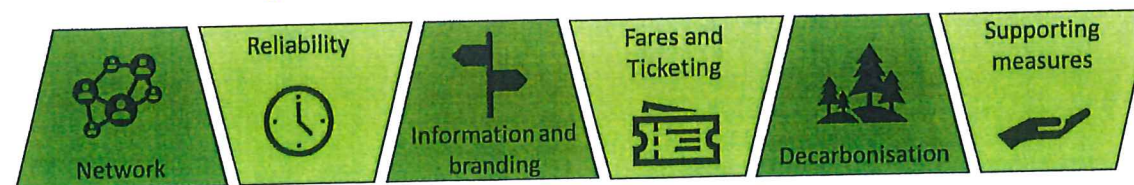
4. Delivery

4.1 The ambition is for buses to play a significant role in meeting travel needs, contributing to the council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions and reduce dependence on cars, having a positive impact on the lives and wellbeing of those who use them and making a positive contribution to the county's economy and environment. The County Plan sets out a vision for Herefordshire to be an exemplar for rural living. The BSIP sets out a similar vision for the county to have an exemplar public transport network. The council is keen to work with government and explore the opportunity to demonstrate the potential to transform passenger transport in a rural area with a county town that suffers from similar challenges to larger urban areas, including congestion and poor air quality.

How do we get there?

4.2 This section sets out the measures and projects that will be developed through the life of the BSIP, with the goal to establish a firm foundation for the Herefordshire bus network on which to build. Developed around the National Bus Strategy objectives, and local objectives that have been determined through local engagement with operators, the public and key stakeholders, the BSIP focuses developing the 'cornerstones' of the network:

Figure 18 Herefordshire's BSIP Cornerstones



The Network

Table 4 Summary of the ambition and measures relating to the network

The Network
<p>Why it is important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The current network is historic and has been adapted to meet different needs to as viability and funding have declined. It is no longer fit for purpose and needs recasting.• From the public survey, for both users and non-users, the areas of least satisfaction were the hours of operation and frequency of bus services.• The most cited reason for using the car instead of bus was the lack of availability of suitable bus services and the inadequate frequency of services.• The top two priorities that would encourage people to use the bus more were more frequent services and provision of evening services.• Operators agree with the need to develop a consistent and simple network for users.• Bus users predominantly use bus services for shopping and recreational purposes, infrequently and off-peak. There is a need to develop the network to be more attractive to those accessing employment and education, as well as social/leisure in the evening.• Significant shortages of PSV drivers in Herefordshire means that any proposed changes that lead to expansion of service provision will have to be preceded by measures to encourage and train new drivers.• Long term impact of the pandemic, marginal network profitability and a base of smaller local operators means that opportunities to develop the network commercially are seen as high-risk and unattractive without support.
<p>The ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An integrated, comprehensive network that will encourage modal shift and reduce car usage.• Service hierarchy, with minimum standards, that is clearly defined and easy to understand.• Regular, clockface timetables.• Evening and Sunday services that mirror the day-time core network, at appropriate frequencies.• Services that are increasingly commercially viable.

Herefordshire's exemplar network

A review of the entire bus network will be undertaken and then planned from scratch with the operators. There will be two main elements to the network development. Firstly, enhancements to the 'core' network. In the city, a number of main services will be increased to 15-minute frequencies, and evening and Sunday buses offered. On the core county services, between the market towns and Hereford, routes will be made as direct as possible, frequencies increased to every 30 minutes, and again evening and Sunday journeys provided. Where appropriate, interchange hubs will be developed on the core routes to facilitate connections with other services.

In parallel, improvements will be made to the supporting network. This will include other city services and links connecting market towns and villages. These will be less frequent than core services (30 minutes in Hereford and local town services in the market towns; and hourly elsewhere), but still offering regular headways. Supporting services will include a mix of timetabled and demand responsive services. As well as providing local links, these will be routed and timed to provide connections with core services, either in the market towns or at intermediate interchange hubs, with through ticketing available.

What is already being done:

- Herefordshire Council's strategic change to a pro-public transport policy.
- Herefordshire Council continues to financially support many local bus services at a cost of £800,000 p.a.
- Covid recovery funding is being used to provide additional Sunday buses and free weekend travel for all for journeys within Herefordshire for a year (September 2021 – August 2022).
- School and college transport arrangements are integrated into the local bus network, supporting current levels of provision.
- HTSR supported the concept of DRT and some outline feasibility work is underway.

Projects and schemes			
No.	BSIP Measure	Description	Timescale
1.	Network review and resourcing	<p>The current network has evolved incrementally over a number of years, often responding to reduced subsidy or commercial pressures and falling revenues. This has resulted in fragmented services and inconsistencies between different geographies. A comprehensive review is required, having regard to the current commercial and subsidised services with a view to identifying a holistic network which meets the aspirations of users and ambitions of the council. The review will be holistic and consider not just the existing and potential public transport network, but opportunities for further integration of travel and movement in, around and out of Herefordshire. It will involve network planning, operator and stakeholder consultation (including neighbouring authorities), and consider delivery and procurement, being built around Herefordshire's vision for an exemplar network of integrated core, supporting and DRT services.</p> <p>Delivery of the new network will begin in 2022/23, with the review quickly identifying 'early wins' for funding and service improvements to be introduced on the network, including opportunity for increased daytime frequencies, evening, and Sunday journeys. Although the main focus in these early stages will be the core network, opportunity to develop both the supporting network and DRT in the first year of funding will be considered.</p> <p>At the same time, internal resource to manage and co-ordinate the network review, co-ordinate the expanded bus network and DRT, and deliver the wider ambitions of the BSIP will be required. This will take the form of a new <i>Network Manager</i> position, and a junior supporting role.</p>	2022/23 – 2025+

Projects and schemes			
2.	Delivering the 'core' network	Influenced by the network review, the 'core' network in Herefordshire will be transformed through enhanced levels of service on Hereford city services (15-minute frequency) and on main corridors linking market towns and Hereford (30-minute frequency) operating 7 days per week and Monday – Saturday evenings. The delivery of 'early wins' will take place in 2022/23, with the roll out of the wider core network taking place from 2023/24 on a phased approach (recognising the lead-in time required for operators to upscale and prepare). Investment and development of the core network will peak in 2024/25.	2022/23 – 2024/25
3.	Enhancing the supporting rural network	Supporting the core network, an enhanced rural network across the remainder of the bus network in Herefordshire will be delivered. Providing an hourly frequency, a network of rural services will connect with core services and DRT and reflect the opening hours of leisure and social facilities. This will include the development of off-peak services that mirror the daytime core network	2022/23 – 2025+
4.	Demand responsive transport	Following on from the Network review, a trial of demand responsive transport around key market towns will be undertaken. Closely aligned with the development of the enhanced rural network, the trial will assess the potential future role of responsive services and its ability to encourage new demand and replace infrequent rural services.	2022/23 – 2025+
5.	Driver training and retention	Countywide project to promote and develop drivers for the Herefordshire bus network. Promotional scheme to subsidise operator PSV training costs, developing and ensuring options for local training provision. In the second-year purchase of a dedicated vehicle for training for Herefordshire operators Driver/employee incentive schemes.	2022/23 – 2023/24

Table 5 Summary of the ambition and measures relating to reliability

Reliability and ambition
<p>Why it is important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operators identified congestion and operation in Hereford as the single biggest area the BSIP needs to address.• Bus reliability and punctuality is a growing issue in Hereford with city operators, over the years, increasing their timetabled journey times, affecting frequency, headway regularity and requiring additional vehicles to maintain reliability• Not only does this provide an unreliable and longer journey time for the passenger, but it increases operational costs, preventing further investment in additional services or journeys.•
<p>The ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buses operate reliably and unhindered within Hereford, ensuring services are reliable and offer shorter journey times.
<p>What is already being done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hereford City Centre Masterplan is seeking to give more prominence to public realm and priority for sustainable travel modes including bus.• Hereford Transport Hub and Public Realm Project - is developing the concept of a bus/rail interchange at the Hereford rail station and assessing the opportunity to increase bus access along the inner ring road and Commercial Road. This will inform the future role for existing interchanges servicing city and rural bus services. HTSR supported greater focus on bus priority measures and the provision of school buses to reduce the 'school run' traffic• Assessment of current congestion points and hotspots, to identify priority schemes to progress.• Assessment of potential places to trial additional school transport provision underway.

Projects and schemes			
No.	BSIP Measure	Description	Timescale
6,7 and 8.	Bus Priority	<p>Building on HTSR, congestion hotspots will be examined for potential interventions (traffic signal priority; bus lanes; bus gates). Feasibility studies will be undertaken and schemes brought forward in a phased approach, depending on funding available and relative benefit on reliability and journey time. Initial work has identified 3 areas to focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belmont Rd – bus lane and priority towards the city centre. • Newmarket St - bus lane and junction priority, supporting the development of the street as a key city interchange. • Commercial Rd / Aylestone Hill – junction redevelopment and bus priority/bus lane towards city on Aylestone Hill 	2022/23 – 2024/25
9.	Enforcement and restrictions	<p>Review across the whole county areas for increased enforcement, with the intention of developing redline routes in market towns. Funding to support the development and execution of TROs at key locations.</p> <p>Considering enforcement, parking restrictions, loading restrictions etc,</p>	2022/23 – 2024/25

Table 6 Summary of the ambition and measures for information and branding

Information and branding
<p>Why it is important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better information surrounding the buses, and it being easier to understand and obtain was the second highest BSIP priority for both bus users and non-users• Information is sporadic across operators' websites, with no consistency of format or information; some websites are difficult to find and navigate• Smaller operators lack resource or skills to develop their own information in an accessible and up-to-date format• Limited resource or capital for local operators to develop their own marketing campaigns or publicity
<p>The ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An umbrella brand developed <i>Transport for Herefordshire</i>• Providing a single point of information for Herefordshire residents and visitors, including timetables, maps, fares information and journey planning• Available via a range of mediums including app and web along with printed information• Linked to wider active and sustainable travel across the county
<p>What is already being done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• HC produces and maintains a county bus map• HC maintains some provision of real time information• Free weekend travel for a year promotion• QR Codes linked to RTI being rolled out to most stops in Herefordshire during early 2022

Projects and schemes			
No.	BSIP Measure	Description	Timescale
10.	Transport for Herefordshire	Herefordshire Council leading a centralised, branded and coordinated approach to public transport information in all media, with all sources offering a complete picture of what is available, when and at what cost. This will improve understanding of travel options and make planning journeys easier.	2022/23-2024/25
11.	Promotional and marketing campaigns	Enhance the image of bus and encourage modal shift, with campaigns specifically aimed at encouraging journeys to work by bus, leisure travel and sustainable tourism.	2023/24-2024/25

Table 7 Summary of the ambition and measures relating to ticketing and fares

Fares and ticketing
<p>Why it is important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Buses accepting contactless payments was the third highest BSIP priority for both bus users and non-users• For both users and non-users, the availability of a multi-operator ticket was cited in the top 5 reasons that would encourage them to use the bus more• For young people, the cost of buses was one of the most significant barriers to use• Range of ticket offers across operators, but limited number of season and period passes• No flexible ticketing arrangements to benefit those with flexible working arrangements post-covid i.e. bundles/carnet tickets
<p>The ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ticketing products that are easily understood, simple to use and consistent across the entire public transport-network• Single ticketing system that allows for travel across the whole of the bus network, regardless of operator• Covers more than just bus, but cycle hire, car hire and potential expanding to rail• More affordable travel for those that need it
<p>What is already being done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free weekend travel promotion on all buses in Herefordshire (September 2021 – August 2022)• HC ETM Loan scheme means that by the end of 2021 all operators will accept contactless ticket payment

Projects and schemes			
No.	BSIP Measure	Description	Timescale
12.	Ticketing and fares strategy	<p>Review of ticketing and fare options and available technology to determine the most suitable options to be developed going forward, considering the needs of different groups, including young people, and future aspirational ticketing options.</p> <p>Quick win project developing multi-operator tickets for all Herefordshire and Hereford city, allowing travel across different operators with minimal premium. Allowance for capital investment in ticket machine upgrades and supporting infrastructure</p>	2022/23 – 2024/25
13.	Mobile-ticketing solutions	Support and resource for local operators to provide mobile ticketing options to customers through existing suppliers (e.g. Mytrip).	2023/24

Table 8 Summary of the ambition for decarbonisation and supporting measures

Decarbonisation and supporting measures
<p>Why it is important:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Herefordshire declared a climate emergency in 2019, buses have a critical role to play in meeting the council objective of carbon neutrality by 2030• With only 25% of the fleet in Herefordshire operating Euro VI engines, there is significant progress to be made• Current grants for zero-emission vehicles require significant investment from the operator – with the majority of the network in Herefordshire provided by local operators (rather than larger national operators) these are financially unviable• Regulatory challenge of more bespoke funding arrangements due to commercial competition in Hereford• A safe to use and attractive bus network will support access for all members of the community
<p>The ambition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The electrification of the urban bus fleet and, over time, the whole fleet• An attractive and safe network
<p>What is already being done:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hereford City Council has secured funding from the Towns' Fund to introduce the Hereford Zipper service operated by electric vehicles. It includes charging infrastructure sufficient for the scheme although with further investment it could be the basis for expanded provision to support the wider local bus fleet as more electric vehicles are brought into service.• Hereford Enterprise Zone interested in converting the dedicated service that it supports to electric.

