

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

<i>Stakeholder's Organisation</i>	<i>Points Made</i>	<i>West Northamptonshire Council Response</i>
Hinton-in-the-Hedges Parish Meeting	I feel that it is a largely 'tick box' exercise as its relevance to almost everyone in South Northamptonshire is zero. The only mentions for Brackley are as a stopping place for east/west routes.	This is not the case, however capital investment is more likely to be focused on the parts of the road network used by more cars and where more bus passengers are travelling. This does not mean rural areas are forgotten, access from rural area to town centres and key education and wider services is important, and as these services approach the busier parts of the network they will benefit from priority measures too. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme (EPP/EPS)
Hinton-in-the-Hedges Parish Meeting	The decision to halt the Northampton to Brackley service at Silverstone was a complete mystery to all in Brackley.	The decision was a commercial one by the operator, as revenue on the Sulverstone - Brackley section was insufficient to cover the cost of operation. Point noted, but this is not a matter covered by this consultation. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme (EPP/EPS)
Hinton-in-the-Hedges Parish Meeting	The Northampton to Oxford Service has just disappeared off the map.	The Northampton - Oxford subsidised service was withdrawn as usage was insufficient to cover the costs of operation. More recently the Brackley - Bicester subsidised service has been introduced, using
Hinton-in-the-Hedges Parish Meeting	No mention of the Brackley to Bicester service and the villages just do not exist in this scheme.	Stagecoach 505 service is a supported service and as such is exempt from the Enhanced Partnership (EP), hence why is not listed in Schedule E. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme (EPP/EPS)
Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)	The CMA has a statutory function within the Transport Act 2000 (as amended). Should the CMA consider that a partnership agreement does not meet the 'Competition Test', the CMA may open an investigation. The Act recognises that while an agreement might have a significant adverse effect on competition it may still pass the Test if it is a proportion means to delivering improvements to bus services. The act does not require the CMA to provide an opinion on whether the partnership proposals meet the requirements of the Test.	The CMA comments are general and cover a number of Enhanced Partnership Plans (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Schemes (EPS) which they have seen and are not made in specific response to the West Northamptonshire's draft. The EPP/EPS has been reviewed against each comment and the arrangements are considered to comply with the feedback, however the Competition Test has been strengthened to consider the counter-factual position. turning to each point: - the first two points are CMA context. they are to note only. - the voting arrangements provide every operator of "Qualifying Local Services" with a vote, there are no proxy arrangements (where a representative operator votes on behalf of others). Therefore this is not a local concern.
CMA	Any comments provided in the course of the CMA's review should not be interpreted to provide legal assurances that there will be no adverse impact for competition or that a proposed agreement is compliant with competition law. We ask that EP plans and documents, reflect this position (by avoiding references that imply that EP plans have been cleared by the CMA).	- Compensation arrangements only apply to the failure to run the last bus (regardless of time but subject to being due to the operators own fault). Therefore the issue does not apply to this area.. - Branding - it is noted that operator own branding must be visible (on London the operator of a service is named by the entry door). This will need considering as the branding issues come forward. - the exemption criteria is believed to be transparent. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme however the Competition Test has been updated to include the Counter-factual position. The Competition Test does not form part of the EPP or EPS.
CMA	Care needs to be taken so that voting/governance arrangements are based on contestable criteria, and do not exclude operators.	

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CMA	To fully satisfy themselves, authorities should consider the state of competition under the counterfactual (i.e. absent the EP) and how it will be impacted by new requirements on operators. Appropriate transition periods may mitigate some of these impacts. The use of non-prescriptive/outcome based objectives may give greater flexibility to operators to deliver your objectives, but it is for the authority in partnership with operators to consider the policy objectives that are to be delivered.	<p>The CMA comments are general and cover a number of Enhanced Partnership Plans (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Schemes (EPS) which they have seen and are not made in specific response to the West Northamptonshire's draft.</p> <p>The EPP/EPS has been reviewed against each comment and the arrangements are considered to comply with the feedback, however the Competition Test has been strengthened to consider the counter-factual position.</p> <p>turning to each point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the first two points are CMA context. they are to note only. - the voting arrangements provide every operator of "Qualifying Local Services" with a vote, there are no proxy arrangements (where a representative operator votes on behalf of others). Therefore this is not a local concern. - Compensation arrangements only apply to the failure to run the last bus (regardless of time but subject to being due to the operators own fault). Therefore the issue does not apply to this area.. - Branding - it is noted that operator own branding must be visible (on London the operator of a service is named by the entry door). This will need considering as the branding issues come forward. - the exemption criteria is believed to be transparent. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme however the Competition Test has been updated to include the Counter-factual position. The Competition Test does not form part of the EPP or EPS.
CMA	Some EPs include proposals for encouraging flexible business models, like Demand Responsive Transport, though the level of thinking and evidence base that has gone into those business models across the EP plans varies. We would encourage you to explore existing trials of these models and learn from best practice in other authorities, where it exists.	
CMA	The removal of single operator tickets will have a potentially significant impact on the incentives of operators to compete against each other. We encourage careful consultation with operators, so that operators who are uncertain about the legal risks of offering multi-operator tickets are not excluded. We would recommend seeking legal advice to ensure that any scheme is compliant with competition law as the CMA as the UK's lead competition enforcement agency cannot provide this.	
CMA	If you have plans for introducing refund guarantees on certain routes, again we would encourage careful consultation with operators, so new schemes do not create the unintended consequence of providers not wanting to service routes or enter the market.	
CMA	Where an authority wishes to require buses to adopt a standard livery or branding scheme we would recommend that operator brands should be clearly visible, particularly where operators are competing on overlapping routes. Care should be given to the impact on operators of cross-border routes.	

