

Leicester ZEBRA Bid

Equality Impact Assessment

August 2021



Equality Impact Assessment

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Context

1. Leicester City Council, Arriva and First Bus are together applying for government funding towards the purchase of up to 96 fully electric buses. If successful this will represent an overall investment of over £40m, with around £18m from Government grant.
2. These buses will be introduced on many bus corridors in Leicester within the next 3 years – all of which are designated air quality management zones. Full route details are shown below. They will replace the existing diesel buses used on these routes.
3. The bidding process is competitive and Leicester has been shortlisted along with five other areas following its successful outline bid submission.
4. The City Council is now completing a full business case for submission by 20 August 2021. Part of this includes early consultation with different users that will be impacted by this proposed investment.
5. The buses will be a range of single and double decker buses similar in overall design and capacity to those already in operation within Leicester. However, they will have many additional features, similar to the 'Greenlines' buses recently introduced on Leicester's Park and Ride services:
 - a. A significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, removing over 3,640 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide from the local atmosphere each year and over 1,180 kg of Nitrogen Oxide – equivalent to removing around 800 cars from our congested roads each year.
 - b. A quiet electric motor, powered by a set of on-board batteries, with energy efficient regenerative braking.
 - c. Overnight charging at each depot, with no in-service charging delays. The overnight charge will last for a full day of operation.
 - d. Power will be purchased from certified renewable 'green' energy tariffs. There is also potential to use solar power energy through panels installed at each bus depot in the future.
 - e. Enhanced accessibility features such as:
 - additional room for a second wheelchair or two unfolded buggies
 - dedicated seats with leg room for an assistance dog
 - on-board screens showing next bus arrival information
 - on-board public address systems alerting passengers of the oncoming stop and other route/timetable information
 - acoustic bus alert system for pedestrians when travelling at low speeds in areas of high pedestrian usage.

- f. Digital contactless fare capping through tap in/ tap out, smart readers – giving the best daily or weekly fare for the trips undertaken, across any operator.
 - g. Distinctive eye-catching livery – both inside and out. There will be a full high-profile marketing plan associated with the launch of each new electric service.
 - h. A range of other route features funded by other successful bids, including:
 - Additional bus priority measures – enforced bus lanes, rationalised parking etc
 - Traffic light signal priority for late running buses
 - Real time information displays at all boarding stops
 - New bus shelters
6. There will be no change to the service timetables, fares or routes associated with these changes, with the needs of current users continuing to be met.

Equality Implications and Obligations

7. This section considers the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty that are relevant to this proposal.

Eliminate Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Victimisation

8. Bus users in Leicester are disproportionately likely to be from disadvantaged groups, with a greater proportion than its total population being:
- Elderly
 - Having various disabilities, including those associated with breathing difficulties.
 - From low-income households
 - From households without access to a car
 - From single-parent families
 - Young
 - From BAME groups
 - From LGBT groups
9. These groups are also more likely to live within the dense urban housing sited within the official air quality management areas in Leicester.
10. This proposal will see significant investment in electric buses, replacing more polluting existing diesel buses. It will be spread across the whole network, but focussed on the main bus corridors/air quality management areas, so disproportionately benefits those with protected characteristics.
11. The investment will also help to make the services more financially sustainable, since there will be associated reductions in fuel and maintenance costs. This will also help to keep fares down, particularly when also linked to other associated route improvement noted.

12. The buses will also be specified with enhanced accessibility features (noted above) compared with the current buses – specifically assisting bus travel for those with certain disabilities.

Advance Equality of Opportunity Between Different Groups

13. This will be achieved through the following:
14. The routes chosen for this investment are those that travel along the main air quality management areas of Leicester – the main areas of dense lower income housing, where the greatest number of bus users are located.
15. Specification to include specific enhanced accessibility features including:
- additional room for a second wheelchair or two unfolded buggies
 - dedicated seats with leg room for an assistance dog
 - on-board screens showing next bus arrival information
 - on-board public address systems alerting passengers of oncoming stop and other route/timetable information
 - acoustic bus alert system for pedestrians when travelling at low speeds in areas of high pedestrian usage.
16. Improving financial viability and therefore continuation of the services by reducing their operating costs.
17. This will help address specific issues to travel which impact on those with specific protected characteristics
- Ability to see when the next stop is, in order to alight the bus at the correct part of the route
 - Ability to hear the audible bus stopping signal and public 'next stop' announcements
 - To access the bus when the statutory wheelchair space is being used – other wheelchair users
 - To access the bus when no pushchair space – single parents of young children
 - Ability to hear when the electric bus is approaching the bus stop or travelling in heavily pedestrianised areas.