Projects and schemes			
No.	BSIP Measure	Description	Timescale
14.	Electric vehicles Trials	Development of service 78X, serving the county's biggest employment area, converted to fully electric vehicles. Additional resource built into the proposal brings opportunity to trial a number of fully electric park and choose services.	2022/23-2024/25
15.	A service for all	Operators putting disabled passengers at the heart of their service provision and playing a leading role in creating a more accessible transport system in Herefordshire, through training and resource (involvement in DFT's Inclusive Transport Leaders Scheme).	2022/23 – 2023/24
16	Infrastructure development programme	In tandem with the Network Review, the development of an infrastructure programme to link bus and active travel modes through the development of 4 park and choose sites, travel hubs in key market towns and rolling programme of bus stop/shelter improvements, taking into account safe access and the needs of all users.	2022/23 – 2025+
17	Better cleaner buses	Through the wider network review, and development of the core and supporting network, improvements will come from development of the 'quality' element of the Council's local bus contracts and network expectations set out and agreed in the Enhanced Partnership	2023/24 – 2024/25

Projects and schemes			
18	Aspirational passenger charter	<p>This will set out what passengers can expect in using any bus across Herefordshire and be consistent with neighbouring authorities for passengers travelling across the region.</p> <p>It will be coupled with the inclusion of user representatives on the main Partnership Group overseeing the delivery of the EP.</p>	2021

The BSIP as a foundation

- 4.3 The BSIP provides a foundation for the transformation of the Herefordshire bus network over the next 3 years. However, **Herefordshire Council's ambition goes further. As the BSIP is reviewed and updated each year, the opportunity will be taken to set out that greater ambition, including electrification of the entire fleet.**

Phased implementation

- 4.4 The 18 different BSIP measures or schemes within the tables above are not discrete packages of work. There is a significant amount of dependency between them, with maximum impact achieved if they are all funded and able to be implemented in parallel (in a phased way) as part of an overall programme.
- 4.5 Important elements to take forward will be the bus priority schemes within Hereford, as they will have wide benefit for bus services generally and give a strong indication that improvements are taking place.
- 4.6 In parallel, a full review of the county's bus network will be undertaken, in order to define what the future enhanced network and levels of service look like in accordance with the agreed hierarchy relating to core and supporting services. This will be planned in a coordinated way with regular clockface timetables, connecting services and feeder services. New patterns of service will be introduced on core services, including improved evening and Sunday provision. These routes will be the first to see enhanced bus stop infrastructure and information provision and roll out of the network branding.
- 4.7 Monitoring of these early improvements will help in the design and introduction of later improvements to other core services.
- 4.8 Improved supporting services will be introduced once the enhanced core network is in place, again on a phased approach. Demand responsive transport service will be trialled. This will be based on one of the market towns, providing semi-scheduled

feeder journeys into the market town, connecting with the core network. Associated with this will be the introduction of a hub with improved waiting infrastructure. By this stage, it will be important to have multi-operator ticketing in place to facilitate easy transfer between services.

- 4.9 Throughout the period of implementing the service enhancements there will be significant marketing and promotion to highlight the transformation and the travel opportunities provided. This will be accompanied by network-wide branding and provision of comprehensive information about routes, times and fares, coordinated by the enlarged team within Herefordshire Council.
- 4.10 Given the current network, and scale of the aspirations outlined in the BSIP, the full transformation of the network will take over 5 years to achieve.

Funding and priorities

- 4.11 The total funding requirement for the BSIP in Herefordshire over 3 years 2022/23 to 2024/25 is **£18,130,000**. Recognising the importance and need for infrastructure to improve priority to be in place ahead of the new network being delivered, there is a focus on developing and delivering bus priority measures in the first two years whilst the network is reviewed, 'easy' wins implemented and core network developed.
- 4.12 These costs are inclusive of resource to define, plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate the schemes and measures to be delivered through the BSIP.
- 4.13 Additionally, it is estimated that a further **£3,490,000** funding will be required each year after 2025. This annual figure is representative of the average revenue and capital requirement considering a 5-year period after the initial BSIP fund. Revenue and capital would need to be higher in the earlier years (2025/26 estimated at £4.9m required), but should reduce as the network settles and patronage increases.
- 4.14 The rural nature of the area and challenges faced means that, to achieve the aspirational network for Herefordshire, a commitment to ongoing funding in the long term will be vital to sustain the network.

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5. Reporting

- 5.1 Each workstream and some individual projects will have their own implementation plans, with a designated project lead to coordinate and oversee progress.
- 5.2 In the short term, the expanded Herefordshire Bus Partnership will continue to meet monthly to monitor progress and take responsibility for the development and agreement of appropriate EP Schemes to gain suitable commitments to facilitate delivery of the various schemes and projects. This Group will receive monitoring reports and guide the implementation of the BSIP.
- 5.3 6-monthly monitoring reports will be produced, providing an update on implementation and assessing progress towards the targets set. These reports will be published on the Council's website, as detailed below.
- 5.4 In the longer term, there will be a designated person responsible for overall monitoring, collection, and collation of data, to assess progress with expected outputs/outcomes and towards targets.
- 5.5 The Herefordshire Bus Partnership will be responsible for overseeing the updating and revising of the BSIP annually, to reflect changing circumstances; new challenges and opportunities; public feedback in annual satisfaction surveys; completed projects and schemes; and emerging ideas for improvement and/or funding.
- 5.6 A record of actions to address any under performance and a copy of the report will be published by Herefordshire Council on its website.

6. Overview

Table 9 Overview of the Herefordshire BISP and EP

Name of authority	Herefordshire Council
Franchising or Enhanced Partnership (or both)	Enhanced Partnership
Date of publication	31 st October 2021
Date of next annual update	31 st October 2022
URL of published report	www.herefordshire.gov.uk/bsip

Targets	Description of measure	2018/19	2019/20	Targets for 2024/25
Journey time	Average bus speed (am peak)	-	14.7mph	5% increase in bus speed
Reliability	Non-frequent bus services running on time (within 1min early, 5mins late)	78%	79%	86%
Passenger numbers	Total passenger journeys on the whole bus network	2.05 million	1.79 million	2.4million
Average passenger satisfaction	% of surveyed users who we dissatisfied with elements of the current networks	-	34%	27%

Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to:	Yes/No	Explanation (max 50 words)
Make improvements to bus services and planning		
More frequent and reliable services		
Review service frequency	Yes	Measure 1 – A review of the entire network will ensure that timetables are co-ordinated to address current inadequacies Scheme 2/3/4 – will provide increased service frequencies on specified routes
Increase bus priority measures	Yes	Measure 6/7/8 – will deliver bus priority measures along the network at points identified within the scheme description

Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to:	Yes/No	Explanation (max 50 words)
		Scheme 9 – will deliver enforcement measures including parking and loading measures to reduce bus delays.
Increase demand responsive services	Yes	Measure 4 – will address the potential for DRT, beginning with a trial, with a view to roll out to replace infrequent rural services.
Consideration of bus rapid transport networks	No	N/A
Improvements to planning / integration with other modes		
Integrate services with other transport modes	Yes	Measure 1/12/16 – will facilitate integration of bus with active travel modes.
Simplify services	Yes	Measure 1/2/3/4 will see a redevelopment of the network in line with simple and consistent criteria across services types across the whole of the county
Review socially necessary services	Yes	Measure 1 – The entire network will be replanned meaning that all supported services will be reviewed. Measure 3 – The development of a supporting network will enhance the bus provision for the local community. Measure 4 – will address how DRT will play a part in providing socially necessary journeys
Invest in Superbus networks	No	N/A
Improvements to fares and ticketing		
Lower fares	Yes	Measure 12/13 the development of an MOT will reduce costs to the passengers making multiple trips on more than one bus service
Simplify fares	Yes	Measure 13 – mobile ticketing will allow for quick and easy purchasing of the correct ticket type for a specific journey Scheme 12 – multi operator ticketing will allow seamless travel between operators with minimal premium
Integrate ticketing between operators and transport modes	Yes	Measure 12 – will address multi- operator ticketing, allowing travel across all operators in Herefordshire and Hereford City
Make improvements to bus passenger experience		
Higher specification buses		
Invest in improved bus specifications	Yes	Measure 14 – investment in electric vehicles on specific routes

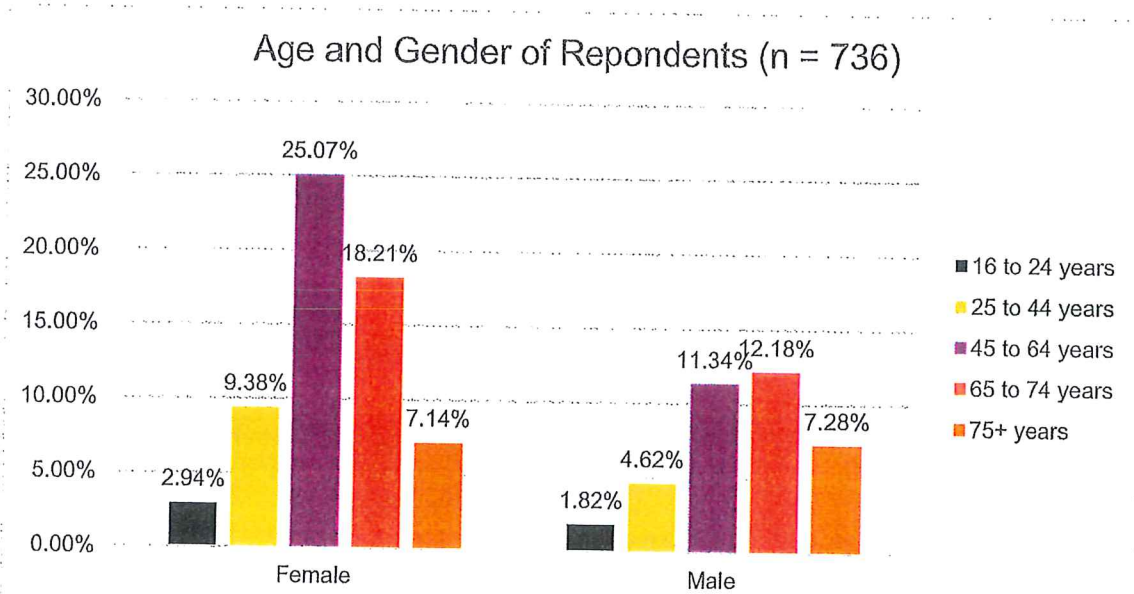
Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to:	Yes/No	Explanation (max 50 words)
		Measure 15 – the development of the core and supported network with include a 'quality' element of local bus contracts to ensure that expectations are met. Measure 16 – to set out expectations of the bus in Herefordshire
Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services	Yes	Measure 17 – a commitment to providing an accessible transport system in Herefordshire, with great consideration for disabled passengers
Protect personal safety of bus passengers		Measure 16 – will address what passengers should expect from buses in Herefordshire and what to do if expectations are not met.
Improve buses for tourists	Yes	Measure 10 – Targeted promotional campaigns with a focus on sustainable tourism
Invest in decarbonisation	Yes	Measure 14 - investment in electric vehicles on specific routes
Improvements to passenger engagement		
Passenger charter	Yes	Measure 16 – will provide an aspirational passenger charter
Strengthen network identity	Yes	Measure 9 – Transport for Herefordshire will provide network identity. Measure 10 – targeted promotional campaigns to target specific user groups.
Improve bus information	Yes	Measure 9 - a co-ordinated approach to public transport information, making it more accessible and easier to understand, with a complete picture of what is available and the associated costs

Appendix A – Public consultation summary

Overview

- 1.1. There were 753 respondents to the public consultation which ran from Friday 15th July to Sunday 16th August. Of these 96% were local residents, with the remaining respondents being visitors to the area or representatives of local groups and businesses.
- 1.2. More females (62%) than males (37%) responded, with the 45-64 years old category being the main age group of respondents. There was slight under representation of the under 24s (5%). See figure 1 below for a further breakdown of respondents.