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CMA	Where governance arrangements do not include individual representation for each bus operator, we advise that there is some form of shared representation (or similar arrangement) for smaller operators that might otherwise be excluded. Where larger operators have greater representation in governance arrangements, this should be defined by contestable criteria (e.g. total mileage) rather than fixed, named operators.	The CMA comments are general and cover a number of Enhanced Partnership Plans (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Schemes (EPS) which they have seen and are not made in specific response to the West Northamptonshire's draft. The EPP/EPS has been reviewed against each comment and the arrangements are considered to comply with the feedback, however the Competition Test has been strengthened to consider the counter-factual position. turning to each point: - the first two points are CMA context. they are to note only. - the voting arrangements provide every operator of "Qualifying Local Services" with a vote, there are no proxy arrangements (where a representative operator votes on behalf of others). Therefore this is not a local concern.
CMA	Should you include exemptions, these should be clearly defined with objective criteria to give confidence the exemptions will be applied appropriately.	- Compensation arrangements only apply to the failure to run the last bus (regardless of time but subject to being due to the operators own fault). Therefore the issue does not apply to this area. - Branding - it is noted that operator own branding must be visible (on London the operator of a service is named by the entry door). This will need considering as the branding issues come forward. - the exemption criteria is believed to be transparent. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme however the Competition Test has been updated to include the Counter-factual position. The Competition Test does not form part of the EPP or EPS.
Member of the public	I rarely use the bus at present, but would do so more if it went to the station from Deanshanger outside peak hours and also stopped at the shopping centre. Environmentally we should be investing in better public transport so we are not using polluting cars with only one person in them.	The support is welcomed, however the bus operators need to balance the destination needs across all users, that said this feedback should be raised with the local operators. Action: No change required to the EPP/EPS. However, the termination destination is being raised with local bus operators so they can review local routing and make a commercial decision.
Braunston Parish Council	Improved Realtime Information should include: At stops where funding does not allow for realtime information displays, a Quick Response (QR) code that links to the operator's, or ideally West Northamptonshire Council's, realtime app will be prominently displayed. Explanation – There are three pairs of active bus stops in Braunston. It is unlikely that all or any of them can be prioritised for realtime information displays. Most potential passengers carry a smart phone that could be used to scan a code to get realtime information.	These are valid points and as realtime is rolled out, information at stops and elsewhere would help users access the information and interpret the messages communicated. The use of QR codes has been used by other authorities. Action: No change required to the EPP/EPS. However, the Partnership and Council should consider the suggestion to encourage broader use of Realtime data.