Foster Good Relations between Different Groups

18. Creating more opportunities to use public transport will benefit all users, including both disabled / non-disabled people and children / elderly people.
19. The improved public transport access will also encourage community cohesion. Improvements to transport links between areas/wards will also improve community cohesion and access to employment

Characteristics of those Impacted

Leicester Population

20. Overall, the age profile for Leicester is generally younger compared to the rest of East Midlands and nationally. In 2011, 55% of the population were under the age of 34 (compared to 43% in East Midlands) and 8% over the age of 70.
21. In 2011, over a quarter (32,447) of city households included a person with a long-term health problem or disability that limits the person's day-to-day activities, and has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. This includes problems that are related to old age.
22. Leicester is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse places in the UK, with a broad population breakdown by ethnic group as follows (Census 2011):
- 51% White
 - 36% Asian/Asian British (of whom 28% are of Indian heritage)
 - 6% Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
 - 4% Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
 - 3% Other ethnic group

Bus User Characteristics

23. A breakdown of Leicester travelling public can be shown by the following split in trip making by ticket type.

Leicester - trips by ticket type	
Type	Percentage
Adult	49.7%
Child	11.9%
Concs Disabled	13.3%
Concs Elderly	18.3%
Group	1.7%
Student	5.1%

24. Detailed profile breakdowns are only known for the West Midlands but are likely to be reasonably similar for Leicester, given the similarity in overall population characteristics and bus network coverage (with the exception of BAME proportion):
25. Bus users come from the younger and older age groups within the conurbation.
- The proportion of users from the 16-24 age group is 26%.
 - The proportion of over 60's around 23%.
 - 51% of bus users are aged 25-59

- Commuters and scholars were younger than the average traveller, while shoppers tend to be 60+ (49%).
26. Typically bus users were more likely to be female (65%) rather than male (35%).
- The female bias was noted amongst all groups, peaking at 72% amongst shoppers.
 - Women are also more likely to be from lower income households
27. Manual work continues to be the most dominant occupation with:
- 24% in semi-skilled/unskilled manual work
 - 15% in skilled manual work
 - 18% in clerical/administrative work
 - Students account for 14%
28. The proportion working full time was 44%, 18% worked part time, while 16% stated they were not in paid work.
- bus users continue to be disproportionately from the less affluent C2DE backgrounds (60%)
 - The Mosaic profile of bus users also suggests a less affluent market with a disproportionate number coming from Ex Council Community (15%), Suburban Mindsets (12%) and Claimant Culture (11%)
29. Bus users continue to be more likely to live in a household without a car (52%), just 48% lived in a car owning household.
- Bus users were increasingly likely to state that they did not have a car available to travel in for the journey they were making by bus (77%).
 - At 79% commuters were least likely to have a car available to use.
 - Scholars were most likely to have a car available – albeit at 74% a lack of car was still common.

How Protected Groups Dependent on Bus Travel

30. Bus users in Leicester are disproportionately likely to be from disadvantaged groups, with a greater proportion than its total population being:
- Elderly
 - Having various disabilities, including those associated with breathing difficulties
 - Identify as Female
 - Identify as LGBT
 - From low-income households
 - From households without access to a car
 - From single-parent families
 - Young
 - From BAME groups.

31. For young people (under 25), cost could be a barrier to increased public transport use. However, bus use is likely to be an important transport mode. Younger people are at a higher risk of road accidents than those in older age brackets. This bid will reduce the operating costs of bus travel and therefore help keep down bus fares.
32. The bus is a key mode of transport for older people, with the majority holding passes for free travel. The greatest barrier to increased public transport use amongst older people is bus service accessibility and concern about anti-social behaviour¹. This bid will both improve the financial sustainability of bus services and introduce a significant number of buses (25% of the whole fleet) with improved on-board accessibility features.
33. Disabled people are more likely to be dependent on buses for all journey purposes, as they are less likely than average to have access to or be able to drive a car. Barriers to use are likely to depend on their particular impairment. For many, physical accessibility is an important driver of public transport use and is often exacerbated at peak travel times when passenger numbers are high. This bid will both improve the financial sustainability of bus services and introduce a significant number of buses (25% of the whole fleet) with improved on-board accessibility features.
34. The following groups are statistically more likely to live within the dense urban housing sited within the official air quality management areas in Leicester:
- Those with disabilities, particularly related to breathing
 - BAME groups
 - Single parent mothers with young children
 - Elderly persons
35. The routes on which the electric buses will be introduced have been chosen on the basis of being the main services along each air quality management area in Leicester. The bid accounts for 42% of all routes across these polluted corridors, using 25% of the whole fleet. This rises to over 50% of all routes once all other planned investment in electric buses has taken place by 2024.