Figure 1. Age and gender of respondents



- 1.3. 32% of respondents never travelled by bus and 41% of respondents don't expect this to change post-pandemic (see figures 2 and 3 below).

Figure 2. Bus frequency

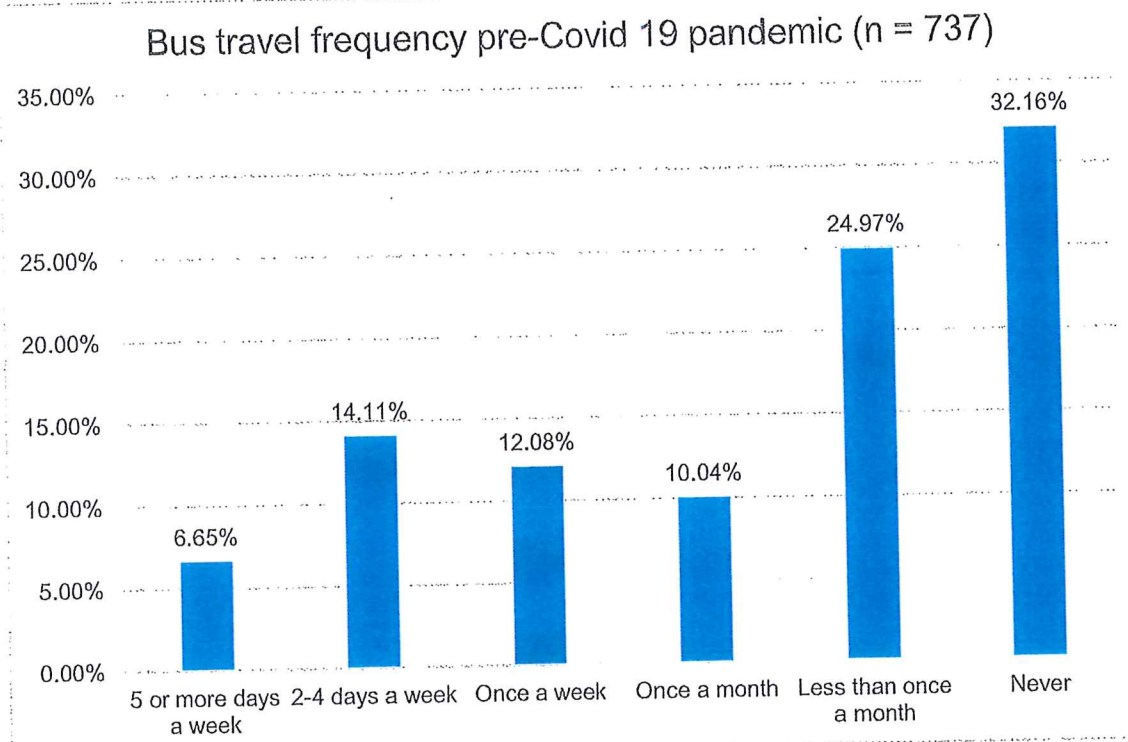
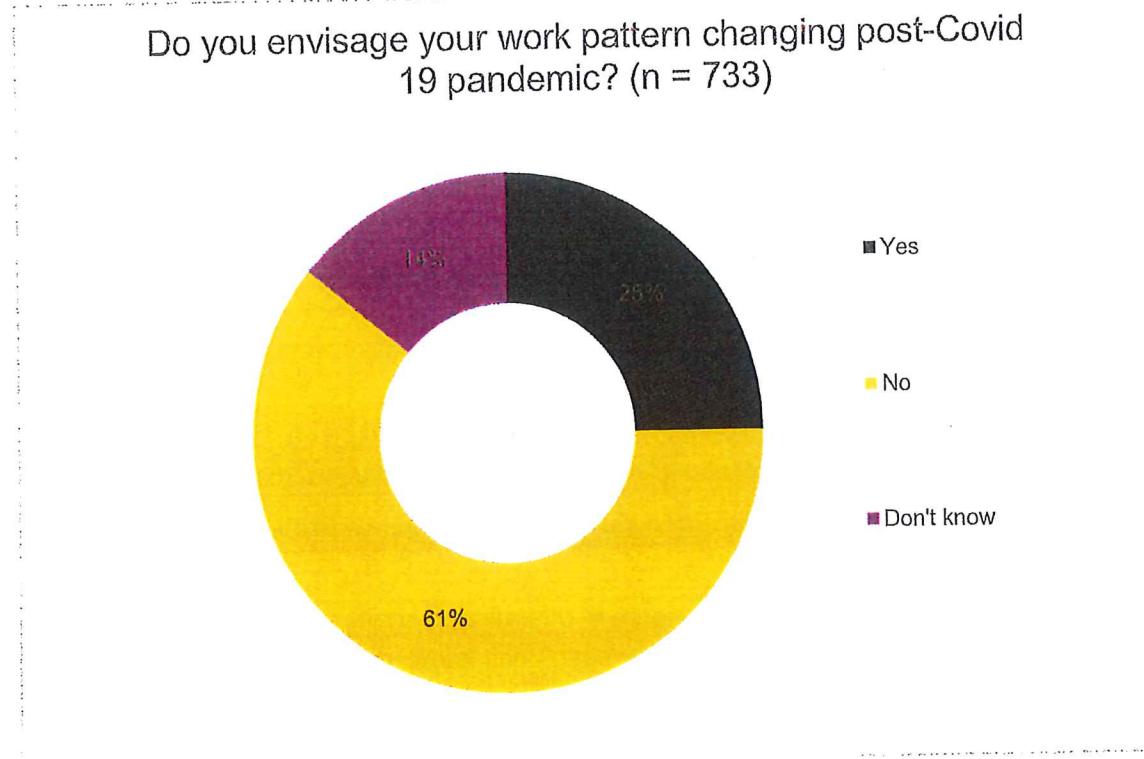


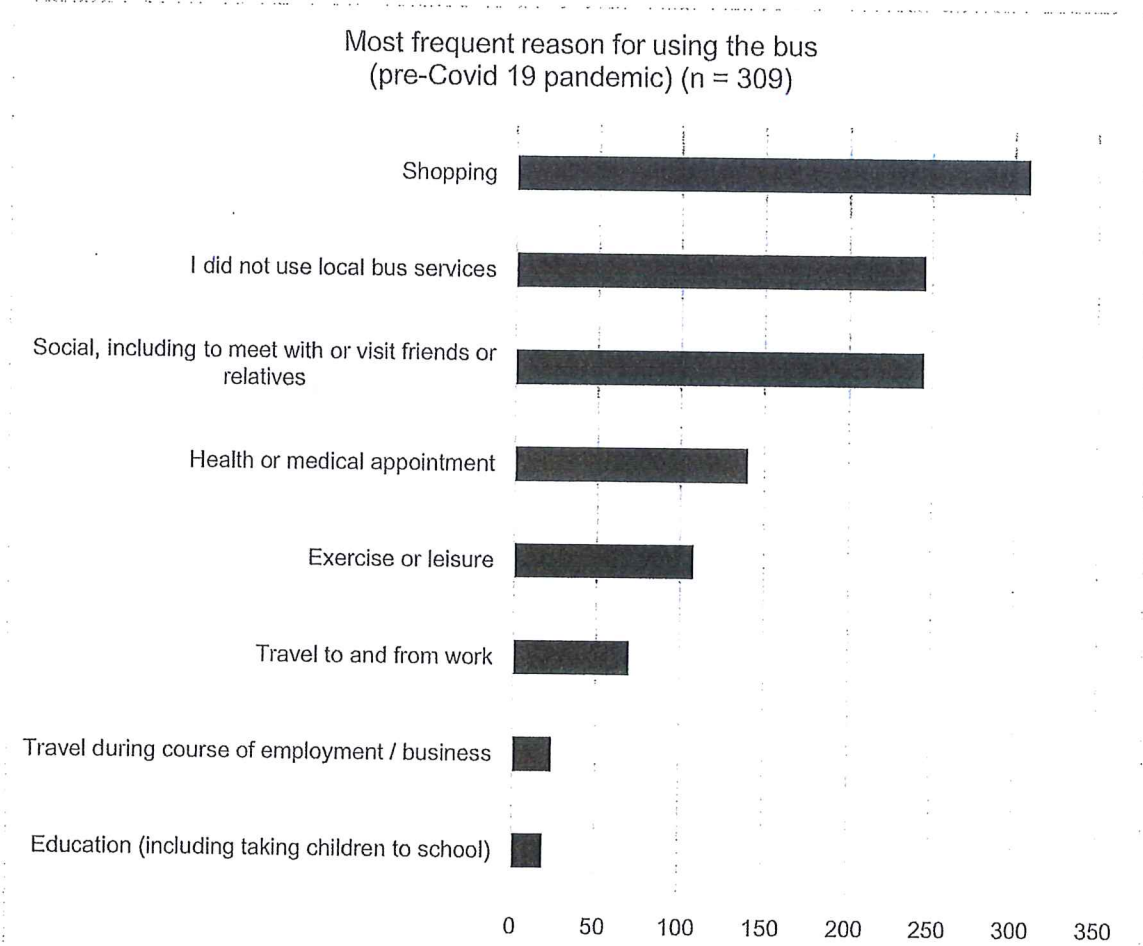
Figure 3. Post-Covid expected bus use



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1.4. The greatest use of bus was to go shopping, followed by social, including visiting friends and family, and healthcare appointments (see figure 4 below)

Figure 4. Reasons for bus travel



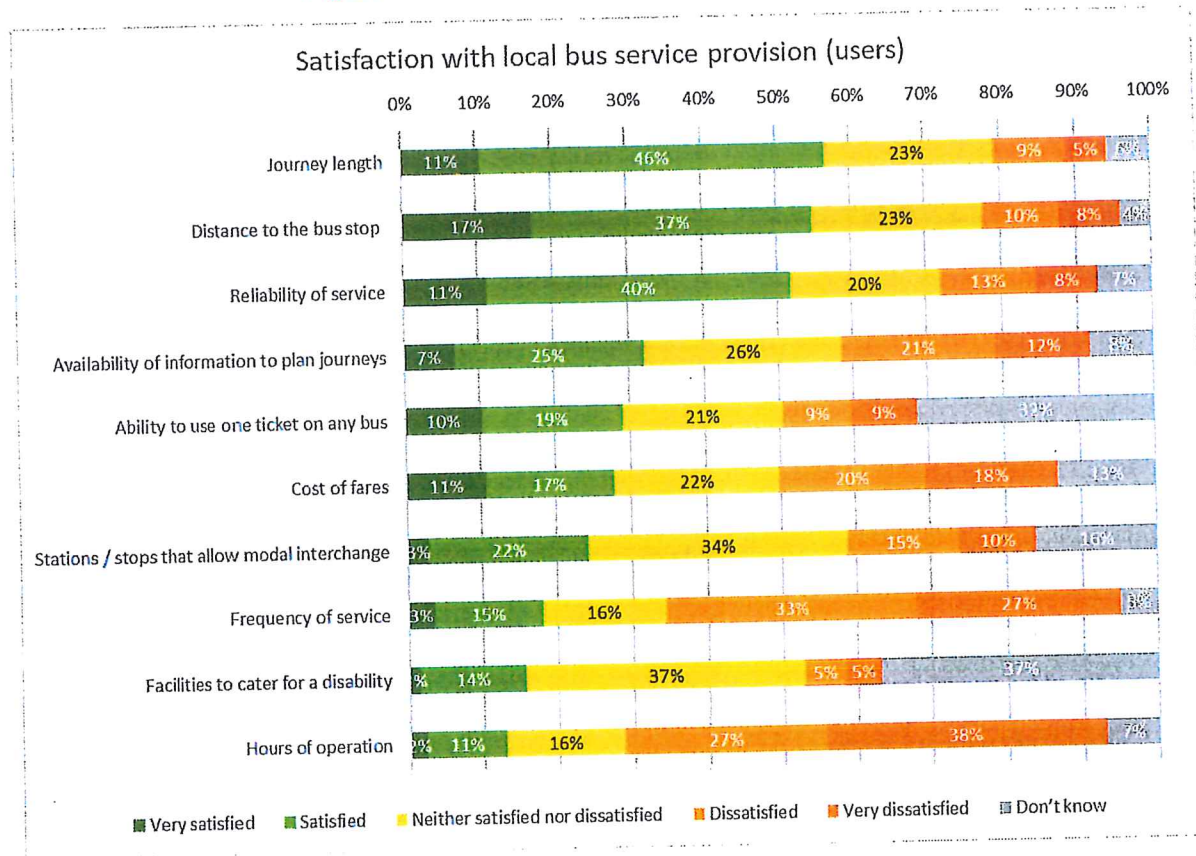
Satisfaction with current bus services

Bus users

- 1.5. Amongst bus users (those who responded as having used the bus at least once - 68%), the satisfaction with local bus provision can be seen overleaf (figure 5).
- 1.6. The areas of greatest satisfaction were journey length, distance to the bus stop and reliability.
- 1.7. The areas of least satisfaction were hours of operation, facilities to cater for disabilities (although this category also received the most "don't know" responses), and frequency of services.

