

Annex: Statutory Consultation Responses

Consultation Period: Friday 18th August 2023 to Friday 8th September 2023

Consultation Communication: The statutory consultation was conducted with the following required consultees, distributed via email. There were no undelivered notifications and no responses received after the consultation period closed:

Category	Consultee
all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;	Reading Buses
all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;	Thames Valley Buses
all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;	Horseman Coaches
all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;	Arriva
all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;	Stagecoach
all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;	First Bus
all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;	Readibus
all operators of local bus services that would be affected by any of the proposals;	Keepmobile
other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals;	Reading Borough Council
other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals;	Bracknell Borough Council
other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals;	Buckinghamshire Council
other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals;	West Berkshire Council
other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals;	Hampshire County Council
other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals;	Oxfordshire County Council
other local authorities that would be affected by the proposals;	Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
the Traffic Commissioners;	Traffic Commissioner (London and the South East)
the chief officer of police for each area to which the plan relates;	Thames Valley Police
Transport Focus [independent watchdog for transport users];	Transport Focus
the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA); and	The Competition and Markets Authority
such other persons as the authority thinks fit.	DfT
such other persons as the authority thinks fit.	NHT Foundation Trust

Category	Consultee
such other persons as the authority thinks fit.	University of Reading

Responses Received:

1. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA): 22nd August 2023
2. Transport Focus: 4th September 2023

Summary of Responses:

1. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA):

Response summary	WBC action
The CMA do not provide individual feedback but refer to published advice.	WBC has already reviewed the guidance and has developed the EP Plan and Scheme in accordance with it, so no further action is required.

2. Transport Focus:

Transport Focus has provided detailed feedback on the EP Plan and Scheme, expressing both praise and areas of concern. They acknowledged their agreement with many aspects of the plan however, they have raised several key points which WBC is obliged to consider before proceeding to 'make' the EP Plan and Scheme:

Response summary	WBC action
Request for a clearer link between proposed measures and the targets to be included within the EP Plan and Scheme.	No immediate action required. Use the bespoke variation mechanism to include further details after the EP Plan and Scheme have been made.
Comments and suggestions regarding the contents of the Passenger Charter.	The passenger charter is being developed alongside the EP and will be published by as soon as possible.
Suggestion to include more in the EP Plan and Scheme about improving passenger information at bus stops.	Action on this is being considered as part of planning the spending of the funding allocation. If applicable, the documents could be updated after the EP Plan and Scheme have been made, through the bespoke variation mechanism.
Request for details about requirement to consult users on how well the Enhanced Partnership is working.	Immediate action: WBC will develop its plans for how the EP Forum and Community-led groups will be involved and make these details available publicly.
Concern about use of the bespoke mechanism to vary the Scheme instead of undertaking full consultation.	Immediate action: WBC will respond to Transport Focus to reassure them that the appropriate processes will be used to engage with consultees depending on the context.

Conclusion:

During the statutory consultation period, responses were received from 2 statutory consultees: The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and Transport Focus [independent watchdog for transport users]. The CMA provided no response specific to WBC while Transport Focus provided praise and

valuable insights into the perspectives of passengers, in the same way they have for EP Plans and Schemes of other councils.

WBC's officers and consultants have carefully considered these responses in terms of whether the EP Plan and Scheme documents need to be changed before WBC proceeds to 'make' the EP Plan and Scheme. While some actions are worthwhile to enhance the EP Plan and Scheme, the documents can be updated at a later date through the bespoke variation mechanism and therefore do not need to be changed now, thus avoiding the need to open another bus operator objection period and meaning that the EP Plan and Scheme can be made by the deadline for DfT BSIP+ funding of 30th September 2023.

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