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Braunston Parish Council	<p>Ticketing Schemes should include: Fares should be calculated from zone to zone regardless of whether a change of bus is required. Explanation – Stagecoach run two buses an hour between Northampton and Rugby. The 96 goes via Long Buckby which has a station and goes via Rugby Station. The D1/D2 goes via Daventry which does not have a station and no longer reaches the station at Rugby. Braunston (and Daventry) has always previously had a service to Rugby Station. To reach the station now it is necessary to change buses and pay a new fare even though this is more time consuming and inconvenient.</p>	<p>Multi-operator ticketing schemes offer day and longer products usable between operators within the Northampton Buzz Card area. There are however no plans to have a cross-boundary multi-operator ticketing scheme that covers both West Northamptonshire and Warwickshire. Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS</p>
Hollowell & Tetton Parish Council	<p>The 'Plan' should include a 'Schedule' identifying those bus services which have been specifically excluded and reason stated to ensure awareness of all bus services and avoid unnecessary queries about 'other services'. I note that there is no reference in either the 'Plan' or 'EP' document to service 59 (Welford to Market Harborough) which links with service 60 (Northampton to Welford).</p>	<p>Both services 59 and 60 are subsidised services, and therefore exempt. It was considered that a look at the timetables and the definitions of exempt services was the better way to go, because services and timetables change and this may alter the status of services, the risk being with a table that people rely on the table and ignore the impact of change, the definitions in paragraph 2.5 should prevail. The exception being than for academic or workers services, which we felt were less clear from the timetable, these are listed in Schedule E. Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS</p>
Hollowell & Tetton Parish Council	<p>Not able to identify anything 'missing' but note that a larger proportion of items quoted in following tables 3.1 & 3.2 would appear to be orientated to Northampton and it is not clear if any of these 'Facility / locations' could be applied to more rural centres. These priorities will assist with bus usage.</p>	<p>The capital investment is concentrated on areas with more frequent bus services, this is important to ensure a good return for the investment made and a balanced approach between differing road users. However rural services also approach Northampton on the main corridors and therefore will benefit from the measures in the busier part of the network (for example). Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS</p>
Hollowell & Tetton Parish Council	<p>Yes agree with proposals for investment in buses, ticketing and Information are the immediate priority for the first 3 years. Query whether the 'obligations' would apply to any / all 'supported services'?</p>	<p>The plan is to extend the "obligations" to supported bus services when the tender next comes up for renewal, it is not planned to do this mid-contract as there would not be a means of ensuring a competitive price to deliver any enhancement. Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS</p>

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Hollowell & Tetton Parish Council	No suggestions for additional members but you could consider whether Parish Councils are involved individually or through a representative body (Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC)).	Parish Councils are invited to be a part of the Wider Stakeholder Group, it is possible for them to choose to be engaged individually or through an umbrella body, in the interests of efficient working. Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS
Parish Council for Barby and Onley	This may not be the correct forum for this request but with the popular focus on more sustainable, efficient transport solutions I would ask that consideration be given to the reinstatement of a route to Onley. Services of No. 12 bus were withdrawn in June 2016. The service which ran from Daventry to Rugby Via A45 Dunchurch diverted to Willoughby and Onley serving the Estate and Prisons on an hourly basis. The removal of this service denied available bus route for the residents and for the visitors, released occupants and employees of the Prisons located at Onley. Please advise if there is a more appropriate way of requesting this should it be deemed out of scope for the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.	Looking at what can be done to reinstate bus services to communities which have lost one will be part of a separate process once we know how much funding we have for next year from the Council's budget and the Department for Transport. Is Onley Park still served by the Flexibus service 203 on Mondays and 214 on Wednesdays? Action: No change proposed to the EPP/EPS
Spratton Parish Council	Q1 response - Our own bus service consists of a combination of two services from Northampton to Market Harborough consisting of the 59 route from Welford to Market Harborough but the same bus is used on the Market Harborough journey with passengers travelling to Market Harborough having to buy a separate ticket on the same bus if they travelled from south of Welford on the 60 service. It may be convenient to iron out any anomalies in the "exempt" system and ensure the appropriate conditions and reasons for exemption are clarified. I am not clear about what help will be given to the exempt services but hopefully money and policies will be produced which will raise their standards as well as the non-exempt services. Are there any plans for supporting on demand services such as those researched by UNO (University bus company)?	Services like #59 and 60 operate under contract. They are exempt from the EPP/EPS because their operation and specification is governed by contract, the means of securing improvements is most easily achieved through the requirements of the contract. That is relatively easy/no cost when it comes to things like participation in a ticketing scheme, but other things such as the use of particular types of vehicle are likely to come at a cost. Demand responsive services are certainly something West Northamptonshire Council want to look into more, but heavily dependent on how much funding is secured as to what will be possible. Again they are supported services and so exempt from the EP. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Spratton Parish Council	Q2 response - They all look positive and hope that they will be applied equally to rural as well as urban areas. (It might be worth mentioning that I was initially misdirected to the EPP rather than the EPS by the word "Plan" in the first line of the question with a capital "P" so that I looked first at the EPP when checking the appropriate tables.)	The support is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