1.8. Alongside facilities to cater for a disability, the categories that received the most "don't know" responses were multi-operator tickets (32%), intermodal services (16%) and cost of fares (13%).

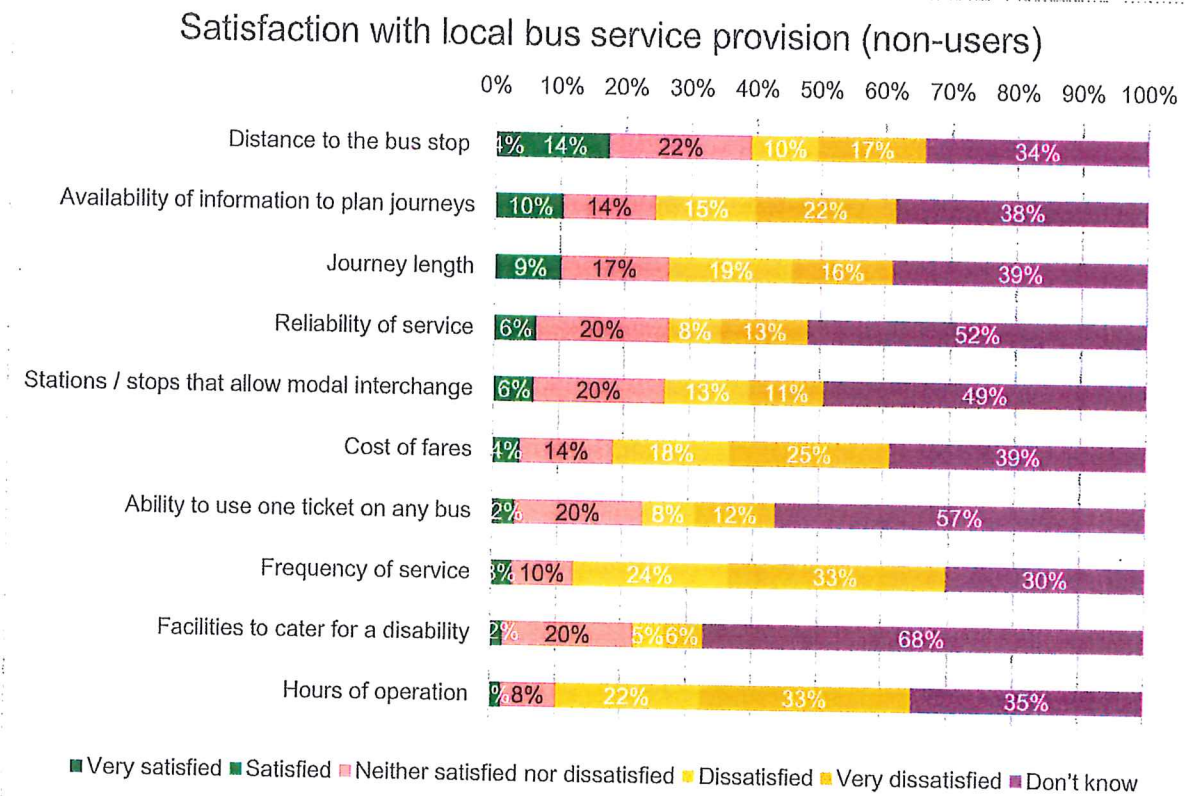
Figure 5. Satisfaction with bus services - users



Non-bus users

- 1.9. Of those who responded as never having used the buses in Herefordshire (32%), satisfaction with local bus provision can be seen below (figure 6).
- 1.10. Although these respondents will have less experience of bus services, the areas of (perceived) satisfaction were the distance to bus stops, ability to plan journeys and journey length – suggesting some respondents have considered using the bus.

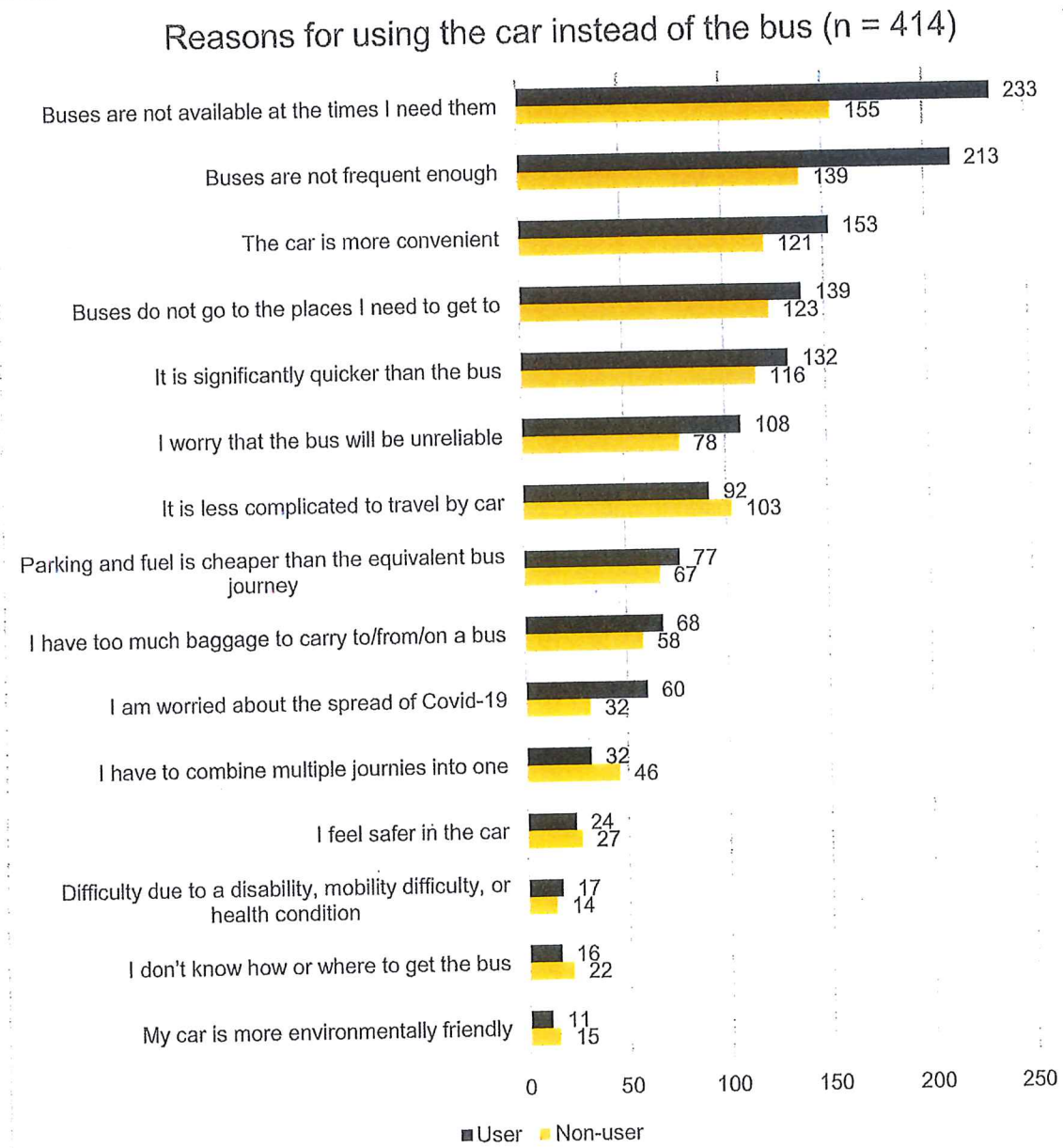
Figure 6. Satisfaction with bus provision - non-users



2. Barriers to bus use

- 2.1 Amongst both users and non-users of the bus the main barrier to using the bus as opposed to the car is that buses are unavailable when needed and that they are not frequent enough.
- 2.2 For the most part the reasons bus users give for opting for the car align with non-bus users, however there is a perception amongst non-users that the bus is a more complicated way to travel. This is summarised in figure 7 below.

