



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of an **INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION** will be held in First Floor 11 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on **THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2022 AT 6.40 PM**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage', with a long, sweeping tail stroke.

Susan Parsonage  
Chief Executive  
Published on 16 March 2022

Note: Although non-Committee Members and members of the public are entitled to attend the meeting in person, space is very limited due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. You can however participate in this meeting virtually, in line with the Council's Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be watched live using the following link:

<https://youtu.be/b2YIDud8BmI>

Please note that other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting. The use of these images or recordings is not under the Council's control.



# WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Our Vision

***A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business***

### Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

### Safe, Strong, Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

### A Clean and Green Borough

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

### Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

### Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

### Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

**For consideration by**

**Pauline Jorgensen, Executive Member for Highways and Transport**

**Officers Present**

**Rebecca Brooks, Community Transport Manager**

**Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist**

<b>IMD NO.</b>	<b>WARD</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>	
IMD 2022/04	None Specific	<b>CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO READING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT</b>	<b>5 - 10</b>

**CONTACT OFFICER**

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# Agenda Item IMD4

## INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: 2022/04

<b>TITLE</b>	Consultation Response to Reading Borough Council's Enhanced Partnership Agreement
<b>DECISION TO BE MADE BY</b>	Executive Member for Highways and Transport - Pauline Jorgensen
<b>DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2022 FF11 at 18:40
<b>WARD</b>	None specific
<b>DIRECTOR / KEY OFFICER</b>	Director, Place and Growth - Steve Moore

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT (Inc Strategic Outcomes)**

The National Bus Strategy advised every Local Transport Authority in England, outside of London, to create an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Agreement with local bus operators as a basis for improving bus services. An EP is a legal agreement which has several statutory processes to go through, including a statutory consultation, before it can be legally made.

The purpose of this report is to gain approval for Wokingham Borough Council's response to Reading Borough Council's Enhanced Partnership Agreement for local bus services.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive Member for Highways and Transport approve the Council's response to Reading Borough Council's Enhanced Partnership Agreement for local bus services, as set out in Annex A to the report.

### **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is a statutory consultee for Reading Borough Council (RBC) in the process of making an Enhanced Partnership.

RBC published their Enhanced Partnership Agreement for Statutory Consultation on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The response attached as Annex A will be submitted on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council.

## Background

WBC is supportive of the shared objectives of building a sustainable, efficient, and growing bus network that meets the needs of residents across both boroughs and welcomes the opportunity to work with RBC.

The key objectives of RBC's EP Plan align with the National Bus Strategy and additionally include the need to enhance bus access and facilities within Reading town center. RBC's Enhanced Partnership Scheme covers the whole of Reading Borough by targeting investment onto eight key corridors. Three of the eight key corridors facilitate local bus services originating in Wokingham Borough, these are:

- Southern Corridor – connects Reading town centre with housing south of Reading in Wokingham Borough
- South-eastern Corridor – connects Reading town centre with Royal Berkshire Hospital, University of Reading, Lower Earley and Thames Valley Science Park.
- Eastern Corridor – is the main access from areas east of Reading, into Reading town centre via the A3290

Twenty separate proposals containing a series of measures, facilities, and provisions for delivering improvements on the key corridors. WBC is identified as a key delivery partner for nine of the twenty proposals, in summary these are:

- Reviewing Service Frequency
- Increasing Bus Priority Measures
- Consideration for Bus Rapid Transit
- Integrating Services with other modes
- Simplifying Services
- Reviewing socially necessary services
- Investing in a Superbus network
- Bus Passenger Charter
- Strengthening Network Identity

WBC is supportive of joint working in circumstances where proposals align with both local authorities' Enhanced Partnership Plans, provide a benefit to both boroughs and where sufficient funding is available to ensure effective delivery.

RBC's EP Scheme requires local bus services, which are not otherwise exempt, to meet certain quality standards to make use of bus priority infrastructure and local bus stops within Reading Borough. The EP Scheme does not provide sufficient detail at this stage on what these standards might be. Whilst WBC fully supports the need for a certain standard of quality in local bus service provision, WBC is also mindful that any standards imposed must not prevent competition or be prohibitive to new routes and operators emerging in the local bus markets within either Borough.

The delivery mechanism and governance for RBC's EP Agreement is contained in the EP Plan. WBC welcomes the opportunity to be part of RBC's, Enhanced Partnership Forum and undertake an observer role on the Enhanced Partnership Board.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

***The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	n/a	n/a	n/a

<b>Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision</b>
None

<b>Cross-Council Implications</b>
Cross-boundary implications would be considered through Wokingham Borough Council's Enhanced Partnership Agreement.

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
An equalities assessment is not required as this IEMD relates to a legal agreement which Reading Borough Council will be making and implementing within Reading Borough. Any joint schemes which affect Wokingham Borough would be subject to Wokingham Borough Council's Enhanced Partnership Agreement and therefore subject to the related equalities assessment.

<b>SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES</b>	
<b>Director – Resources and Assets</b>	Any comments to be updated at meeting
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	Any comments to be updated at meeting
<b>Leader of the Council</b>	Any comments to be updated at meeting

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
N/A

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
Reading Borough Council's Draft Enhanced Partnership Agreement

<b>Contact</b> Rebecca Brooks	<b>Service Place</b>
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Customer Services Tel: 0118 908 8302  
Email: rebecca.brooks@wokingham.gov.uk  
Date: 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022



**WOKINGHAM  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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## **RE: Consultation Response to Reading Borough Council's Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme**

Thank you for providing Wokingham Borough Council with the opportunity to comment on Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Enhanced Partnership (EP) Agreement.

Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is keen to work in partnership with RBC to ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of local bus services across our respective boroughs. Following the significant impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the lack of clarity around future government funding, we particularly keen to support the shared objective of building a sustainable, efficient, and growing bus network that meets the needs of residents in both of our boroughs.

WBC welcomes the opportunity to be part of RBC's Enhanced Partnership Forum and undertake an observer role on the Enhanced Partnership Board. It is noted that several actions within RBC's Enhanced Partnership Plan's Delivery Action Plan require joint working between our two boroughs. WBC is supportive of joint working in circumstances where proposals align with both local authorities' Enhanced Partnership Plans, provide a benefit to both boroughs and where sufficient funding is available to deliver them.

It is understood that local bus services will not be permitted to use local bus infrastructure, including bus priority lanes and local bus stops in RBC unless the service meets the EP Scheme's quality standards or is otherwise exempt. At the current time, RBC's EP is unclear on what the expected service quality standards are that will need to be met. Whilst WBC fully supports the need for a certain standard of quality in local bus service provision, WBC is also mindful that any standards imposed must not prevent competition or be prohibitive to new routes and operators emerging in the local bus market either within RBC or any neighbouring authority.

I trust the above comments are helpful to RBC in the further development of your EP Agreement. WBC would be happy to engage further with RBC before the EP is finalised through the statutory legal process.

Yours sincerely,

*RBrooks*

**Rebecca Brooks**  
**Community Transport Manager**