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Spratton Parish Council	Q3 Response - Yes and of course reliability, frequency and accessibility are part of these priorities.	The support is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Spratton Parish Council	Q4 Response - Although schools have their own legislation and service, there is still a reasonable number of children and staff who use the public service and it may be appropriate to notify the heads of schools.	The support is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Potterspury Parish Council	Potterspury Parish Council would like to see an improved bus service to Potterspury and surrounding villages.	Looking at what can be done to reinstate/improve bus services to rural communities will be part of a separate process once we know how much funding we have for next year from the Council's budget and the Department for Transport. . Supported services are governed by contract and as such are exempt from the EP. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Daventry Town Council (North Ward - Ashby Fields, Drayton Park, Lang Farm, Middlemore & Monksmoor)	We would have preferred to respond as a council but due to the time frame this is not possible.	The challenges of responding to consultations is appreciated, in this case we allowed just over 4 weeks, which is in excess of the statutory 28 day timescale provided to bus operators. The timescales to deliver the EP has also been imposed by the Department for Transport, although they have recently relaxed this. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Daventry Town Council (North Ward - Ashby Fields, Drayton Park, Lang Farm, Middlemore & Monksmoor)	I don't have many comments as the EPP probably does all it can. I would just like to emphasise that the partnership should try to include local people (including parish councils) as possible as they often have knowledge which can improve the service.	User group representatives including Parish Councils are invited to be part of the Wider Stakeholder Group to ensure the voice of local bus users is heard. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Brackley Town Council	The plan does not include Brackley and as we are an expanding town it needs to. It seems to be Northampton centric – Brackley is a growing part of West Northants and seems to have been forgotten.	The focus of the EP is on commercial bus services rather than supported services, meaning that the commercial network does create a greater emphasis on Northampton. However, all commercial services serving Brackley are listed in the EP, and there are proposals for real-time information displays subject to funding. Brackley may also benefit from improved rural services, which as noted elsewhere will be part of a separate process. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Billing Parish Council	Improving connectivity has to be the number one priority for our Parish. We currently have two areas that no longer have a dedicated bus route the Northern half of Ecton Brook Road and the a section of Fishponds Road which runs from the corner of Fieldmill Road up to the top of Orchard Hill and onto Little Billing Way. Ecton Brook does have the Number 16 route however this only covers the bottom half of Ecton Brook. The North of Ecton Brook Road from Overmead Road is only serviced by 53 & 54. The number 54 to Moulton Park only runs once in the mornings (05:10) Monday to Friday so workers are unable to get a bus straight home or get to or from work on a weekend.	The ability to extend coverage of bus services in Northampton will form part of the Network Review which forms part of the EPS. The return journey on commercial service 54 was withdrawn because it was used by significantly fewer people than the outward run.. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

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Billing Parish Council	Bellinge is lucky to have a regular bus number 16 bus service which connects able bodied people and the elderly that live around Fieldmill Road area however the people that live from Faracre Court up to Orchard Hill and The Leather Works have between a 5 minute to 20 minute walk before they can reach a bus service. As you can appreciate this is not acceptable for people who are not able bodied who wish to use this service to get them to vital services such as the hospital, supermarkets and doctor surgeries.	The ability to extend coverage of bus services in Northampton will form part of the Netrowk Review which forms part of the EPS. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Billing Parish Council	Our Parish also doesn't have a direct bus route to the General Hospital.	The ability to extend coverage of bus services in Northampton will form part of the Netrowk Review which forms part of the EPS; however it is inevitably difficult to provide a through service from all parts of the town to the General Hospital. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Billing Parish Council	The bus stops that have the live update screens need to be improved. Sometimes they show that when a bus is late its way however it then disappears from the display. They should show that it's been cancelled like on the App so people can decide whether to use another mode of transport especially if they need to get to an appointment.	The quality of information depends on how near the start and end of the route the service is. However working through the partnership there is the need to improve accuracy, improve access to information and improve peoples understanding on the meaning of the messages being displayed. The EP makes some progress on this for example operators, producing maps and timetables, are obliged to prominently include details of the Realtime system and how to use it, using text shall be provided by West Northamptonshire Council and agreed at the Management Forum. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Billing Parish Council	Some of our Parish Bus Stop need to be cleaned up and trees covering them need to be cut.	The EPS includes actions for the Council to work with Operators and local representatives to review stop locations, their position and layout to make stops more accessibility, safe and attractive, within the available funding. It would be good to know which stops the Parish had in mind. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme, however the Parish Council will be contacted to see which stops they were referring too.
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	The plan only refers to local bus services. While this consultation is limited in scope to the Unitary Authority, it neatly sidesteps the issue of the totally inadequate Coach station in Northampton. Serious consideration needs to be given to constructing a coach interchange that is more than a few benches and a port aloo. There are currently 3 transport hubs in the town, The Northgate bus station, the Northampton Train station, and the coach 'station' on Victoria street. More needs to be done to improve the connectivity between the three, and serious investment needs to be done to make the coach station provide a positive first impression on visitors to the town using this service.	The legislation covering bus services is different to coach services, coaches are not part of the EP, therefore whilst the point is appreciated, it does not impact on the EP. The routing of services between the bus, coach and rail stations is a matter of balancing needs of people making onward trips vs. this using retail/employer and other town centre services. All are within 600-800m walk of the bus station. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