¹ Transport for London, Understanding the travel needs of London's diverse communities, Older People, April 2012

Bus routes on Each AQMA						
Air Quality Management Area:	Electric Committed	Electric Zebra	Diesel Euro 6	Total	Zebra Electric	All Electric
City Centre/Inner Ring Road	5	20	29	54	37%	46%
Ring Rd - Glenhills Way/Braunstone Way	1	1	0	2	50%	100%
Ring Rd - New Parks Way	0	1	0	1	100%	100%
Ring Rd - Colchester Rd/Goodwood Rd	1	2	0	3	67%	100%
Abbey Lane	1	2	0	3	67%	100%
Melton Rd	0	3	7	10	30%	30%
Dysart Way	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
Humberstone Rd/Uppingham Rd	0	2	3	5	40%	40%
London Rd	1	3	4	8	38%	50%
Welford Rd	0	2	1	3	67%	67%
Saffron Lane	0	2	3	5	40%	40%
Aylestone Rd	0	3	2	5	60%	60%
Narborough Rd/Braunstone Gate	1	2	0	3	67%	100%
Hinckley Rd	1	1	3	5	20%	40%
Northgate	0	3	1	4	75%	75%
Total	11	47	53	111	42%	52%
* not a bus corridor						

36. In relation to mental health specifically, evidence shows that access to public transport is a key determinant in a person's chances of achieving maximum recovery and being part of their community. Research undertaken by the mental Health Action Group in 2011 identified that 83% of respondents said public transport was 'very important' to their mental health. 'It has the potential to 'liberate' a person from the downward spiral of poor mental health, social isolation, poor life opportunities and to engage them with education, cultural opportunities, voluntary employment and paid employment.' Barriers to accessing public transport for those with mental health issues include cost, overcrowding, unreliability, and transport staff who are poorly trained in mental health.
37. Women are more likely to be the primary carer at home, which contributes to a lower employment rate amongst women compared to men. When travelling, women are more likely to be the primary carer at home, which contributes to a lower employment rate amongst women compared to men. When travelling, women are more likely than men to be travelling with buggies, accompanying children and/or shopping, which can affect mode choice. This bid will both improve the financial sustainability of bus services and introduce a significant number of buses (25% of the whole fleet) with improved on-board accessibility features.

Continuous Engagement

38. The outline ZEBRA electric bus bid was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in May 2021 and shortlisted in mid-June 2021, with full submission due for mid-August 2021. Clearly a comprehensive consultation process has not been feasible under the time available.
39. However, since lockdown Leicester City Council has established a reasonably effective on-line system for consultation with:
- various representatives from a broad range of different user groups

- existing bus users with registered email addresses through First Bus
 - key stakeholders from employment, health and educational establishments
40. Appendix 1 shows the process by which the City Council is now engaging online with the accessibility user groups for transport projects, together with some examples of ongoing funded projects under consultation. This group has representatives from Mosaic, Leicester Disabled Persons Action Group, Vista and the Council's own disabled employee group. It meets every 4 months and if successful a progress report on this bid will be submitted to a future meeting.
41. The City Council also has an active Bus User Panel, with representative from elderly persons organisations and various persons representing different disabilities. Their understanding of the details of buses and bus travel is well developed and many are quick to participate in consultation of projects, at any stage of their development.
42. The attached Appendix 2 briefing note and very simple survey was undertaken through email and postal correspondence with member of the Bus User Panel.
43. In addition, a more comprehensive online survey was distributed to First Bus and Centrebus users via their online email database and through their social media. This is shown on the weblink below:
- https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=udlGGZV0HESkXg3itl7XpbtLH_cIN2JN_ozhAoydh0VtUNE42OVg0S1VKSFJSVUhQM0c4SzIwOFY5Ni4u
44. There were 313 responses from the First Bus Leicester electronic version of the survey – sent to their active customer database.
45. Responses were strongly in support of the proposals and are summarized below. Questions were not set to mandatory to allow customers to comment on areas they had something to contribute. It should be noted this is a sample of engaged bus users, so likely to be supportive of bus improvements and may not be representative of the broader community.
46. A summary of their responses

Do you agree with the council making this bid?

91% rated between "4-5" for this question

Score distribution



47. In terms of the potential features on board the proposed electric buses, ratings were given between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest) and scored as follows:

- Additional room for a second wheelchair or two unfolded buggies **4.65**
- Dedicated seats with leg room for an assistance dog **4.53**
- On-board screens showing next bus arrival information **4.74**
- On-board public address systems alerting passengers of oncoming stop and other route/timetable information **4.64**
- Acoustic bus alert system for pedestrians when travelling at low speeds in areas of high pedestrian usage. **4.4**

48. In terms of complementary work to enhance these proposed electric bus routes, ratings were given between 1 (lowest) and 5 (highest) as follows:

- Digital fare capping - to give best value day or weekly fare for trips made during that period **4.71**
- All electric power drawn from renewable source **4.71**
- A new identity/look and promotion of bus travel **4.47**
- Additional bus priority measures such as enforced bus lanes, changes to parking schemes etc **4.30**
- Traffic light signal priority for late running buses **4.41**
- Real time information displays at all boarding stops **4.82**
- New bus shelters **4.46**

49. Verbatim comments were broadly supportive of the bid but reflect customer requirements that reliability, with a friendly driver and at a reasonable price continue to be key priorities for bus users and these developments should have a positive impact on core service delivery.

