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| Transport & Infrastructure Committee | | Agenda Item |
| 13 September 2023 | | 8 |
| Title: | Bus Network Review – initial recommendations | |
| Report of: | Neal Byers | |
| Lead Member: | Cllr Anna Smith, Chair of Transport and Infrastructure Committee | |
| Public Report: | Yes | |
| Key Decision: | Yes | |
| Voting Arrangements: | A vote in favour by at least two thirds of all members (or their substitute members) appointed by the Constituent Councils, to include the members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, or their substitute members | |

| Recommendations: | |
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| A | To recommend to the CPCA Board the extension of 51 Bus Service contracts to March 2025. |
| B | To recommend 18 services are reviewed and that discussions with relevant local communities take place to help identify options for improvements (noting that 7 services have yet to be assessed). Also to request that further recommendations are brought back to TIC and the CPCA Board on these services alongside any new service or enhanced service proposals. |
| C | To recommend to the CPCA Board the extension of the Ting contract to March 2024 and for CPCA officers to undertake a review of the Ting service. |
| D | To present options and recommendations for investing BSIP+ funding to TIC and CPCA Board in November 2023. |
| E | To instruct the Executive Director of Place and Connectivity to report progress against these recommendations back through to the TIC and CPCA Board at appropriate intervals during the municipal year 2023/24. |

| Strategic Objective(s): | |
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| The proposals within this report fit under the following strategic objective(s): | |
| | Achieving ambitious skills and employment opportunities |
| | Achieving good growth |
| X | Increased connectivity |
| | Enabling resilient communities |
| <i>The proposal sets out three important workstreams to improve the bus network in the Combined Authority area. Buses are an essential part of providing connectivity to our communities.</i> | |

1. Purpose

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| 1.1 | The Combined Authority and its partners are seeking an approach to provide the 'best possible' tendered bus network within the funding available. The previous approach was limited as decision makers did not have a clear process and sufficient data. The Bus Network Review is required to enable the CPCA Board to make future decisions on a more structured and balanced basis. |
| 1.2 | This paper sets out the initial findings of the Bus Network Review and sets out recommendations for services to be retained and further work required to complete the review. |

2. Proposal

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| 2.1 | There is a medium-term vision to explore the best delivery model to recast the network and people's experience of it through Bus Reform i.e., Enhanced Partnership or Franchising. An immediate decision was taken to secure the existing network and retender services during 22/23 and 23/24. Over the 23/24 financial year, the Bus Network Review workstream was established. The approach will enable Leaders to make decisions for the 24/25 financial year for tendered services on a more structured and balanced basis. The Bus Network Review focuses on the tendered bus services. Bus Reform will provide a more strategic and ambitious response to the challenges faced by the bus system. |
| 2.2 | Members had previously considered the Local Bus Service Assessment Framework which sets out the approach to be followed for the bus network review. This approach set out five stages to assess the network and provide recommendations. The framework had been updated to reflect the new Bus Strategy and recent feedback on the approach. This feedback included that the framework needs to consider both the need and affordability of service to establish value for money. The framework also needed to account for differences between urban and rural services. A key first step in the assessment framework is to understand if there is a need for intervention. This requirement remains to help ensure the limited budget is focused on supporting communities which would otherwise have no alternative bus service. |
| 2.3 | All existing tendered bus services will be assessed against the framework. The outcome of the analysis provides a ranking of each service against the objectives set out in the Local Bus Service Assessment Framework. This assessment has considered the need and affordability of each service. It has also considered the distance travelled for each service to help establish the value for money of more rural services. |
| 2.4 | Budget for Tendered Services The total budget available to support bus services in 2023/24 is £7,598,432. The current budget is funded through the Levy, Mayoral Precept, Bus Operator Service Grant and Bus Recovery Grant. The Bus Recovery Grant is not expected to be available in 2024/25. This fund represented £174,835 of the total budget. Subject to decisions yet to be taken on the 2024/25 budget, the budget for the next financial year would be £7,563,889. |
| 2.5 | Subject to other Board decisions, this budget could be further supplemented with funding from the CPCA's BSIP+ allocation, of up to £2.3m per annum over the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 (£4.6m in total). A decision on the allocation of this resource will be made at the same time as the final recommendations of the bus review. This will enable the CPCA Board to consider how many services could be supported. Broadly speaking, the more money available, the more services we can support. |
| 2.6 | Undertaking the Bus Network Review The bus network review is being undertaken in two phases. This report presents the findings of the first stage which sets out those services which are performing well, those which need to be reviewed and the next steps to review any newly proposed services. The focus of the next part of the report is on the assessment of the existing services. Recommendations are made to make the decision to retain many of the services as they are, with the next phase of work to focus on the remaining services and any new service proposals. The assessment of existing services considers the catchment of services, the performance of services and the impact of distance on the value for money of services. |