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Kingsthorpe Parish Council	There are numerous issues with the public transport provision in Northampton. Northgate Bus station is inadequate to service the number of services that are required for a town the size of Northampton, with the consequence that the drapery has become very congested. The former Greyfriars bus station, whilst it certainly had numerous issues, at the very least was of sufficient size that the Drapery was not overwhelmed with buses and provided a convenient location for changing service. There is also a large distance between the bus station and train station, and while certain bus services do pass the Train Station, it is inconvenient for commuters to have to travel a large distance between interchanges on foot.	Within the life of the EP there are no plans to enlarge the bus station. The walk distance is within acceptable standards, but for customers with luggage or less able to walk up to 800m then catching a service which stops closer to the rail station is an option. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	We agree that improving the current routes is desirable. We are pleased to see that the partnership plan has identified that bus stops need to be safer and proposes spending money on street lighting around bus stops and upgrading the information boards. Maybe we could suggest that maintenance of them is improved, there are numerous locations in Northampton generally, and Kingsthorpe Parish specifically where the bus stops are in a poor state of repair due to vandalism and graffiti.	The support for improving bus stops and shelters is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	The bus routes themselves are still at the mercy of the inadequate roads. The unpredictable service delays along the Harborough Road corridor, and, as part of this piece of the document it references a route that no longer exists (the 77), includes several routes that use the Welford Road rather than the Harborough Road, and that suggests removing on-street parking along the Harborough Road to make those times more predictable. Member's feelings are the delays to buses in Kingsthorpe are more likely to be when they are navigating the suburban streets than an A road, and that the proposed modifications to on-street parking will only benefit (in its whole) one route out of those that service Kingsthorpe (X7) and will have very little impact on bus services in the area. Maybe, as a compromise, they could increase the area around the size of the bus stop (opposite the BP garage) to ensure that buses have enough space to safely pull in or a dedicated 24-hour bus lane would ensure that bus services would not be hindered by congestion from cars.	Stagecoach service 77 still exists but shares a timetable with X7, and provides a foreshortened route early in the morning. The corridor improvements will look at the detail of the routes and the cause of delays, this will validate the cause of delays to buses and inform the improvements to be brought forward. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

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Kingsthorpe Parish Council	<p>The consultation also seems to only concentrate on improving existing services rather than looking into additional services and how they may improve public transport provision. The majority of services start and terminate at Northgate bus station, or along the drapery. This means moving around the periphery of Northampton as a bus user necessitates a journey from your start point, to the centre of town, and then out to your destination. For example, travelling from Thorplands to Moulton park means using the number 1 or 2 service into the town centre, and then changing to the number 7 or 58 service to travel to Moulton Park. This journey can take up to 1 hour on the bus, 30-40 minutes to walk, 15-20 minutes to cycle, and 5-10 minutes to drive. A circular route, or routes would allow commuters to travel around Northampton to locations such as Moulton Park or Brackmills without needing to travel into the town centre.</p>	<p>The EPP and EPS do not of themselves increase or reduce the bus service quantum, rather they address service specification. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	<p>There is also a paucity of school busses in Northampton proper in relation to the more rural areas of the authority. This obviously leads to more car journeys to drop students off at school. If there was to be investment in school busses it could have an effect on congestion, and at the same time start to encourage a modal shift in young people and make them more likely to use busses in the future.</p>	<p>Further to the answer above, bus operators run commercial bus services where passenger demand and income covers cost. The Council can fund service enhancements where commercial services do not run and subject to having the budget. However, budgets are tight at present and there are competing demands for investment. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
Kingsthorpe Parish Council	<p>We agree that they are important. Having a simple payment method that would allow you to use multiple different service providers, as well as easy access to visual aids with which to plan your route would allow commuters to better plan their journeys. The move away from diesel busses to more environmentally friendly and less polluting vehicles is also important. However, we feel the immediate priority should be consulting the public on exactly which bus services they would like to see introduced or improved, and then delivering those services, and at the same time ensuring that busses have priority over other motor vehicles on the roads. If modal shift towards public transport can be encouraged, by having services that are convenient, have short journey times, and are along routes that are wanted, then the public is more likely to use public transport over their cars or other personal vehicles.</p>	<p>The support for improved multi-operator ticketing and reduced bus emissions is welcomed. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>