Figure 7. Reasons for using the car over the bus

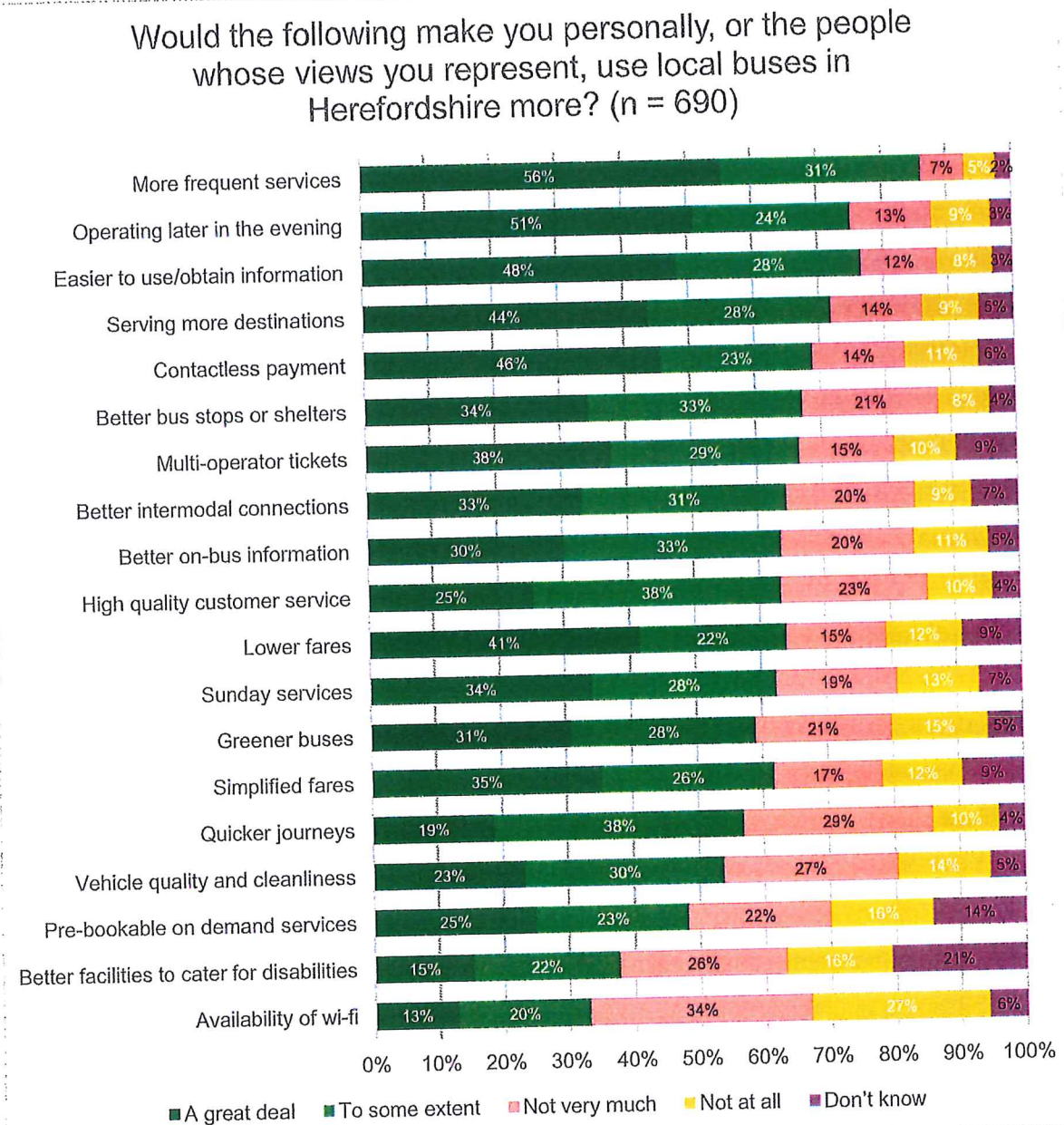


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3. BSIP priorities

- 3.1 The factor which would make respondents use the bus more was more frequent services (87%), followed by information surrounding the buses being easier to understand and obtain (76%) and longer operating hours (75%). This correlates with the main reasons for travelling by car rather than bus being that buses are not available when needed, they're infrequent and don't go to the places people wish to travel to. Over half of respondents felt that the car was quicker and more convenient than the bus.
- 3.2 Actual bus quality, such as Wi-Fi provision and vehicle cleanliness were deemed far less important than frequent and reliable services.
- 3.3 Despite 50% of people not being satisfied with the cost of fares, lower fares ranked 11th out of 19 bus improvement methods, with multi-operator tickets and contactless payments being higher ranked.
- 3.4 These can be seen summarised in figure 8 below.

Figure 8. BSIP priorities



3.5 For both users and non-users, the top four priorities were aligned, with more frequent services being the highest priority (88% and 83% respectively), followed by information about journeys being easier to obtain and use (79% and 74%), contactless payments being number 3 (78% and 73%) and more destinations served at 72% and 71%.

3.6 For bus users the fifth most requested change to bus services was multi-operator tickets (69%) followed by later hours of operation (68%). For non-users these were reversed with later hours of operation being a higher priority (68%) than multi-operator tickets (67%).

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- 3.7 For both groups the provision of Wi-Fi was the least popular measure with only 41% of users and 34% of non-users indicating it would encourage them to use the bus more.
- 3.8 For both categories an increased provision of facilities for disabled people were the poorly ranked (32-33%), however amongst disabled respondents this increased to 60% for users and 55% for non-users.
- 3.9 An increase in Sunday services was also ranked as a low priority with 46% of users and 47% of non-users indicating it would increase their likelihood of using the bus.

Bus users	Non-bus users
More frequent services (88%)	More frequent services (83%)
Information easier to find/use (79%)	Information easier to find/use (74%)
Contactless payment (78%)	Contactless payment (73%)
Serving more destinations (72%)	Serving more destinations (71%)
Multi-operator ticket (69%)	Operate later in evening (68%)
Operate later in evening (68%)	Multi-operator ticket (67%)

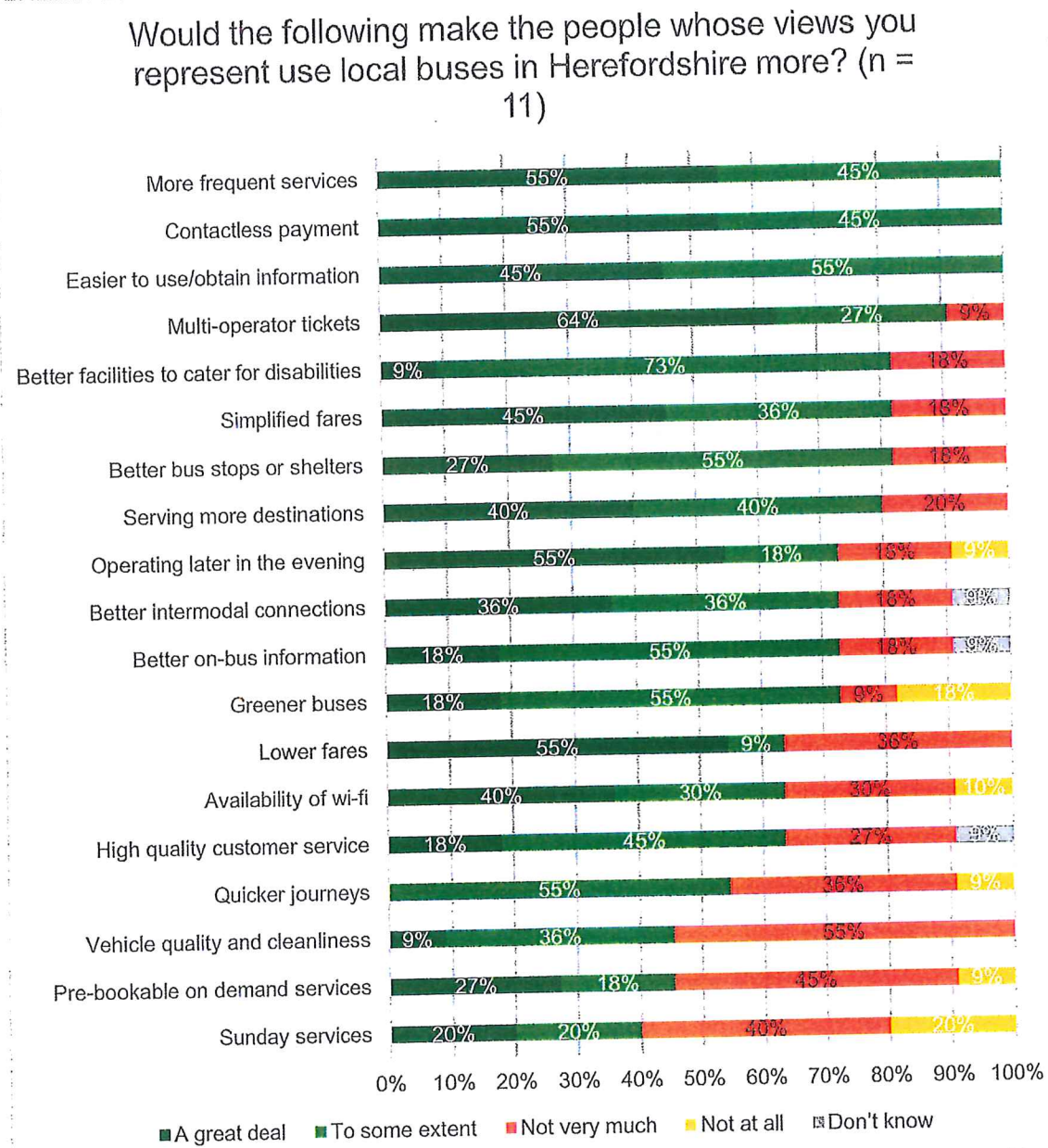
Business and group representatives

- 3.10 Figure 9 (below) shows the BSIP priorities for business and group representatives. Whilst this was a small sample size of 11 it highlights the differing priorities compared to the general public.
- 3.11 More frequent services had 100% popularity, making it the top priority which echoes the views of local residents. Contactless payment was equally prioritised by representatives, whereas it ranked 3rd in the general results. This is followed by easier to use and obtain information, again 100% but with a higher proportion of "To some extent" respondents, which was a high priority for local residents.
- 3.12 The lowest priority for business and group representatives was more Sunday services (40%) compared to 62% for general responses, this is not unexpected given most business don't operate on a Sunday. The provision of Wi-Fi, which was the lowest ranked priority generally (33%) was ranked 13/19 for representatives (70%), possibly to encourage work whilst travelling. Pre-bookable services and vehicle cleanliness and quality ranked lowly in priorities for both representatives and general respondents.

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Figure 9. BSIP priorities for business and group representatives



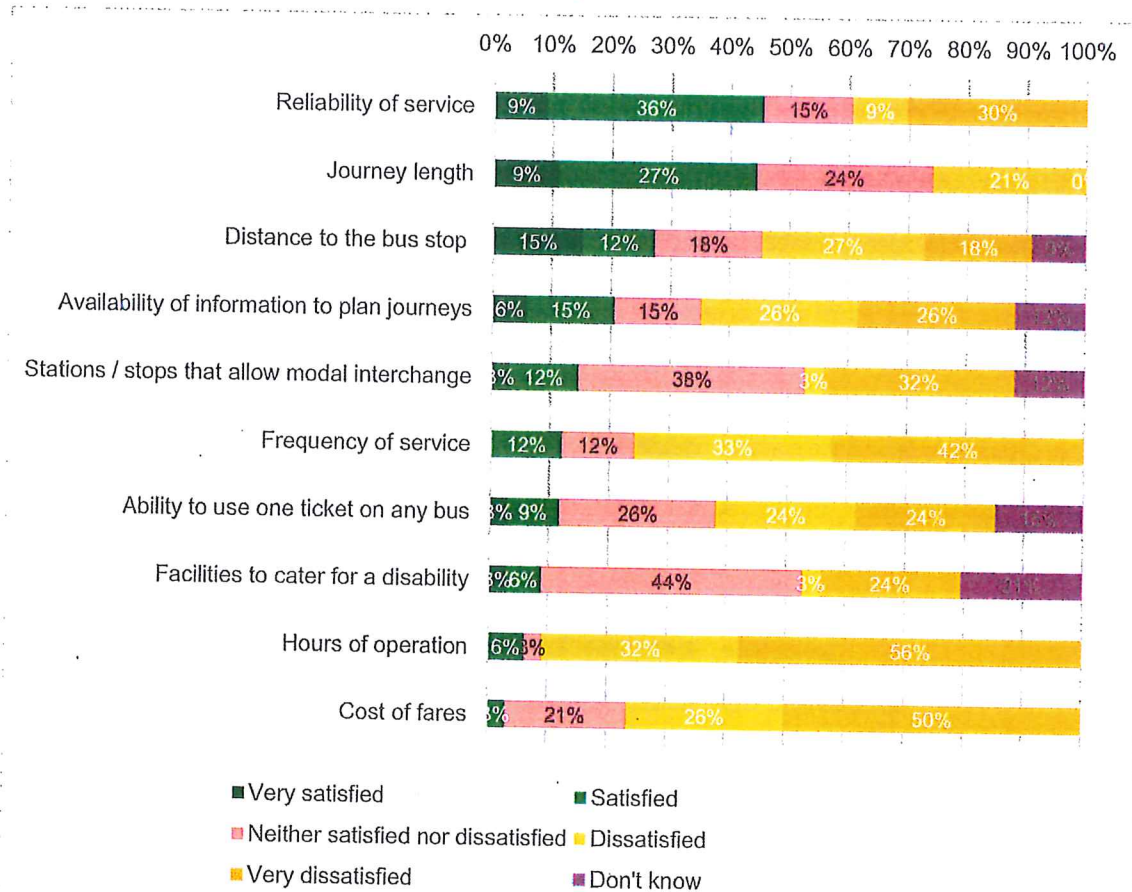
4. Results by age demographics

- 4.1 Figure 10 shows that overall respondents under 24 are not happy with local bus services. Under 24s are most satisfied with the reliability of the service (45%), followed by journey length (36%) – however although these are the categories with the highest levels of satisfaction over half of respondents are not happy with them.
- 4.2 The cost of fares was the area of least satisfaction, with only 3% of respondents feeling “satisfied” and none responding as “very satisfied”.

14 1630

4.3 Hours of operation was the second least satisfied category (6%) and the option with the most active dissatisfaction (88%). Cost of fares also received large amounts of dissatisfaction (76%), followed by frequency of service (75%).