50. In addition, 90% of respondents also supported further bids.

51. It is instructive to note the demographic information given by respondents (note: some customers may fall into more than one category). For brevity these asked respondents whether which categories they felt the fell into:

- Being an older person
- Having a disability that makes travel difficult
- A single parent with one or more children below school age
- Having a low income with limited access to a car

- Coming from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background.

Being an older person	90
Having a disability that can m...	34
A single parent with one or m...	28
Having a low income, with lim...	102
Being from a Black, Asian or ...	75



52. In addition, there is wider consultation currently ongoing related to Leicester's Local Transport Plan 2024 – 39. Within this plan is a proposal for significant investment in electric buses across Leicester over the next 5 years, complemented by a range of promotional bus measures. To partially fund this package, the plan is proposing the introduction of a workplace parking levy and as such will be engaging with all major employers over the next 6 months to take this forward.

Possible Negative Impacts and Mitigations

53. The following areas have potential to impact adversely on either all bus traveller or certain disadvantaged groups. These have been raised through the consultation process and through online research.

Reduced capacity

54. Some electric buses have a lower seating capacity than the diesel buses they are replacing due to the space required to house batteries. In addition, there is potential for some routes to move from being double deckers to single deckers as a result of this change. This has potential to reduce access to a seat – which can present more of a disadvantage for those with disabilities, the elderly or with small children.

55. This aspect will be mitigated against by specifying larger buses with similar levels of seating than present, and by providing duplicate buses at key peak times.

Noise - bus too quiet

56. This can present a potential problem for those with visual impairment, particularly in city centre areas where there is a lot of conflict between bus and pedestrian movements.

57. This aspect will be mitigated against by ensuring that the buses are specified with an automated acoustic alert system, activated at low travelling speeds and/or in given locations.

Travelling information.

58. Those with visual or hearing impairments stated they often find it difficult to navigate whilst on the bus. The same can apply to wheelchair users who are facing backwards from other passengers.

59. This will be mitigated by the following

- Double sided on-board passenger information screens – visible from both sides.
- On board public address system
- On-board USB points at all seats – for user to charge their own mobile comms devices.
- Expansion of real time displays in the programme at stops, all with text to speech audio buttons

Interior steps

60. Design constraints related to battery buses make them difficult to specify as being totally low floor, with no internal steps. This can present a difficulty for those with visual or ambulant difficulties.

61. This will be mitigated by the following

- Continuously step free for two thirds of the bus floor area from the driver cab onwards
- Contrasting floor covering and step material
- Hand rails and stopping buttons at every seat

Bus route recognition

62. Buses that are all very similar in terms of shape and colour can make it difficult to some people with visual impairment to easily identify their particular service.

63. This will be mitigated by having distinct strong colour branding for each route and by retain individual route numbering shown on LED displays at the front, side and rear of the bus.

64. In line with the recommendations of the National Bus Strategy - the overall network numbering will be adjusted to remove duplication of the same route number across different operators.

Reliability - Run out of power

65. Electric buses have the potential to run out of power during operation. A broken down bus will have disproportionate impact on more vulnerable groups since they are often less able to find alternative option (e.g. walk, taxi).

66. This will be mitigated by specifying the following

- Operating miles of each service is less than 80% of the bus's battery capacity
- Drivers fully trained in regenerative braking – to save power

- Remote diagnostics equipment – so that operations manager can be alerted if any buses is getting below its due state of charge at any point in a day's operation.
- Smart remote overnight charging system – not reliant on human error
- Spares, warranty and maintenance systems.

Expense – reduce viability of the routes

67. Electric buses are about twice the cost of diesel buses to purchase. This could potentially have the impact of reducing the commercial viability of the service, leading to either service reductions and/or fare increases.

68. This will be mitigated by

- A robust commercial business plan to ensure no adverse service changes
- Accessing government capital grant to reduce the difference by 75%.
- Savings from fuel and maintenance, reinforced by driver training related to maximise regenerative braking savings.
- Extended warranties
- Bus service operation grant of £0.22 per km for first three years at least
- Investigating ways to produce, store and use solar power at each depot.

Safety

69. This area has come out as of high concern for many female and younger travellers. Also seen as an issue for some LGBT travelers. This will be mitigated by some of the proposed complementary measures noted, including

- Better, illuminated waiting facilities
- Real time information at bus stops, with text-to-speech audio buttons.
- Digital and smart ticketing – removing need to carry cash, speeds boarding
- Continuous driver awareness training
- CCTV on buses and in bus stations – address hate crime too.