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Deanshanger Parish Council (DPC)	Our comments, in summary, were that Deanshanger residents deserved a bus service that allowed our children to get to school and college and our residents to get to work, to the doctors/hospital, to the affordable shops in neighbouring towns and to services such as youth and community services and Foodbanks. These issues were not addressed in the Bus Improvement Plan and the proposed Enhanced Partnership Scheme and Plan does not address them either.	The EPP and EPS do not of themselves increase or reduce the bus service quantum, rather they address service specification., bus operators run commercial bus services where passenger demand and income covers cost. The Council can fund service enhancements where commercial services do not run and subject to having the budget. However, budgets are tight at present and there are competing demands for investment. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
DPC	Deanshanger is a large village with 4,000 + residents in rural South Northants and is very poorly served by buses in recent years since Northants County Council removed its support and subsidies for buses . The Britannia, 89 bus that has, in the past 3 years, serviced Deanshanger every two hours weekdays, daytime is now, since December 21 even further reduced to one bus a day, four days a week, leaving Deanshanger at 9.30 am for MK and returning from MK at 11.30 am. The service in recent years up has been wholly inadequate and the current service, since December 2021 that still continues, is now scandalous. We note the COVID related issues cited by Britannia Buses for the reduction to 1 bus a day and that as a small operator such issues have had a great impact on service delivery than larger operators.	I refer to the answer above, the concern about Covid affected timetables is understood, it is hoped (but not guaranteed) that as patronage returns to the bus, services will return to pre-covid levels. This is an exceptional situation, and we would expect operators to return services to the levels contained in their service registration at the earliest opportunity. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
DPC	DPC calls upon West Northants Council (WNC) to reconsider its support for bus services that service Deanshanger (and rural South Northants) and request an urgent meeting on this matter with relevant officers. DPC understand that the Britannia Bus service 89 is a commercial service and note that no supported / subsidised service serves Deanshanger. Our residents deserve better. They should be able to access school and college, get to and from work, access medical and other essential services and we demand urgent action to provide an improved service. A WNC supported / subsidised service delivered under contract with a Bus Operator or funding for other Bus Operators to divert into and service Deanshanger are urgently required.	The concern of the Parish Council with the current situation is understood, but subsidised services are only intended to operate where no commercial service exists. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
DPC	DPC is very willing to work with WNC officers and Deanshanger WNC Councillors to progress this matter and look forward to hearing from you to arrange an urgent meeting.	This offer of joint working is welcomed and is something West Northamptonshire will follow up on. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme. WNC officers will follow up a meeting to discuss service provision in Deanshanger.