Figure 10. Satisfaction with local bus service provision of 16-24 year olds (n=34)



4.4 As shown in figure 11 there are discrepancies in priorities between age groups.

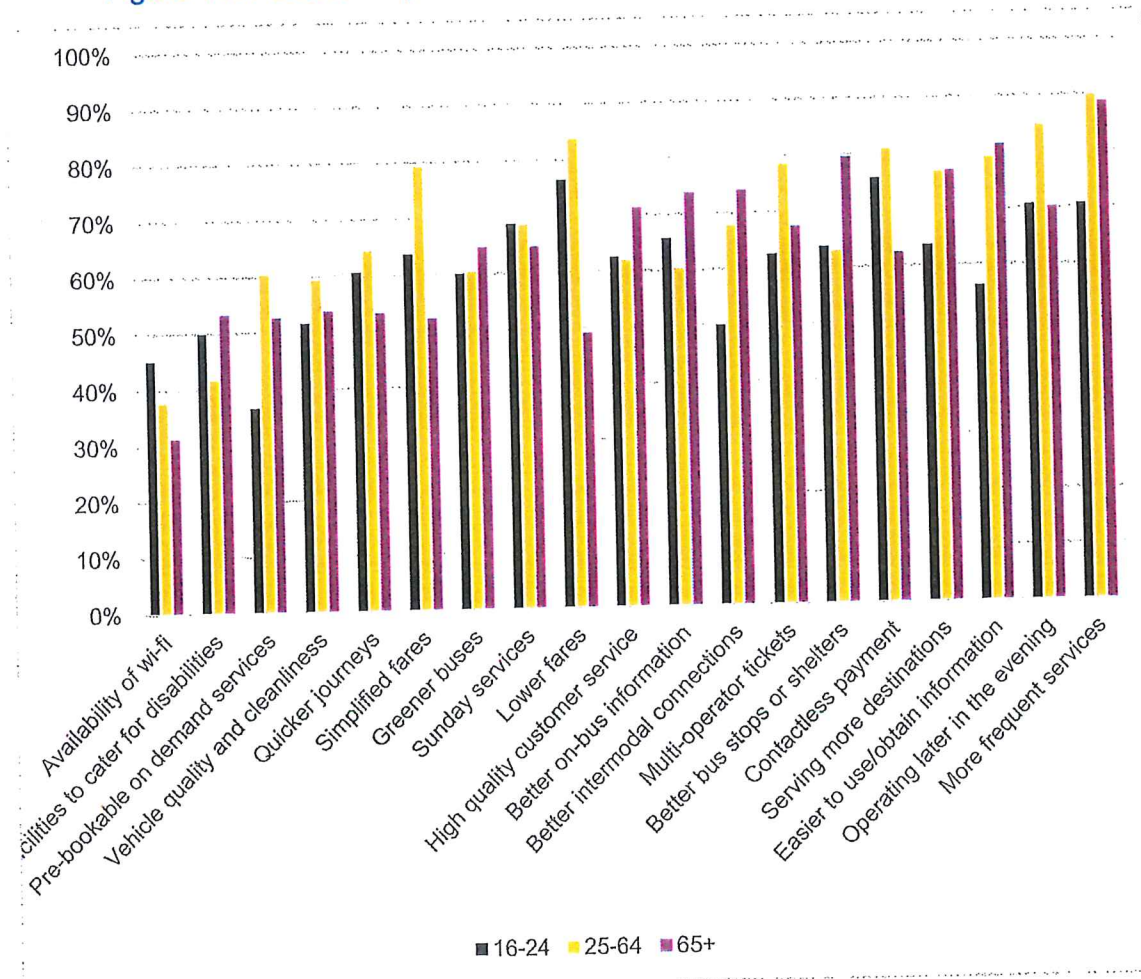
4.5 The most popular improvement measure for those under 25 was lower fares (76%) and contactless payments (76%). In both these categories these received more enthusiasm by the 25-64 category (84% and 81% respectively) and less enthusiasm for those aged 65+ (49% and 62%).

4.6 The second most popular category for 16-24 year olds was later hours of operation and more frequent services (71%). More frequent services was 25-64 year olds highest priority (90%) and over 65s's (89%), however operating later in the evening only received 70% of positive responses for those aged 65+; it did however rank as 25-64 year olds second priority (85%).

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- 4.7 The least popular improvement for 16-24 year olds was pre-bookable on demand services (37%), followed by Wi-Fi (45%) and better inter-modal connections (50%).

Figure 11. Positive responses to BSIP measures by age (n=753)



5. Workshop outcomes

- 5.1 Two workshops were undertaken as part of the BSIP development programme. One with Elected members (17th August 2021) and one with a wider stakeholder group (19th August 2021).
- 5.2 The key outcomes from the workshop with Elected members included:
- Supportive of initiatives to train PSV drivers locally
 - Important to recognise the leisure/tourism potential of bus services
 - Supportive of the concept of improved frequencies and consistent core network
 - Agreement with draft vision and objectives

5.3 The key outcomes from the workshop with Stakeholders included:

Desire to see more consistent provision / improved frequencies (hourly service on core routes 0700 – 2200 on 7 days per week)

More links between market towns (e.g. Kington – Leominster)

Concerns around the operation / image of City Bus Station

Herefordshire Council should take lead in information provision

Vision and objectives – more ambition and more explicit objectives

Appendix B – letters of support from local bus operators



Sargeants Brothers LTD

Kington

Herefordshire

HR5 3AL

01544230481

Transportmanager@sargeantsbros.com

21st October 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Support for Herefordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan

I write to confirm that Sargeants Brothers Ltd has been engaged with Herefordshire Council and other operators in the process of developing Herefordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and is fully supportive of its content. Sargeants Brothers Ltd has worked in partnership with the local authority for many years.

We look forward to continuing this partnership approach in the delivery of the BSIP.

Yours faithfully

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Matthew Evans.

Matthew Evans

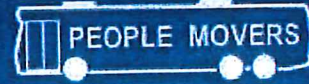
Director



www.drmbus.com



DRM BUS



Tel: 01885 483219 drm@drmbus.com The Bus Garage Bromyard HR7 4NT

22 Oct 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Support for Herefordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan

I write to confirm that DRM BUS has been engaged with Herefordshire Council and other operators in the process of developing Herefordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and is fully supportive of its content. DRMBUS has worked in partnership with the local authority for many years and as a result has implemented a number of successful schemes to enhance the bus offer for passengers.

We look forward to continuing this partnership approach in the delivery of the BSIP.

Yours faithfully



D R Morris

DRM Bromyard



Stagecoach West
Third Floor
65 London Road
Gloucester
GL1 3HF

21st October 2021

Herefordshire Council Bus Service Improvement Plan

Dear Sir/Madam,

I'm writing to confirm that Stagecoach West has been actively engaged in the preparation of Herefordshire Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and is fully supportive of its ambition.

Stagecoach has a long history of working with Herefordshire Council on bus services in the region, both commercial and subsidy-supported. We are encouraged by positive schemes including the current 'free weekend travel' offer which prove an initiative to proactively support bus as part of the post-Covid regional recovery programme.

We support the Council's vision to radically enhance long-term bus modal share within the County through ring-fenced investment and formal partnership. We welcome the commitment of policy focussed on customer volume growth across the region, overcoming the core legacy challenges of chronic traffic congestion and a fragmented baseline service network.

We consider the indicative targets set by the Council meet the fundamental need to create a faster, more punctual and more car-competitive bus network to meet and exceed the expectations of existing and, most importantly, new customers. We welcome these targets being strengthened in due course as part of a virtuous cycle of investment, growth and reinvestment.

Herefordshire Council has remained supportive of and receptive to bus operators throughout the BSIP process and we look forward to entering into a formal Enhanced Partnership in due course.

Yours faithfully,



Rachel Gelliamassj
Managing Director
Stagecoach West

1.7.00

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Herefordshire Council
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0LE

25th October 2021

Dear Sir,

Herefordshire Council – Bus Service Improvement Plan

In response to *Bus Back Better*, the National Bus Strategy for England, Herefordshire Council has consulted with us in developing a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

We believe that the BSIP document created in partnership between the Council, ourselves, and other operators creates an exciting opportunity to deliver an integrated and inclusive transport network across Herefordshire, sustaining the existing level of service, and better connecting places, communities and economic assets within the region and beyond.

A focus on public transport will prioritise investment in a sustainable future, supporting a green recovery from Covid-19 and tackling the climate emergency through the decarbonisation of the transport sector.

Arriva fully support Herefordshire Council's BSIP and the measures contained within it. As a major bus operator we are making every effort to regrow customer demand following the pandemic, and we welcome the future funding from DfT to help support that recovery and build upon it to deliver the BSIP's ambitious targets on patronage growth, reliability, punctuality, journey times and overall passenger satisfaction.

Kind regards



Andrew Godley
Commercial Director

Arriva Midlands
Wattmoreland Avenue
Thurmaston
Leicester
LE4 6PH

Tel 0116 264 0400
Fax 0116 260 5610

www.arrivabus.co.uk

Arriva Midlands is the trading name of the following companies, each of which has its registered office address at 1 Admiral Way, Dootford (International) Business Park, Gurdahand S83 3DP Arriva Midlands Limited (20141077), Arriva Midlands North Limited (2166302), Arriva The Shires Limited (2114610) and Carebus (Leicester) Limited (2554427).

company

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Enquiries and Coach Hire 01432 344341

The Travel Centre
Old School Lane
Hereford
HR1 1EX

Email: sales@luggvalleytravel.co.uk

Coach Holidays 01432 356201

British & Continental Coach Holidays and Tours

Dear Sir/Madam,

Support for Herefordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan

I write to confirm that Lugg Valley Travel has been engaged with Herefordshire Council and other operators in the process of developing Herefordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and is fully supportive of its content. Lugg Valley Travel has worked in partnership with the local authority for many years.

We look forward to continuing this partnership approach in the delivery of the BSIP.

Yours faithfully



Nigel Yeomans
Managing Director

1639



Coach Hire
01432 356201

YEOMANS TRAVEL



Established 1920



Worldwide
01432 356202

The Travel Centre, Old School Lane, Hereford HR1 1EX Email: sales@yeomanstravel.co.uk www.yeomanscoachholidays.com

British & Continental Coach Tours, Air Travel and Holidays

Dear Sir/Madam,

Support for Herefordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan

I write to confirm that Yeomans Travel has been engaged with Herefordshire Council and other operators in the process of developing Herefordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and is fully supportive of its content. Yeomans Travel has worked in partnership with the local authority for many years.

We look forward to continuing this partnership approach in the delivery of the BSIP.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature]

Nigel Yeomans
Managing Director



14. 1640



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LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE	3 FEBRUARY 2022	AGENDA ITEM: 9
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Report prepared by Angela Price – Town Clerk

SPECIAL AUDIT REPORT

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a copy of the Special Audit Report and to provide details of what has been actioned to date to improve the governance with Ledbury Town Council and to provide suggestions on what is still required to ensure the points raised within Mr Rose's report are acted upon.

Detailed Information

Following the Judicial Review in 2018/19 it was agreed that Ledbury Town Council would commission a special audit report to review the governance and process of the council that had been in place at the time of the Judicial Review. The purpose of this review was to ensure that the Council could ensure that policies and procedures were updated so as the issues leading up to the Judicial Review would not be repeated.

Following several enquiries and the appointment of an auditing company who subsequently withdrew due to a conflict of interest, the council appointed IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd to undertake the governance review in December 2020.

Mr Kevin Rose of IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd met with the Town Clerk to discuss the scope of the review following which he submitted a fee proposal, detailing how he proposed to approach the review. The proposal was considered and approved at a meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee in December 2020.

As part of the review Mr Rose sent a questionnaire to councillors asking them to provide responses, which would be treated anonymously, to help with the gathering of information.

The first draft of the report was received on 6 June 2021 and a copy was made available to the then Mayor and Deputy Mayor (Councillors Vesma and Harvey) for consideration. Some observations were made on the report, and these were provided in a response to Mr Rose on 12 July 2021. The final draft was received at the end of July, and the report was provided to the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor (Councillors Manns and Howells) for consideration, affording them the same courtesy that had been given to the former Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Following sight of the report the Mayor and Deputy Mayor offered some observations on the report and these were also made available to Mr Rose.

The report was included on an agenda of the Resources Committee held on 2 September 2021, which Mr Rose attended. It was agreed at that meeting that the report should be deferred to an extraordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee as this was the committee that dealt with all audit matters.