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| 2.7 | <p>Assessment of the Need for bus service</p> <p>This assessment identifies whether the services are connecting people to key centres and amenities (work, training, healthcare and leisure):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 41 of the routes provide services to a catchment of over 10,000 people within 400m of a bus stop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 40 of these serve 4 or more different types of amenity (Hospital, GP, pharmacy, education, work, shops or market town) - 1 of these serves 3 different types of amenity • 11 of the routes provide services to a catchment of between 9,999 and 5,000 people within 400m of a bus stop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All 11 serve 4 or more different types of amenity (Hospital, GP, pharmacy, education, work, shops or market town) • 17 of the routes provide services to a catchment of between 4,999 and 1000 people within 400m of a bus stop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 of these serve 4 or more different types of amenity - 4 of these: serve 3 different types of amenity, 1 serves 2 different types of amenity - These services tend to support the rural communities. 7 connect to places outside of the CPCA area. • 6 of the routes provide services to a catchment of under 1,000 people within 400m of a bus stop. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These services tend to support the rural communities and all also connect to places outside of the CPCA area. |
| 2.8 | <p>Assessment of performance of bus services</p> <p>This assessment identifies whether we are achieving value for money against the £12 per passenger journey benchmark, including when we consider the distance covered by the service. The assessment is based on a single trip, it covers all passengers, which includes concessionary travel. It includes any revenue which is returned from the contracts to the CPCA to provide a net cost.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49 services are below the £12 benchmark • 2 services are between £12 and £13 • 11 services are between £13 and £24 per passenger journey • 8 services above £24 per passenger journey <p>The assessment also considers the distance travelled by each service, by assessing the cost per passenger per km. This assessment shows that when distance is factored in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 services are below a £1 per passenger journey per km benchmark • 6 services are between £1 and £2 per passenger journey per km • 4 services are above £2 per passenger journey per km <p>Decisions to continue services are informed by all of the metrics, alongside input from local councillors and community groups to provide a balanced view across the need for and performance of bus services.</p> |
| 2.9 | <p>Initial recommendations for scheduled services</p> <p>51 services are performing well in terms of the need and performance. Two of those are marginally above the £12 per passenger journey. These services should be retained and promoted to ensure continued viability. CPCA will work with operators and communities to further improve the use of these services.</p> <p>Eight need to be reviewed to identify options to meet the community need, whilst using public funds prudently. The relevant local authority leaders and members of the community will be engaged to explore alternative proposals, including an option to link with home to school services. For six of the eight services the cost passenger journey per km benchmark is above two. Two of the eight are below</p> |

the £1 per passenger journey per km, showing a difference when the distance of the services is considered.

Eleven are above the £12 per passenger journey benchmark but are meeting a community need. Of these eleven, nine are below the £1 per passenger journey per km. One service is between £1 and £2 and one service is above £2. These services should be further examined to identify changes which could improve the performance. A recommendation for each service should be developed with input from relevant local authority leaders and communities.

Seven of the services still require data to be provided on passenger numbers to enable the analysis to be complete for all services.

Using the baseline assessment, the opportunity to improve contracted service or to introduce new services can be undertaken.

2.10 The following table summarises the first phase of service which are proposed to be continued and the phase 2 services which are to be reviewed.