Ticketing

70. Although digital and smart ticketing was seen as a good safety measure, it was also noted that there is significant unbanked section of residents in Leicester (8%). They will be assisted through the following

- concessionary smart cards for those unbanked who are either elderly, disabled or young or unemployed.
- cash retained on the buses – the electric buses will retain cash handling, trays and hoppers

Other features

71. There are several other aspects which have been noted as being required to make travel easier for many groups. These include additional buggy space, step free interior design, frequent grab rails and stop buttons, language

barriers, stop accessibility and user behaviour. These will be addressed as follows:

- bus specification includes specific design improvements to assist accessibility e.g. step free for more than two thirds of bus floor area.
- additional programme of works to make bus stops more accessible
- advanced driver customer care training
- general campaigns to improve user behaviour
- availability of information in different languages.

Monitoring Ongoing Impact of Proposal

72. The ongoing impact of this proposal will be monitored by the following methods

73. Measurement

- Usage on each electric routes against other routes
- Usage changes per route split by user groups: elderly persons and disabled persons travel passes, discounted young persons passes, fare paying adults
- Take up of concessionary travel passes
- Air quality measurement at key locations across the city

74. Quarterly passenger satisfaction surveys related to travel on these buses – against other similar authorities. Using independent Transport Focus survey analysis.

75. Regular reports and feedback from:

- Leicester Transport Accessibility Panel
- Leicester Bus User Panel
- Operator and council social media platforms

76. Further online local surveys to regular bus users on established email databases, covering and separately identifying all disadvantages groups.

Information Used for Assessment

77. This assessment has used the following data sources:

- Age UK, The Future of Transport in an Ageing Society, 2015
- Department for Transport, Young People's Travel – What's Changed and Why?, 2018
- Public Health England – Leicester City Health Profile 2018
- NHS Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group, The Health of the Population, 2017

- Transport for London, Understanding the travel needs of London's diverse communities, April 2012 (<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/travel-in-london-understanding-our-diverse-communities.pdf>)
- Department for Transport, Travel by car access, household income, household type, NS-SEC and mobility status NTS0702, 2018
- Leicester City Council, Local Transport Plan (2011-2026)
- Census 2011 (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census>)
- NOMIS (<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/customerrors/nodataset.asp#>)
- Mental Health Action Group, Mental Health and Public Transport, September 2011
- Department for Transport, Transport for Everyone: an action to promote equality, 2012
- West Midlands Bus Users Profile 2015 - <https://data.birmingham.gov.uk/dataset/bus-rail-and-metro-user-profiles>

Conclusions

78. The above overview equality impact assessment shows the following main points:

- a. Leicester has a diverse population with high dependency on bus travel.
- b. There is very strong support for the proposed bid across all types of traveller.
- c. The proposal should greatly improve the quality of life of many users, though care needs to be taken in ensuring the specification is properly tailored to all needs.
- d. Continuous monitoring is required to ensure this investment consistently meets all users' needs

Appendix 1.

Future engagement with accessibility user groups

Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 24 June 2021

Lead director/officer: Andrew L Smith/Stuart Maxwell

1. Summary

This report outlines how the department proposes to engage with accessibility user groups on highways and transport related projects.

2. Recommended actions/decision

The commission are asked to note and support the proposals to set up a new disability access group to assist the Council with accessibility considerations on highways and transport related projects.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

3.1 EDTT Scrutiny Commission 9th July 2020; a question was asked regarding the Council's approach to engagement with users with disabilities. It was explained that much progress had been made to develop expertise in house and that the council would continue to invest resources into accessibility and was committed to inclusive design. As part of the Council's street design guide a street assessment tool has been developed and the guide itself was produced with input from disability groups.

3.2 Engagement with the Chair of the Leicester Disabled Persons Accessibility Group took place on 9th December 2020. Email sent to accessibility groups 15th January 2021 inviting them to put forward representatives to take part in a proposed new forum.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

N/a

5. Detailed report

Proposed Leicester Transport Accessibility Panel

5.1 As part of the design process, the department has previously engaged with accessibility user groups via the Leicester Disabled Access Person's Group (LDPAG) and Bus User Panel (BUP). This has highlighted the needs of different users and helped officers design for inclusive access. Since the COVID pandemic and lockdown in March 2020, these groups have been unable to meet as they had done previously although engagement has taken place where possible as outlined in paragraph 5.6. Officers have developed proposals for a new disability access group to ensure the wide range of accessibility interests

and issues are considered within both individual project designs and the wider management of the public highway and urban realm.

5.2 Officers met with the LDPAG Chair, Sujata Barot, in December 2020 to ascertain the status of the LDPAG group and to discuss future engagement options and opportunities. Sujata explained they were trying to get their members to adapt to using IT in order to set up online meetings, but this was proving difficult. A discussion took place around the need to organise a suitable group, including LDPAG, to appropriately represent the wide range of accessibility interests and provide informed comments on draft scheme designs being developed by the council. It was a very positive meeting and the LDPAG Chair welcomed the opportunity for their group to be represented in this new forum alongside other relevant groups. Following that initial meeting, we were informed of the very sad news that Sujata had passed away. Officers have since exchanged e-mails with Sally Williams of LDPAG who, on an interim basis, has agreed to administer invitations to any future consultation meetings.