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DPC	Deanshanger Parish Council also requests information on what bus services are currently subsidised as part of WNC's funded support for the county's bus network.	This will be addressed in the aforementioned meeting. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme. WNC officers will outline the level of locally funded supported bus services in the aforementioned meeting.
DPC	The Enhanced Partnership Scheme and Plan offers next to nothing to our village. The scheme's objective to deliver faster journey times on the five corridors to Northampton have no relevance to our residents as we cannot even access these corridors. It's objectives to provide common hours of operation and better serve larger visitor attractions in the area; improve the way the bus network is promoted to users and non-users, in particular communicate the whole bus offer and improve user and potential user access to information; and, put in place a passenger charter which gives passengers more influence over bus services and delivery are largely irrelevant when we do not really have any bus service to speak of. have such a desperately poor service that does not meet even the basic daily needs of our residents.	Given that the bus services from Deanshanger is mainly towards Milton Keynes, this is inevitable. West Northamptonshire Council addresses delays to bus services in its area, and Milton Keynes Council will do the same for their area.I. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
DPC	While we wish WNC well with its Enhanced Partnership Scheme and Plan and hope that it is able to draw down government funding to deliver it, we are extremely disappointed that no actions or recommendations are in place to support rural bus services in the south of the county particularly to Deanshanger.	I refer to the answer above. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
South Northants CLP	I was disappointed to see the emphasis being on Northampton with little reference to South Northamptonshire's market towns and rural areas. After all this is the West Northamptonshire Bus Partnership scheme, which includes, Northampton, Daventry and South Northants. Surely to understand what is needed in West Northants, greater research and data gathering has to be carried in all areas of West Northants. This lack of knowledge meant the draft had little relevance in addressing the great need we have outside of Northampton.	The commercial bus network, varies across West Northamptonshire, but as all but 1 of the Tier 1 and 2 urban and the Tier 1 inter-urban bus services all travel into Northampton, it is inevitable that works will focus on the areas served by the majority of commercial bus services. The steps to improve reliability in the busier parts of the bus network will benefit those travelling on these bus services and growing patronage on commercial services will best help retain or improve the services. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>The draft spoke repeatedly of a return of bus usage to pre-covid levels and yet admitted that "bus use actually declined overall between 2012/13 and 2019/20." At no point did the report explain why this decline had happened and I feel this is a real failing as the causes of this decline was not establish. To address the problem going forward, there has to be an understanding of the decline before the pandemic and not just as a result of the pandemic.</p>	<p>The longer term trends and analysis is set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), the Enhanced Partnership is one tool being used to deliver the BSIP. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>The reality of bus services outside of Northampton are simply not addressed in the draft. Although for example the number 88 bus service is mentioned in the report it is put under the heading of Inter-Urban Tier 2 (around hourly on most routes). The reality is that after the first two buses in the morning, the service is actually every two hours. Pre- pandemic it was an hourly service, so to classify it as around hourly is simply incorrect.</p>	<p>The BSIP categorises bus services based on their pre-Covid timetables, as the aim is to return to that level of service as paroinage increases . The 88 was an hourly service (pre-Covid) so its classification is correct. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>In terms of the more rural areas of Northamptonshire, the report does not mention that before the pandemic, the number 89 stopped running from Northampton to Milton Keynes, via Towcester and the villages of Paulerspury, Potterspury and Deanshanger. This change resulted in some of these villages having a 1 bus every hour service reduced down to a 1 bus a day service and for some villages no bus service at all. This happened before the pandemic and the impact of this on those areas was not examined. This is also crucial as many villages in South Northants are closer to the big urban area of Milton Keynes, than to Northampton and so it is essential to understand South Northants in the context of bus services across counties for example Buckinghamshire. No mention of this is made in the draft.</p>	<p>Service 89 was originally a subsidised service, which Stagecoach ran commercially for a time after the former County Council reduced its bus subdisy budget in 2011. However, patronage was insufficient to sustain commercial operation. Looking at what can be done to reinstate bus services to communities which have lost one will be part of a separate process once we know how much funding we have for next year from the Council's budget and the Department for Transport. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>The draft refers to Part 1 Local Plan of the West Northants Joint Core Strategy, which included targets to increase modal shift away from the private car towards other forms of transport, including public transport and aimed for a 5% reduction in single occupancy car journeys to work from the existing built up areas. Milton Keynes and Northampton provides a great number of employment opportunities, and yet the poor service from the market towns of Brackley and Towcester and the villages to these big urban centres means that people in South Northants have no choice but to resort to cars as a means of commuting. Brackley and Towcester, the two market towns, which are a mere 20 minutes away by bus and with all their accompanying employment and educational opportunities, is connected by one service a day, which is simply woeful. The draft mentions none of this.</p>	<p>Looking at what can be done to reinstate bus services to communities which have lost one will be part of a separate process once we know how much funding we have for next year from the Council's budget and the Department for Transport. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>There has been huge levels of house building across South Northants and this is set to continue. These new developments have become like satellite towns in their own right. Often lacking basic infrastructure like GP surgeries, schools and shops, these developments are cut off from the towns nearby and residents are forced to resort to cars to travel to vital services. None of this is mentioned in the draft</p>	<p>The point is noted, it would be for developers to pump-prime services via Section 106 funding, as already stated supported bus services are managed under a contract and for that reason the Enhanced Partnership does not apply. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>
<p>South Northants CLP</p>	<p>The vision set out in the scheme is that "the bus network will meet community need" and one of those community needs in rural areas is accessing schools and colleges. Since the pandemic the number 88, which already provides students with transport to Silverstone College, no longer runs an early 7am service in to Northampton. This has resulted in the farcical situation that young people who wish to attend Northampton College have to drive to Greens Norton to get the 7am number 87 bus service just to get to college. Northampton offers vocational courses and so students who wish to do such a course are deterred from doing so as there are simply unable to get there. This greatly reduces young people's educational choices and life chances. Schools are often oversubscribed, so it is crucial that young people are able to travel to other alternatives.</p>	<p>The point is appreciated, however the EPP/EPs is only designed to improve control and standards of commercially provided bus services. By implication, where no such services exist, the relevance of the Enhanced Partnership is minimal. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme</p>

