

Agenda Item IMD6

INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION

REFERENCE IMD: 2022/06

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| TITLE | Consultation Response to Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead's Enhanced Partnership Agreement |
| DECISION TO BE MADE BY | Executive Member for Highways and Transport - Pauline Jorgensen |
| DATE, MEETING ROOM and TIME | Wednesday 13 April 2022 FF11 at 18:00 |
| WARD | None specific |
| DIRECTOR / KEY OFFICER | 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 Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead's Enhanced Partnership Agreement for local bus services.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive Member for Highways and Transport approve the Council's response to Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead'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 Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead (RBWM) in the process of making an Enhanced Partnership.

RBWM published their Enhanced Partnership Agreement for Statutory Consultation on 15th March 2022 for a four-week period, until 12th April 2022. The response attached as Annex A has been submitted on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council, subject to Individual Executive Member Approval.

Background

WBC is supportive of the shared objectives of increasing local bus travel and reducing carbon emissions from transport and therefore welcome the opportunity to work with RBWM to provide a local bus network which meets the needs of residents of both our boroughs and across the wider Berkshire area.

The guiding principles of RBWM's EP Plan are as follows:

- **Partnership:** RBWM recognises the need to work in partnership with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to deliver the objectives of their EP Plan and Scheme.
- **Quality:** to enable the local bus network to compete with other modes, RBWM identifies that the local bus network needs to provide a quality service which is affordable, accessible, reliable, and available.
- **Responsive:** RBWM is looking to work in partnership with local bus operators and other stakeholders to make appropriate use of data in responding to changing demands for travel.
- **Monitoring and reporting:** a monitoring plan will be developed and deployed to allow the impact of investment to be understood and to allow for continuous improvement in any future developments of their EP.

The key objectives of RBWM's EP Plan are for:

- A quality local bus service that provides accessibility to the widest cross section of the population
- Buses that provide people with an option to access work, services, and leisure activities
- Operators who offer and promote affordable fares and multi-operator ticketing
- A bus network that encourages integration with other modes of transport
- Information being widely available and accessible to all users
- Bus infrastructure, which is contemporary, well-maintained, and consistent

RBWM's Enhanced Partnership Scheme covers the whole administrative area of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. The EP looks to address the EP Plan's objectives through a series of short-term (<12 months) and medium-term (12-36 months) facilities and measures. In summary these are:

- The creation of a RBWM Buses website
- Investment in technology to improve bus punctuality data
- Reviewing RBWM's bus network
- The creation of passenger charter, and
- Continued support for existing services

Obligations on local bus operators will mean all local bus service, unless exempt, will need to be provided by Euro VI, Hybrid or Zero Emissions vehicles from 1st April 2022. By 31st March 2030 all local bus services, unless exempt will need to support CCTV, free onboard Wi-Fi, free onboard USB power provision, automatic vehicle location equipment, on-board audio announcements, onboard visual next stop displays and have the ability for onboard contactless ticketing. A commitment is also made to achieving an improvement on the current offer of ticket acceptance by 31st March 2023.

An EP Forum is proposed for the purpose of providing opportunities to discuss issues affecting the RBWM and the wider Berkshire bus network. WBC is fully supportive of joint working and as such welcomes the opportunity to be part of the RBWM EP Forum.

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 |

| Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision |
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| None |

| Cross-Council Implications |
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| Cross-Council implications would be considered through Wokingham Borough Council's Enhanced Partnership Agreement. |

| Public Sector Equality Duty |
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| An equalities assessment is not required as this IEMD relates to a legal agreement which the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead will be making and implementing within the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead. 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. |

| SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES | |
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| Director – Resources and Assets | Any comments received will be advised at the meeting |
| Monitoring Officer | Any comments received will be advised at the meeting |
| Leader of the Council | Any comments received will be advised at the meeting |

| List of Background Papers |
|---------------------------|
| None |

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