5.3 It is proposed to establish a new disability access group called the “Leicester Transport Accessibility Panel” (LTAP). This will support the Council with accessibility considerations on highways and transport related projects by providing informed comments on:

- individual scheme designs.
- design standards and related guidance.
- technology which enhances accessibility; and,
- other relevant accessibility issues

5.4 The Panel will meet 3 times per annum chaired by the City Transport Director. Additional meetings focussed on specific schemes will be arranged as required, led by the relevant project leader. Officers have made contact with a number of groups to represent accessibility interests and, to date, have received an interest to join from the following:

- Mosaic
- LCC Disabled Employee group
- LDPAG
- VISTA

This can be kept under review and additional groups can be added as appropriate.

Officer Training on Accessibility

5.5 As part of our commitment to accessible design, all officers that are involved from a project delivery, planning or policy perspective will be provided with suitable training. The following are examples of training that is ongoing or proposed.

a) ***Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for each project***

EIAs are carried out for all relevant projects. They are reviewed and updated throughout the life of the project. Project Managers have training sessions on the requirements of an EIA and use of the corporate EIA template. Regular training sessions will be held to ensure officers are familiar with EIA requirements.

b) ***Design Guide Workshops***

- Relevant officers have or will attend workshops on the new Leicester Street Design Guide. This promotes sustainable, healthier and accessible designs which reflect the characteristics and function of the particular streets within the scope of the project.

c) ***Inclusive Design Training***

- Strategy managers, programme / project managers and scheme designers will be given ongoing inclusive design training opportunities relevant to their role. Officers are considering external and in-house training options. Examples of available courses include:

Ensuring Compliance with the Equality Act (Supplier – PTRC)

This course has been developed to help transport, highways and public realm professionals in unitary county and district authorities to understand the provisions of the Equality Act and what this means for their day-to-day work in policy development through to planning, designing and delivering schemes on the ground

Delivering Accessible and Inclusive Transport (Supplier – PTRC)

Retro-fitting high-quality cycling infrastructure is a significant challenge for engineers and planners. Restricted space, UK driving rules, culture and political support are key challenges.

This course explores the different approaches to making cycling feel convenient and safe in urban areas, illustrated by case studies of innovative cycling infrastructure design.

Inclusive Design – Examples of Inclusive Design & Engagement with Disability Groups

5.6 **Core Features and Facilities** – the following elements are routinely embedded within our scheme designs to improve accessibility:

- Tactile paving at crossings & on cycleways
- Tactile push-buttons and audible signals (when safe to do so) at traffic signal controlled crossing points
- Raised boarding platforms at bus stops

5.7 **Consultation on Major Schemes (pre-Covid 19)** – despite the absence of a formal access panel, designers have been able to consult relevant groups on accessibility issues associated with major projects. Examples include:

a) ***London Road Improvement***

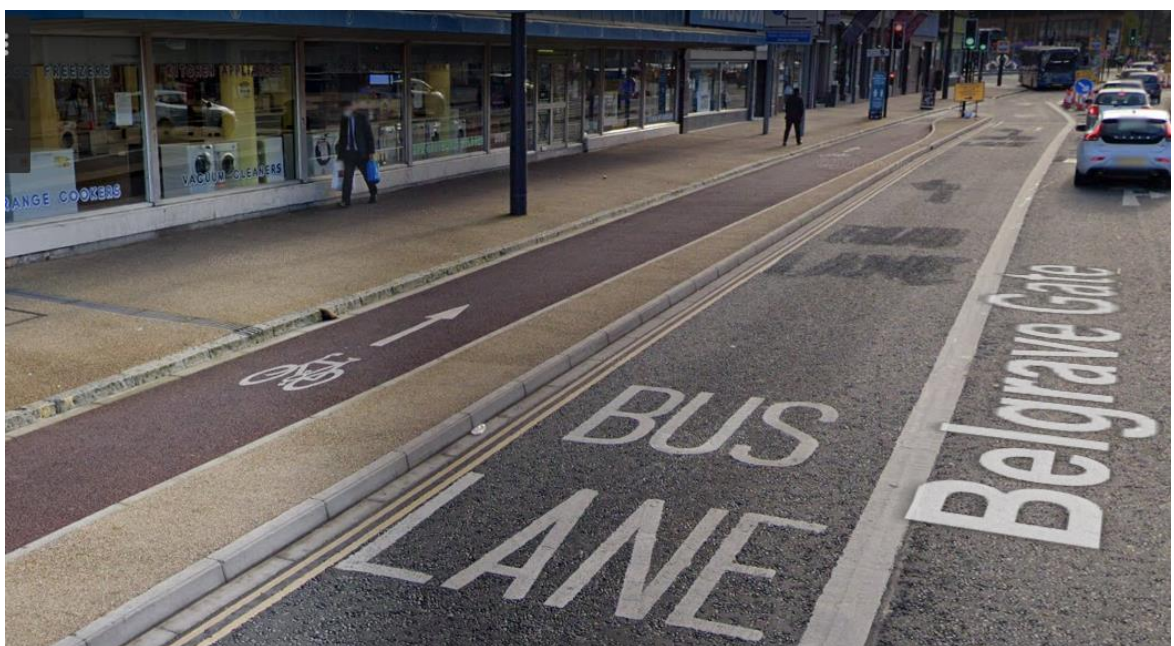
The London Road Highway Improvement scheme aimed to create a safer route for all users. Consultation on the scheme took place in Autumn 2017. Comments were received from members of LDPAG at exhibition events. A meeting was also held in September 2017 with different stakeholder groups including LDPAG and Vista. Comments from the meeting were fed into the public consultation which took place in October 2017. The scheme was constructed between October 2018 and December 20.