Councillors Hughes asked that some additional information be included in the report:

- That additional information be included to show how the conclusions reference was evidenced in the report.
- That information in relation to the scope of the review be provided

Mr Rose agreed that he would make these amendments and a copy of the amended report and his initial proposal letter, which provides a scope of the review as provided by Ledbury Town Council is attached.

Conclusions

In his report, Mr Rose has identified a number of conclusions which the Clerk has been asked to consider and provide information on improvements that have been made or need to be made to ensure that they are not repeated.

The following points provide information on what process have improved following the outcome of the Judicial Review and where there is still some improvement required. These are based on the 9 conclusions as provided in Mr Rose's report and it should be noted that at the meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee held on 27 September 2021 it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the conclusions in Mr Rose's report be accepted.

1. During the period under review that Council failed to ensure a robust system of corporate governance was in place.

- With the introduction of the CiLCA qualification, Councils should be able to ensure that good governance will be managed by their Clerks. Ledbury Town Council recognise the importance of having a CiLCA qualified Clerk and when recruiting this was agreed to be an essential requirement or that the successful candidate would agree to obtain the qualification. They have also made this a requirement for the Deputy Clerk position.
- The requirements of both staff and Councillors in this sector can seem very strange to anyone who is not used to working in such an environment and the Clerk and Councillors have recognised the benefits of admin staff obtaining the ILCA qualification, which provides a basic understanding of why they are asked to carry out many of their day to day tasks and the need to meet statutory requirements in doing so. Recently two members of staff have obtained the ILCA qualification and going forward it would be prudent

to ensure all office based staff acquire this, with the exception of the Accounts Clerk. The Clerk would suggest that the Accounts Clerk and the Clerk and possibly the Deputy Clerk in due course, undertake the FILCA qualification that was launched on 11 October 2021. This will provide good understanding of the requirements of the financial needs of the Council, as per the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which underpins the financial practices of this sector.

- Upon joining the Council in April 2019 the Clerk recognised that corporate governance was not being managed as it should be. Following the Council elections in May 2019, at the Annual Meeting, the Clerk provided Members with a number of updated and amended governance documents which included Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Terms of Reference for all Committees and Council Code of Conduct. In 2020 the Asset Register and Corporate Plan were also included in the agenda for the Annual Meeting. – it is recommended that these are reviewed at all future annual meetings.
- To date in excess of 30 workplace policies have been amended or drafted since 2019, and whilst there are still some outstanding, it is anticipated that these will have been completed by the end of the 2021/22 Municipal year. A list of policies is attached showing those that are completed and those that are still to be complete.

2. The Council repeatedly failed to comply, over a period of years, with most aspects of governance as set out in the Annual Governance Statement

- Attached is a list of the 8 Assertions that should be complied with when completing the Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

In his report Mr Rose's has identified that the during the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 the Council failed to comply with all but one of the 8 elements of the AGS.

- There are now robust internal controls in place in respect of financial management and governance within the council and these are continually being reviewed.
- The commissioning of the report by Mr Rose is evidence in itself that Ledbury Town Council recognise the importance of external scrutiny – this type of scrutiny should continue to ensure transparency and openness of the council activities.

3. The Terms of Reference of sub-committees were inadequate, being poorly defined and not reflective of the actual practices of the Council

- Newly drafted Terms of Reference were presented to the Annual Meeting of Council in April 2019.

- These Terms of Reference are now presented to the Annual Meeting of Council for review and provided at the first meeting of each Standing Committee at its first meeting of each municipal year for further consideration.
- Any amendments made by each committee will be referred back to a meeting of Council for approval.
- Terms of Reference for Working Parties and Task and Finish Group's are prepared by each committee respectively, and these are then referred back to each Standing Committee for their approval.
- The Council should ensure that this practice is repeated annually for all Standing Committees, Working Parties and Task and Finish Groups at their first meeting of each municipal year.

4. The Council failed to comply with its Standing Orders in respect of its handling of complaints against Councillors

- Standing Orders have been updated in line with the NALC Model Standing Orders and all staff and Councillors have been provided with a copy – these are reviewed at the annual council meeting and therefore all councillors should be familiar with the content of the Standing Orders
- All new councillors are provided with a New Councillor Pack following election or Co-option
- A new complaints procedure is in place for complaints against councillors from members of the public, however this complaints procedure has yet to be tested.
- A new Grievance Procedure is in place and staff should be advised to use this if they wish to make a complaint against a councillor and line managers
- More work needs to be done on how to identify and address a complaint raised by employees against councillors, i.e. whether it should be referred to Monitoring Officer as a breach of the Code of Conduct or whether it should be dealt with through the Council's Grievance process.
- With effect from December 2021 the Clerk has agreed with the Mayor that she will include an item on all council and standing committee agendas relating to the Nolan Principles to help remind councillors of their duties under the Code of Conduct that they have signed up to on becoming councillors.

5. The Council failed to properly identify and manage the risks associated with the legal cases in which it was engaged

- The Risk Register is reported to each meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purpose report for a review of each section throughout the Municipal Year. This is also included on the agenda of the annual meeting of council for review by the Council in recognition that the management of risk lies ultimately with the council as a corporate body
- In the past two years, the internal auditor has commented that the Council's risk register is one of the best they have reviewed.
- The council have retained the same internal auditor for a period of three years and is currently in the process of appointing an internal auditor for the next three years – this will help provide consistency for staff and councillors
- On appointing the new internal auditors LTC should ensure that they are appointed to undertake two visits to the Council in each financial year
- The risk register is currently being reviewed by officers and once completed will provide a more comprehensive listing of risk within the council, along with suggestions to mitigate that risk

6. The Council repeatedly failed to adequately address issues raised by External Auditors

- All issues raised with the Clerk by the external auditors in respect of the AGAR are dealt with within the timescales given
- Each year since 2019/20 there have been improvements in the outcome of the external audit, and it is anticipated that in 2021/22 the council will be in a position to receive an unqualified audit
- A full copy of the external auditor's report is provided to council for their review and to make them aware of any actions that need to be addressed
- All issues identified by the external auditors should be recorded as noted in the minutes of council and MUST be addressed without fail going forward

7. The terms of appointment of legal advisors were not properly reported to Council

- Where legal advice has been sought since 2019 the decisions taken by council have been clear on what is required of the solicitor and fee proposals have been reported to council accordingly.
- Improvements have been made in what is recorded in minutes of all meetings of council and standing committees, which provided information on what has been discussed with clarity on the resolutions made
- If a standing committee is delegated to deal with a legal matter, the minutes have indicated that reference back to council should be made at all stages

8. Councillors were not properly provided with the legal advice upon which they based key decisions

- Council recognises their role as a corporate body and agree reference back to full council on legal matters, in fact the majority of the decisions are managed through extraordinary meetings which ensures that council are kept informed as a corporate body
- The fact that legal matters are being dealt with via council as a corporate body, means that all councillors will be provided with copies of the advice received
- Councillors are provided with reports at meetings wherever possible and this includes confidential items, except in extreme circumstances – there are concerns about confidential documents being shared with members of the public on occasions and Councillors should be aware that by doing so they could put the council at risk and themselves in respect of being reported to have breached the Code of Conduct
- Previously the council prepared “Confidential minutes”. They are now aware that there are no such things as confidential minutes – minutes of a confidential discussion should be included in the minutes of the meeting along with clear resolutions, but consideration should be given as to how much information is placed in the minutes – it should be sufficient enough to provide an overview on the subject matter, whilst still retaining the confidentiality required.

9. Councillors were not provided the opportunity to discuss matters directly with the Council’s solicitor and, instead, had to rely on information passed to them in confidential session –

excess reliance was placed on verbal communication to Councillors, related in confidential meetings of Council

- Much of this has been covered in point 8 above
- Consideration is given as to which councillors would meet with the Council's solicitors, along with the Clerk and all discussions are reported back via written confidential reports, where possible these are provided as part of the agenda pack prior to the meeting
- All copies of correspondence undertaken by solicitors on behalf of the council are provided to council in confidential session, where possible these are provided as part of the agenda pack prior to the meeting.

It is clear from the points above that Ledbury Town Council has made improvements to their governance and financial management since the Judicial Review, however it is also clear that there are still some areas that need to improve.

Recommendation

1. That the report provided by Mr Rose be received and noted.
2. That the conclusions within the report be accepted.
3. That arrangements be made to place the report in the public domain.
4. That the report provided by the Clerk be received, with consideration being given to a drafting an action plan to address any outstanding points in the future.

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Corporate Governance Review
Ledbury Town Council

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Introduction

This review covers the period May 2015 (the date of the election of the current Council) until March 2019. Records reviewed include Minutes of Full Council, Standing Committee and Financial & General Purposes Committee and associated papers, Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and reports of Internal and External Auditors.

Conclusions

1. During the period under review that Council failed to ensure a robust system of corporate governance was in place.
2. The Council repeatedly failed to comply, over a period of years, with most aspects of governance as set out in the Annual Governance Statement [Page 16-17].
3. The Terms of Reference of sub-committees were inadequate, being poorly defined and not reflective of the actual practices of the Council. [Page 20-22]
4. The Council failed to comply with its Standing Orders in respect of its handling of complaints against Councillors. [Page 23-25]
5. The Council failed to properly identify and manage the risks associated with the legal cases in which it was engaged. [Page 12-13]
6. The Council repeatedly failed to adequately address issues raised by External Auditors [Page 14-15].
7. The terms of appointment of legal advisors was not properly reported to Council [Page 7].
8. Councillors were not properly provided with the legal advice upon which they based key decisions [Page 8].
9. Councillors were not provided the opportunity to discuss matters directly with the Councils solicitors and, instead, had to rely on information passed to them in confidential session. Excess reliance was placed on verbal communication to Councillors, related in confidential meetings of the Council. [Page 8]

A. Council compliance with 'Proper Practices' as required by the applicable Accounts & Audit Regulations.

"Proper Practices" is a term set out in law. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and 2011 both make multiple references to the expression 'Proper Practices' that must be complied with by Local Councils. The detailed requirements in respect of 'Proper Practices' are set out in 'The Practitioners Guide' issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG) and these have been subject to revision from time to time. During the review period there were revisions in 2016, 2018 and 2019.

In addition to the requirements in respect of Proper Practices the Accounts and Audit Regulations make specific reference in Regulations 6 and 11 to the Annual Governance Statement and the Accounting Statements. Regulation 6.4 (b) requires that an Annual Governance Statement must be prepared in accordance with Proper Practices and Regulation 11 requires the preparation of Accounting Statements, again in accordance with Proper Practices.

From a review of the records provided it appears that the Council was able to comply with the requirements for the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statement as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The Accounting Statements prepared during the review period appear to have been robust. The External Auditor did raise one issue, as an "Other Matter" in respect of the 2018-19 Accounting Statement, which related to the restatement of the value of an asset, but overall it appears that the Council was able to comply with 'Proper Practices', at least in respect of the content of its Accounting Statements, for each of the years 2015-19 covered by this review. The Council was also able to give a positive response of Assertion 1, in respect of Accounting Statements for each of the years subject to this review.

It was noted that the Accounting Statements for 2017-18 were not approved until 26th July 2018, beyond the 30th June deadline, however the accuracy of these statements were not subject to challenge by the External Auditor. The late approval of the Accounting Statements did, however, make it impossible for the Council to comply with the requirements in respect of the Exercise of Public Rights, which must include the first 10 working days of July. As a consequence the External Auditor

required a negative response in respect of the of Assertion 4, which relates to the Period for the Exercise of Public Rights, for the Annual Governance Statement in 2018/19.

It was also noted that the Accounting Statements for 2018/19 were approved by the F&GP Committee on 27th June 2019 and recommended to Full Council for approval. They were subsequently approved by Full Council on 4th July 2019, again beyond the 30th June deadline.

The Council did also broadly comply with the requirements in respect of the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement, albeit that the 2018-19 Governance Statement was signed on 4th July 2019 after the 30th June deadline. There were, however, numerous compliance issues in respect of the individual elements of the Statements over the review period. These are referred to in detail in Section F of this report.

B. Council compliance with its own Financial Regulations, with specific focus on procurement and the awarding of contracts to suppliers and advisors.

The Councils Financial Regulations, adopted 28th January 2016, were based on the NALC model regulations and, as such, are a form of Regulations commonly in use by many local councils. The Council has continued to use Financial Regulations based on a subsequently updated version of the NALC model regulations.