Phase 1 services recommended to be confirmed continued with no further investigation needed:

| Service route | Service no |
|---|-------------------|
| Cambridge - Dry Drayton - Papworth Everard | 8 |
| St Ives - Bar Hill | 1A |
| Cambridge City Centre - Grafton - Beehive - Addenbrookes | 114 |
| Ely - Chatteris | Ely Zipper 2 |
| Ely - Little Downham | 125 |
| Ely City Circular | 9A |
| March - Manea/Benwick | 56 |
| Gt Thurlow - Cambridge | 16A |
| Newmarket - Dullingham - Linton | 46A |
| St Ives - Chatteris - March | 302 |
| Huntingdon - Spaldwick - Kimbolton - Huntingdon | 400 |
| Haslingfield - Bassingbourn - Royston | 15 |
| Huntingdon - Leighton Bromswold - Huntingdon | 401 |
| Whittlesford - Duxford - Saffron Walden | 101 |
| Cambridge - Burwell - Newmarket | 11 |
| Landbeach - Cambridge | 19 |
| Ely - Upware | 117 |
| Cambridge - Newnham | 199 |
| St Neots - Longstowe - Orwell - Arrington - Croydon - The Hatleys | C2 |
| Horse Fair - Tesco | 68 |
| Brinkley - Dullingham - Newmarket | 47 |
| Longstanton - Swavsey | 5A |
| Ely - Brandon Creek | 129 |
| Huntingdon - Papworth Everard - Cambridge Biomedical Campus | X2 |
| Peterborough City Centre - Maxey | 62 |
| Newmarket - Soham - Ely | 112 |
| Wisbech - Manea | 56 |
| Cambridge - Royston | 26 |
| St Ives - Somersham - Ramsey | 21 |
| Peterborough - Ramsey | 31 |
| Wisbech - Long Sutton | 50 |
| Peterborough - Keys Park | 63 |
| Cambridge - Cambourne - St Neots | 18 |
| Ely - Witcham | Ely Zipper |

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| Newmarket - Kirtling - Cheveley - Newmarket | 902 |
| Cambridge City Centre - Madingley Road park&ride | PR1 |
| Isleham - Snailwell - Newmarket | 204 |
| Newmarket - Dullingham - Brinkley - Newmarket | 904 |
| Wisbech - March | 46 |
| Parnwell - City Hospital | 4 |
| Peterborough City Centre - Newark Sainsbury's | 61 |
| Cambridge - Papworth Everard - Huntingdon | X3 |
| Dullingham - Newmarket | 903 |
| Ashley - Cheveley - Newmarket | 901 |
| St Ives - Fenstanton - Boxworth | V4 |
| Paston - Bretton | 2 |
| Bretton - Park Farm | 3 |
| Welland - Yaxley | 5 |
| Peterborough - Hampton | 6 |
| Orton - Werrington | 1 |
| Huntingdon - St Neots | 66/X3 |

Phase 2 services where further review is recommended:

| Service route | Service no |
|--|-------------------|
| Duxford - Whittlesford - Sawston - Whittlesford - Duxford | 7A |
| Cottenham - Chatteris - March | 8A |
| Peterborough: City Hospital - Hampton | 29 |
| Over - St Ives | 15 |
| Cambridge - Fowlmere - Barley | 31 |
| Newmarket - Fulbourn - Teversham - Newmarket Road Park & Ride | 18 |
| St Ives - Somersham - Ramsey | 301 |
| St Ives - Somersham - Woodhurst | 22A |
| Peterborough - Upwood | 415 |
| Cambridge - Orwell - Wrestlingworth | 75 |
| St Neots - The Offords - Buckden | 65 |
| March Town Service | 33A |
| Royston - Bassingbourn - Guilden Morden | 17 |
| St Neots - Kimbolton - Tilbrook | 150 |
| Newmarket - Fordham - Soham - Stuntney - Ely | 12 |
| Haverhill - Linton - Burrough Green | 19 |
| Eynesbury - St Neots - Eaton Ford/Eaton Socon - St Neots - Eynesbury | 61 |
| Huntingdon - Ramsey - Chatteris | 305 |
| West Huntingdonshire Demand Responsive Transport | Ting |

Service requiring further information before assessment can be completed:

| Service route | Service no |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Cambridge - Cambourne | Citi4 |
| St Ives - Pidley - Warboys | 22 |
| Peterborough: Queensgate - Lynch Wood | 23 |
| Ely - Cottenham - Impington | 110 |
| Newmarket - Isleham | 203 |
| St Ives - Pidley | 22X |
| Peterborough: Queensgate - Lynch Wood | 23A |