London Road – serving multiple user needs at a busy location

b) Belgrave Gate Improvement.

This scheme creates a safer and more attractive route for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians. Stakeholders, including members of LDPAG, were consulted on the scheme in summer 2017.



Belgrave Gate – dedicated space for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and cars

c) **Lancaster Road / Tigers Way & Victoria Park Road / Queens Road Junctions**

Consultation with LDPAG was undertaken in 2019 and resulted in positive and effective design changes including:

- Introduction of a crossing on Lancaster Road adjacent to Tigers Way.
- Introduction of guidance paving on the path through Victoria Park.
- Simplified design at Victoria Park Road/Queens Road junction.



Tigers Way Crossing – with segregated pedestrians, cycles and vehicles

d) **King Street**

No design changes were made following consultation with LDPAG in 2018.



King Street – shortlisted for national “Healthy Streets” Award

5.8 **Consultation during covid-19** - notwithstanding the limitations on engagement during scheme development through the Covid-19 pandemic, several projects have in the recent past been subject to engagement with members of LDPAAG and other disability groups. Examples include:

Live Bus Information Signs with Audio Announcements

Our Transforming Cities Fund Programme includes the roll-out of approximately 500 No. live bus information signs along our major radial routes. For the first time in Leicester, the signs have the potential to include an audio announcement facility triggered by a push button.

A trial sign was installed in Charles Street (nr the junction of Church Street) and was available to any users making an essential trip to that area of the city centre. Recognising the constraints imposed by Covid-19, mobility impaired users were also consulted using a video clip of the Charles Street test sign in operation. Feedback has been positive.

In addition to improving accessibility, these battery powered signs are quick and easy to install – avoiding the expense and inconvenience of the excavations and cabling required for mains electricity connections. Removing the need for these on-site works is a further small but worthwhile benefit for mobility impaired pedestrians.



Audio Sign &

St Margaret's Bus Station Rebuild

Two separate meetings were held with LDPAG during the RIBA design stages. The first, in November 2020, outlined the scheme proposals and sought to understand any issues and requirements from an LDPAG perspective. Following this meeting, scheme designs were amended and presented to LDPAG in January 2021. Additional items were raised during the second meeting and have now been incorporated within the design and tender documentation. Minutes of the consultation meetings were sent to all those in attendance.

Going forward, our tender documentation stipulates that the successful contractor must continue engagement with LDPAG when finalising the RIBA stage 4 design work.



St Margaret's Bus Station – rebuild underway

5.9 Working with others to improve accessibility - the above examples illustrate projects which are designed and delivered by the city council. However, if the opportunity arises the council will work with partners to improve accessibility by building on systems and services which are outside our immediate control. For example:

a) Public transport – off bus mobile ticketing

The challenge of increasing social distancing and reducing personal contact during Covid-19 provided a window of opportunity to work with bus operator partners and make rapid progress in the complex area of contactless and mobile ticketing.

Building on existing bus operator platforms, the result is that our multi-operator flexi-tickets can now be purchased off-bus and used across Leicester's commercial bus network.

Although many mobility and visually impaired bus users will benefit from the concessionary travel card scheme, it is not always the case. The provision of this cashless and contactless multi-operator ticket is therefore considered to be a positive step which will increase accessibility and improve safety during Covid-19 and beyond.

Flexi Tickets - Unlimited travel on any bus in Leicester



6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

6.2 Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 also requires that reasonable adjustments be made so that disabled people are not excluded from places that serve the public, including publicly accessible open spaces. This duty is on-going and anticipatory and, therefore, reasonable and proportionate steps to overcome barriers which may impede people with different kinds of disabilities.