The External Auditor, in their report dated 10th July 2018 (in respect of the 2016-17 Annual Return) raised the issue of the procurement of legal services;

"The Councils Financial Regulations (section 11.1h) require that three competitive tenders should be obtained for goods and services supplied to the Council. These requirements can only be set aside in an emergency (section 11.a). This section includes specialist services supplied by solicitors.

The Council employed legal advisors in connection with the judicial review and we understand that they relied upon these emergency provisions within the Financial Regulations to make the appointment without going to tender. However the Council has not been able to provide evidence that this emergency appointment was subsequently discussed or approved by the Council. "

Regulation 11.1h referred to by the External auditor states [emphasis added]

"When it is to enter into a contract of less than £60,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk/RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £100 the Clerk/RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates."

Regulation 11.a of the Councils Financial Regulations , states[emphasis added];

"Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:

.....

ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;

....."

It is clear from review that the Councils Financial Regulation 11.1 a) gave specific dispensation for contracts awarded to solicitors from the three quotes requirements described in Regulation 11.1 h). Due to the express wording of 11.1 h) it is clear that the Council did not need to rely on any 'emergency

provision' contained with Financial Regulations for the appointment of solicitors as the Regulations stated that the Regulation '*need not apply*' for '*specialist services such as are provided by solicitors..*'.

It appears, from the External Auditors comments, that they may have been under the mistaken belief that 11.1 a) was intended to cover procurement under 'emergency' provisions, whereas, in fact, its purpose was specifically to state the nature of services that could be procured, in the normal course of events, without the requirements for 3 quotes as set out in regulation 11.1 h).

It is common practice for Councils to retain professional advisors, such as solicitors, without undertaking a formal tendering process, or requesting 3 quotes, and the Financial Regulations are clear that the Council would not have needed to place any reliance on the '*otherwise than in an emergency*' provision of regulation 11.1 a) to appoint solicitors. The External Auditors observation on this therefore appears to be incorrect.

Consideration of the Minutes also have failed to identify any reference to 'emergency' as the basis under which the solicitors were appointed. The External Auditors comments may therefore have either been based on a misunderstanding of the provisions of 11.1h or, perhaps, based on information provided to them during their audit which is not reflected in Council Minutes. This reliance is suggested by their use of 'we understand' when making their observation which indicates further information may have been provided to them, It is possible that the External Auditor may have formed the view that it was based on emergency provisions due to communications received from the Council during their audit work, however this could not be verified during this review.

The External Auditors more broad finding was that;

"...the Council has not been able to provide evidence that this emergency appointment was subsequently discussed or approved by the Council"

The decisions in relation to 'consider taking legal action' and to 'allocate a budget for such action' were based on a recommendation of the Standing Committee and resolution of Full Council. The Minutes of the Standing Committee held on 14th July 2016 made recommendations to Full Council: [Minute Ref. S.4 - 07.16]

- 1) *to consider taking legal action to protect its staff from harassment.*
- 2) *to allocate a budget for such action*

Subsequently at the meeting of Full Council on 21st July 2016 the Council resolved [Minute Ref. C.107-07.16];

"To empower the Standing Committee to take legal action to protect its staff from harassment"

"That a budget of £10, 000 be allocated for such action"

In retrospect the wording of the two resolutions of Full Council on 21st July 2016 was unhelpful. It clearly states to 'empower the Standing Committee to take legal action' and allocates a budget, but it makes no specific reference to the employment of legal advisors, who would, of necessity, need to be retained. The resolution also does not define the nature of any legal action or against whom the action might be taken.

The resolutions were very broad and imposed no obligation on the Standing Committee to report back to Council, or to seek further authority from Council prior to taking any legal action.

In retrospect it is clear that this resolution was both poorly drafted and ill advised. It provided very broad authority to a sub-committee without imposing any constraints on action or any need to report back to Council prior to instigating legal proceedings. Given the nature of the legal proceedings, which related to key areas of Council operations, its staffing and its Councillors, the delegation to a sub-committee, with such broad and loose authority, was clearly not appropriate.

Minutes of a subsequent meeting of the Standing Committee held on 18th October 2016 state; [Min Ref S.15 - 10.16].

"The Mayor apprised members of legal advice received from the Council's solicitor relating to the protection of staff from harassment"

It is clear from the above that by 18th October 2016 a solicitor had been instructed and their advice received. What is not clear is who, at the Council, had given instructions to the solicitors and who had received and considered this advice.

It was not possible, from a review of the Minutes between 21st July 2016, when Full Council delegated authority to the Standing Committee, and the meeting of Standing Committee held on 18th October 2016, to identify when the appointment of solicitors was made or who the solicitors were.

Although there is justification for holding of discussions, in respect of legal advice received, in closed session, it is unclear why the fact of the appointment of legal advisers, and the terms of their appointment, were not formally disclosed to Full Council. As the Council had previously resolved a budget of £10,000 for this purpose it would appear logical for the fact of the appointment, and the financial terms of the appointment, to have been disclosed to Council to confirm compliance with the prior resolution of the Council.

Given that the resolution of 21st July 2016 was so poorly drafted it should be noted that a Notice of Motion [C.158-12.17] on 4th December 2017 which called for council to;

‘..revert to full council all decision-making and all financial authority for the judicial review’

was defeated by vote 9-6 with one abstention. This indicates a persistent willingness by the majority of the Council to delegate these matters to the Standing Committee.

It is also pertinent to note that neither Minutes of the Standing Committee of 18th October 2016, nor Full Council of 3rd November 2016, indicate which Councillors, if any, had seen the advice of the ‘councils solicitor’. Reliance had, instead, been placed on the verbal appraisal provided by the Chair of the Standing Committee who was also the Town Mayor.

The details of what was communicated to members of the Standing Committee are, unfortunately, not recorded in the Minutes. It is therefore not clear what advice members of the Standing Committee may have received. It is not possible, given the absence of any written record, to verify that the advice provided to Councillors was either complete or accurate.

The Minutes of Standing Committee 18th October 2016 record a resolution, inter alia, {Min Ref S.15 - 10.16};

“To ratify the solicitor’s seeking of barrister advice in order to protect staff.”

“That Cllrs Baker and Barnes be authorised to meet with solicitors to receive further legal advice.”

Subsequently the meeting of Full Council on 3rd November 2016, received the Minutes of the Standing Committee meeting of 18th October and approved their recommendations [Min Ref C.136 - 11.16]. It is not clear whether this meeting also received an update from the Mayor, or received a copy of any legal advice that may have been provided.

It is notable that the Full Council Minutes of 3rd November 2016 do not include any reference to a confidential section to the meeting, so it appears reasonable to presume that members of Full Council were not provided with the detailed advice that may have been provided to members of the Standing Committee. Notwithstanding the lack of legal advice disclosed to Full Council, the Council resolved by 10 votes for and 3 abstentions to approve the recommendations of the Standing Committee.

Based on this review of the Minutes the External Auditor does appear to be correct in their observation regarding the lack of any discussion or approval by Council of the appointment of the solicitors.

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C. Council strategic financial management, including the process for setting budgets and Council Tax.

The 'Committee Functions' schedule [See Section I], which appears to represent the Council's approved scheme of delegation, does not refer to financial management, the setting of budgets, or the proposal of the precepts as matters for the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee. In practice, however, from a review of the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, it appears that this function rested with F&GP.

The setting of the precept for the Council was carried out through the F&GP Committee and Full Council. The process of setting the precept involved the F&GP committee considering the budget, making a determination of what the precept required would be, and making a recommendation to the Full Council. This arrangement reflects what is common practice for Councils of a similar size to Ledbury Town Council.

Minutes of Full Council meetings record approval of both the budget and precept.

Year	Date of Council approval of budget and precept
2016/17	28/01/2016
2017/18	02/02/2017
2018/19	01/02/2018

Minutes for the years 2017, 2018 and 2019 record that the F&GP Committee regularly reviewed a number of financial reports including;

- Listings of invoices for payment
- Record of receipts and payments
- Balance Sheet and Trial Balance
- Bank statements and bank reconciliations
- External and Internal Audit reports

Progress against the Budget was reviewed on a quarterly basis using reports from the Councils Rialtas accounting system. The Minutes of F&GP meeting record review of actual income and expenditure against budget, there is also record of Councillors review and questioning in relation to the budgetary reports. There is also reference in the Minutes to detailed examination of virements and the 'rollover' of budgets and the need for the Council to discuss these with the Internal Auditor.

Although Internal Auditors often hold an accountancy qualification it is unusual for a Council to need to refer such issues to them as they would normally be a matter for the Councils Responsible Financial Officer. This may suggest that the Council, either through its Officers or Councillors, may not have had sufficient training to exercise more advanced forms of financial management.

From a review of the Minutes it appears that the Council, through the F&GP Committee, did generally exercise good oversight of the financial affairs of the Council.

D. Council Risk Management arrangements.

The Councils 'Committee Functions' schedule [See Section I] does not refer to the responsibility for Risk Management. In practice the management of Risk rested with the F&GP Committee, although, as a specific item of the Annual Governance Statement, overall responsibility rests with Full Council.

Minutes of the F&GP Committee record regular, detailed discussion of the Councils Risk Register with the Committee reviewing in some detail the specific areas of risk and the associated weightings of these risks.

The Council Risk Management arrangements were subject to Internal Audit to the extent that the Internal Auditor was required to undertake such tests as were necessary to give a response to Internal Control Objective C;

"This smaller authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these".

In each of the years subject to this review the Internal Auditor gave a positive response to this assertion confirming that, in the view of the Internal Auditor, a review and assessment of risks had been undertaken.

It should be understood that in giving a response to this Control Objective the Internal Auditor was not expressing any opinion on the adequacy of any risk management arrangements the Council may have had in place, they were simply confirming that the Council undertook an 'assessment' of risk. It would be wrong to draw any conclusion on the adequacy of the Council's risk management arrangements by reference to the response to Objective C by the Internal Auditor.

It is notable, from a review of the F&GP committee Minutes, that there is no specific reference in Minutes to any risks associated with the legal disputes in which the Council was actively engaged. Given the nature of the disputes, which impacted both staff and Councillors, and given the clear references to this in External Auditor reports, the failure of the F&GP committee to address this appears to be a serious omission.

It is, of course, possible that the delegation by Full Council of matters relating to the legal disputes to the Standing Committee resulted in a compartmentalising of this matter so that members of the F&GP committee did not consider that this fell under their remit, but there is nothing to support this conclusion in the Minutes.

The failure for this risk to be considered by F&GP was, without question, a serious failing of the Councils risk management arrangements however, given the approach of the Council, as a body, to the legal issues, it appears very unlikely that an assessment of risk by the F&GP Committee, which included the identification of the risk associated with the legal action, would have resulted in any significant change in the Councils approach.

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E. Internal and External Audit arrangements.

Local Councils are subject to audit under the 'light touch' audit regime. Under this regime the Council is subject to both an Internal Audit and External Audit.

The Council's External Auditor was previously appointed by central government under a form of regional contract in which all local Councils in a specific area were subject to External Audit by one nominated firm. Following the abolition of the Audit Commission since April 2017 the External Auditors contracts have been awarded through SAAA Ltd (Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments).

In practical terms this has made little difference to individual Local Councils as they continue to face External Audit on almost identical terms as existed under the Audit Commission.

The Town Council has had a number of different Auditors over the years. The External Auditor has changed based on the award for contracts through the relevant national body. The Internal Auditor has been subject to change more frequently.

Year	External Auditor	Internal Auditor
2014/15	Grant Thornton	Luke Keegan ACMA
2015/16	Grant Thornton	Sarah Jackson
2016/17	Grant Thornton	Auditing Solutions
2017/18	PKF Littlejohn	Auditing Solutions
2018/19	PKF Littlejohn	Ian Selkirk
2019/20	PKF Littlejohn	Ian Selkirk

The practice at the Council was for reports from both the Internal and External Auditors to be reviewed through the Finance & General Purposes Committee although, once again, this is a role not specified in the 'Committee Functions' schedule.

There is regular reference to both Internal Audit and External audit in the Minutes of the F&GP Committee over the period 2016-2019 and the Committee has received and noted these reports. There are also references to the quality of the work of the Internal Auditor which indicates that, at least to some degree, the F&GP committee was conscious of the work being undertaken.