

# Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

For the county area  
of Lincolnshire



## Executive summary

# Introduction

In 2024, we published the Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The BSIP aims to present the challenges faced with providing bus services across the county, and put in place a plan to overcome some or all of these challenges to make using a bus in Lincolnshire more convenient and less expensive than it might otherwise be.

This document summarises the BSIP to make it easier to see what it is that the Council, in close partnership with bus operators, is looking to do to make buses better.

## Background

In Lincolnshire, we face two key challenges when providing bus services:

1. We are a **large and very rural county** with a sparse population in many areas
2. We have an **ageing population**

In the past we have sought to meet these challenges through the development of the InterConnect network of services operating between our market towns, and through our CallConnect network of on-demand bus services that serve all areas throughout the county.

Both of these projects were successfully delivered, encouraged growth in the number of bus users and journeys made, and they not only exist today but provide a strong foundation and structure to our entire bus network. However, we recognise that we need to build on the networks we have and make them more attractive for more people.

Our vision for bus services in Lincolnshire is to maintain a local bus service for every Lincolnshire resident for 12 hours every day and for at least 6 days a week. In our market

towns, we aim to provide a minimum 30-minute service headway for local residents, and on our inter urban corridors we will provide a minimum of a one hourly headway.

To deliver this vision, our BSIP has five key aims:

1. **Support the growing Greater Lincolnshire economy**
2. **Be a more credible alternative to the car**
3. **Be easy to understand through high quality digital information & ticketing**
4. **Support a sustainable & greener future**
5. **Be delivered in partnership between the County Council, bus operators, local businesses, bus users and potential users**







# How we will make buses better in Lincolnshire

## Into Town Service Upgrades

We plan multi-faceted approach aims to provide an intensive upgrade of the bus offer to drive patronage growth, enhance the commercial viability of these services and provide operators with an opportunity to invest and grow their customer base to create a sustainable level of service.

- **Comprehensive review of each Into Town network**, identifying areas to optimise routes and service levels based on existing demand and future demand where there is planned housing growth
- Provide **kickstart funding and financial support** to enhance services
- Engage with operators to **introduce modern, high quality and low emission buses** on the network
- **Activate bus priority** at all of our signalised junctions
- **Investment in bus stop infrastructure** to ensure we have a shelter at bus stops where there is high demand, a bus pole and flag at less frequented stops and real time information at our most popular bus stops
- All bus stop poles and shelters will include **3 or 4 facing panels** providing timetable information for all services stopping at that stop, a location map and information around connecting services and promotional information promoting bus services



# Inter Connect Service Upgrades

We will carry out a significant upgrade along the service 100 and other Inter Connect corridors. There will be three parts to this: Infrastructure enhancements, service enhancements and improved information provision:

- **Upgrade the most popular bus stops to bus shelters**, in addition to introducing real-time information displays, integrated into the design of the bus stop. Providing **live information for bus arrival times** will help to increase confidence in services and drive patronage growth
- **Provide financial support to significantly enhance the timetable** to include more early morning, evening and weekend services.
- Operators will provide **upgraded vehicles** to include refreshed livery, next stop announcements and new flooring.
- To improve reliability, we will ensure that **traffic light priority is given to all late running bus services**



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## Rural Interchange Hub Demonstration Corridor

Lincolnshire has seen significant residential development, with many more planned across our county. As a result, we find that our villages are growing away from the main bus stop(s) in the centre of the village. To encourage bus use, either the bus can be made to come closer to the new residential developments – which costs time and resources as additional vehicles would be needed so is not to be encouraged – or the new residential developments could be made to be more accessible to the local bus stop(s).

We will trial rural interchange hubs in our growing villages along the A15 corridor between Bourne and Peterborough, this will involve:

- **Feasibility studies** to determine the **most appropriate modal hub for the village**. This could range from a simple Sheffield cycle stand to enable people to cycle to the local bus stop, to more secure cycle storage with CCTV cameras, to car parking near the bus stops to enable pocket park and ride systems to develop.
- **Design and construction** of the hub(s)
- Within the design, we will look to develop the bus stop infrastructure to **provide shelters instead of poles and flags** at busier stops, and incorporate **real-time information**
- **Promote and raise awareness** of the new infrastructure to encourage its use



# Upgrade of Bus Stop Infrastructure



In Lincolnshire, we have many bus stops that do not have hard standing. We have identified the 35 most used bus stops without this most basic of infrastructure and, where physically viable, we will install hard standing to enable bus users to board and alight buses more easily.

In areas of high footfall and bus use – as well as sufficient roadside space – we will upgrade bus stops to bus shelters to provide shelter from the elements.

Where we introduce shelters, we will incorporate real time information to provide bus users with better and more reliable information. Alongside this, upgrading all bus stop information will be carried out to provide a consistent and high-quality approach across the county. This will include all timetables operating at that bus stop, in addition to further information about making connecting and onward journeys.

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## Bus Service Support

The impact of COVID-19 continues to have a significant influence on bus patronage in Lincolnshire. Revenues have not recovered for bus operators as they would have hoped or expected, thus many of our services are becoming increasingly challenging to sustain for commercial operators.

The Council will continue to engage with operators on an individual basis – as it has for many years – and assess operator requests for support using the following principles:

- Ensure every resident has **access** to a local bus service **6 days a week**
- **Provide for essential journeys** accessing education and employment opportunities
- Maintain a **countywide network of frequent Inter Connect services**, operating 6 days a week
- Maintain a **network of Into Town networks** operating 6 days a week
- Maintain a network of **Call Connect services providing demand responsive services** for residents
- Identification of **best value local bus options** based on demand and assessment of costs



# Boston College Bus Driver Training Academy

All bus operators in Lincolnshire have identified a lack of qualified drivers as a significant challenge for their business and training and recruiting new drivers is carried out at a significant cost. From September 2023, Boston College started training HGV and bus drivers, but has only produced a small number of bus drivers to date.

It is necessary to provide additional financial support to increase the number of students attending and successfully completing their PCV (Passenger Carrying Vehicle) licence. Additional funding shall be spent on promotion and recruitment of more suitable students, as well as supporting the College to continue to provide the course in the medium term to train more bus drivers.

We will also work with the College to develop courses such as mechanical and digital maintenance to passenger assistance, not



only providing core elements of compliance but crucially, an enhanced offer to ensure that Lincolnshire's operatives are considered the 'best in class' for passenger safety, service and support.



# Lincolnshire Passenger Charter

In April 2024, Lincolnshire County Council and local bus operators launched the Bus Passenger Charter. This is a key deliverable of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme launched in April 2023. The Passenger Charter aims to provide bus users in Lincolnshire with what they can expect from bus operators, and what they can do about it if their expectations are not met. Bus operators and the County Council have developed this BSIP in order to drive patronage growth, and the passenger charter helps to provide greater confidence in the service they can expect to receive.



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