Accessible and inclusive design relating to highway and transport schemes in an around the City will support the general aims of the PSED and will be beneficial particularly in removing barriers to participation in public life. Ongoing engagement and consultation with key service user groups, disability groups and organisations is a vital aspect of ensuring that an inclusive approach which is consistent with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 is taken. It is vitally important that less visible disabilities are taken into account, as they can pose just as much of a barrier as a physical disability.

As the report notes, equality impact assessments are carried out to ensure that any potential disproportionate negative impacts on any particular protected characteristic/s are identified and mitigated and to ensure that the schemes are inclusive of individuals and groups with different protected characteristics.

Engagement enables public authorities, and people with an interest in their work, to pool their knowledge and experience of eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. This evidence can then be used to improve decision making. Setting up of a new disability group to help to develop projects should make a positive contribution in achieving positive equalities outcomes. Engagement can also help to design more appropriate projects/services, which in turn are more likely to be effective, and make better use of resources.

Surinder Singh Equalities Officer, ext 37 4148

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no specific climate change implications arising directly from this report.

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

n/a

7. Background information and other papers:

None

8. Summary of appendices:

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly) . No.

10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why? No

Appendix 2

Equality Impact Consultation : Letter to members of Bus User Panel

To : Bus User Panel Members

Date : 18 July 2021

Leicester Electric Bus Bid - Consultation

Leicester City Council, is leading a partnership bid with Arriva and First Bus to apply for funding towards the purchase of upto 96 fully electric buses. If successful this will represent an overall investment of around £39m, with nearly £17m from Government grant.

These buses will be introduced on most main bus corridors in Leicester within the next 3 years – all of which are designated air quality management zones. For commercial reasons, full details of these routes cannot currently be disclosed.

The bidding process is competitive and Leicester has been shortlisted along with five other areas following its successful outline bid submission.

The City Council now has to complete a full business case for submission by 20 August 2021. Part of this includes an initial equality impact assessment, including consultation with different users that will be impacted by this proposed investment.

The buses will be a range of single and double decker buses to a similar overall design and capacity to those already in operation within Leicester. However, they will have the following additional features, in line with those 'Greenlines' buses recently introduced on Leicester's Park and Ride services:

1. A 34% reduction in green house gas emissions compared with the current diesel buses employed
2. Quiet electric motor, powered by a set of on-board batteries, with energy efficient regenerative braking.
3. Overnight charging at each depot, with no in-service charging delays – the overnight charge will last for a full day of operation.
4. Power will be purchased from certified renewable 'green' energy tariffs. There is also potential to use solar power energy through panels installed at each bus depot in the future.
5. Enhanced accessibility features such as
 - additional room for a second wheelchair or two unfolded buggies
 - dedicated seats with leg room for an assistance dog
 - on-board screens showing next bus arrival information

- on-board public address systems alerting passengers of oncoming stop and other route/timetable information
 - acoustic bus alert system for pedestrians when travelling at low speeds in areas of high pedestrian usage.
6. Digital contactless fare capping through tap in/ tap out, smart readers – giving the best daily or weekly fare for the trips undertaken, across any operator.
 7. Distinctive eye-catching livery – both inside and out.
 8. Full high-profile marketing plan associated with the launch of each new electric service.
 9. A range of other route features including
 - Additional bus priority measures – enforced bus lanes, rationalised parking etc
 - Traffic light signal priority for late running buses
 - Real time information displays at all boarding stops
 - New bus shelters

I would be very grateful if you could complete the attached brief survey and return it to me by 30 July at the latest by email. I will, of course, keep the panel updated on how this bid progresses.

Many thanks.

Andy Gibbons

Programme Manager

Leicester City Council

andrew.gibbons@leicester.gov.uk

<u>Leicester Electric Bus Funding Bid</u>	Jul-21		
Please complete in yellow boxes			
Do you agree with the Council making this bid?	Support	No view	Don't Support
Do you agree with the proposed investment in the following additional features:	Support	No view	Don't Support
Additional room for a second wheelchair or two unfolded buggies			
Dedicated seats with leg room for an assistance dog			
On-board screens showing next bus arrival information			
On-board public address systems alerting passengers of oncoming stop and other route/timetable information			
Acoustic bus alert system for pedestrians when travelling at low speeds in areas of high pedestrian usage.			
Digital fare capping - to give best value day or weekly fare for trips made during that period			
Powered by certified renewable electric			
New livery and associated promotion			
Do you agree with the proposed accompanying investment for these proposed electric buses:	Support	No view	Don't Support
Additional bus priority measures – enforced bus lanes, rationalised parking etc			
Traffic light signal priority for late running buses			
Real time information displays at all boarding stops			
New bus shelters			
Do you agree to future bids for further investment in electric buses	Support	No view	Don't Support
Please give any other comments related to this proposal			