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

South Northants CLP	The draft mentions upgrading real time information displays and although that might be suitable for Northampton, the reality for South Northants is that there are not even timetables at the bus stops and even on the main high street in Towcester for example, there isn't a single bus shelter, let alone bus shelters elsewhere across South Northants.	The lack of bus shelters is not a barrier to realtime information improvements, and the EPS suggests examples of areas for investment could include Brackley and Towcester town centres as well as outside Northampton General Hospital. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
South Northants CLP	To seriously increase bus patronage and to fulfil the vision set out in the scheme that the "bus offer is understood by the wider community not simply bus users" and "is easily used by all", these very simple things need to be addressed. Buses used to carry paper copies of timetables, but these are no longer available and so for users as well as non-users, it is difficult to know when buses are running, particularly since the pandemic altered bus timetables so frequently. None of this is mentioned in the draft.	The problems with bus service changes during Covid is understood, the issues caused by financial sustainability and drivers isolating. Exemptions were granted by Government during this time and the Council and DfT have been financially supporting bus operators. Looking forward the Enhanced Partnership include plans to improve information provision, and potentially pooling resources to diver more for the same cost. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
South Northants CLP	For this scheme to have any relevance, there has to be a greater understanding of the public transport need and situation across West Northamptonshire and this draft comes no-where near providing that.	The EP can only deal with a limited part of the issues affecting public transport, the BSIP explores this area more fully. Action: No change to the Enhanced Partnership Plan or Scheme
Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council	Commercial bus services primarily benefit other commercial businesses in urban areas such as people travelling to/from work and visitor attractions. A typical resident in a rural area relies on Council / community supported services which are excluded from scope of the Enhanced Partnership. Usually, the commercial service and the community/supported services are operated by the same bus operator. All bus services in the area ought to be integrated as one network to give passengers more choice. We are concerned that the potential benefits of the Enhanced Partnership will be limited to commercial services in urban areas with community services in rural areas being left further behind.	The point is a criticism of the legislation, the fact EP's only impact on commercial services is not a matter the Council can control. Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

<p>Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council</p>	<p>Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council (HMPC) has seen significant population growth over the years with the following notable developments. The planning applications: N/2007/1570 - up to 625 dwellings – Pineham Village including a retail area. N/2015/0524 - Pineham New Primary School and Community Centre. 10/0188/FULWNN - up to 200 properties at Pineham Lock. N/2015/0872 - up to 34 dwellings - Land off Banbury Lane, Northampton, NN4 9QE The above is in addition to what was the original Hunsbury Meadows / Banbury Lane development with circa 300 houses. In total, the electoral roles showed Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council having just short of 1800 electors on the electoral roll last May 2021. This continues to rise and the area there needs an integrated and regular bus service. The planning statements and travel plans for the above developments aimed to encourage residents and visitors to use of sustainable public transport to travel in and out of HMPC. Bus “55 Northampton Town Centre – Swan Valley (Stagecoach Midlands)” does not directly serve the residents in Pineham Village or Hunsbury Meadows Banbury Lane. The hourly frequency of Bus 55 provides the needed accessibility to meaningful public transport compared with the infrequent community Bus 87. We call upon West Northamptonshire Council</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to encourage the operator to run services directly through Pineham Village to provide better access to the 55 service by Pineham Village residents. 2. To construct a suitable bus stops on Upon Valley Way East, at the top of Banbury Lane to enable access to the 55 service by residents on Hunsbury Meadows and Pineham Lock. 3. To request the operator to include a stop at these new bus stops as in (2) above. 	<p>The point is noted, but not a matter within the scope of the EPP and EPS. Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS</p>
<p>Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council</p>	<p>For Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council, we would like to have included the above referenced bus stops on Upton Valley Way East and in the centre of Pineham Village. Currently, apart from the infrequent Bus 87 services, the residents do not have access to any regular public service into and from Northampton Town Centre. If the objective of this Enhanced Partnership is to encourage use of public transport, then meaningful and regular public service must be made available. Aside of these, we agree with the measures and priorities in the Tables in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the consultation.</p>	<p>Please refer to the above answers about supported bus services. Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS</p>
<p>Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council</p>	<p>Question 3 - Yes.</p>	<p>The support is welcomed (Q3 - Do you agree with the proposals for investment in buses, ticketing and Information are the immediate priority for the first 3 years). Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS</p>

West Northamptonshire Council Enhanced Partnership Stakeholder Responses

Hunsbury Meadows Parish Council	We would suggest the inclusion of Primary and Secondary Schools to the Wider Stakeholder Board. Currently, congestion at schools by parents parking, often irresponsibly, is an issue. If the objective of this consultation is to encourage more people to use public transport, then schools should be consulted, and proper consideration given to how they are serviced by public service routes.	As dedicated home to school services are exempt it is not clear what value schools would add to the wider stakeholder board, however the Board membership is flexible enough to change if the participation of a school representative was seen as having merit. Action: No change is required to the EPP and EPS
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