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| 2.11 | <p>Identifying changes to the bus network</p> <p>There are two ways for new services or changes to services to be proposed.</p> <p>Commercial services</p> <p>Under the current system, where the service is an existing commercial service, the request should be directed to the relevant operator and the CPCA bus team notified. CPCA can support the request but cannot require it of the operator. Operators are keen to understand opportunities to enhance the network, where there is evidence of demand and is likely to be commercially viable.</p> <p>Tendered services</p> <p>Where CPCA tenders the service, the request should be made to CPCA. CPCA officers will consider the request as part of the bus network review. If the change provides an overall benefit and is likely to provide value for money, the CPCA can put forward the service alongside other services for consideration. It should be noted that, under the current system, CPCA cannot tender services which could abstract significant patronage from commercial services. This constraint leads to the tendered network focusing on filling the gaps in the commercial network. To support the review CPCA will engage with education, business and representative community groups.</p> <p>Those existing tendered services which are to be reviewed will be further examined by the bus team to identify opportunities for efficiency and alterations to provide better value for money. Under the current system, the CPCA cannot use any profits from one route to subsidise another. This examination includes opportunities to link with home to school services.</p> |
| 2.12 | <p>DRT within the bus network review</p> <p>In parallel to the Bus Network Review, a review of Demand Response Transport (DRT), as a way to complement scheduled bus services, has been undertaken. The review of DRT highlights that the DRT approach can be suitable for providing connections to some communities and that there is scope to trial a further four pilots in the CPCA area. The suggested pilot areas are: Wittering area, Wisbech area, East Cambridgeshire and Longstanton.</p> <p>Each of the four trial areas have been estimated to cost £300k per trial per year, based on using two vehicles. The option to introduce a new subsidised service, whether that be scheduled or demand responsive should be taken as part of the bus network review.</p> |
| 2.13 | <p>To support decision on the pilot DRT services, each will be assessed against the metrics used for the bus network review. This assessment will be undertaken ahead of the final recommendations on the bus review and presented to members of the Committee and CPCA Board in November for consideration.</p> |
| 2.14 | <p>This paper is also seeking agreement to extend the existing Ting DRT service contract to March 2024. This short-term extension is requested to enable officers to undertake and report on a review of the Ting service. The review is intended to provide members with a more detailed assessment of the service and inform a future recommendation on the next steps for the service. This report will be prepared and brought back to members in November as part of the Bus Network Review.</p> |
| 2.15 | <p>Alongside the existing service, CPCA has undertaken research to examine the Future Role of DRT in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The research was commissioned to examine the application of Demand Responsive Transport across the UK and provide an understanding of applicability to the Combined Authority area within the short (less than two years), medium (two to five years) and long term (10 to 20 years).</p> |
| 2.16 | <p>The report sets out recommendations that would enable the delivery of a new mode of public transport in Demand Responsive. Moreover the recommendations create the foundation from which to create a one-system approach to public transport. This would be achieved through integrating area-wide transport modes through ticketing and MaaS (Mobility as a Service)</p> <p>Benefits of this approach include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to employment and education/training centres. • Improved economic growth of peri-urban areas through a reliable Public Transport offering. • Reduced Isolation in rural communities through increasing connectivity • A means by which residents can make a modal shift to less polluting alternatives to the car. |

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| | <p>The Future role of DRT in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough report makes the following recommendations to take place within the short (less than two years), medium (two to five years) and long term (10 to 20 years). The medium and long-term recommendations are relevant for consideration as part of Bus Reform. For the purpose of the Bus Network Review the focus is on the short term.</p> |
| 2.17 | <p>Potential for DRT within two to three years:</p> <p>Implementation of up to four new pilot schemes to test different models of DRT. The addition of these Pilots will result in a DRT pilot taking place in four constituent local authority districts. An evaluation of the success of the pilots will take place at the end of year three. Options that are currently being considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wittering area - Wittering, Wansford, Ailsworth, Castor and Long Thorpe are poorly served by public transport. There is an opportunity to trial a DRT service where previous timetabled services have proved unviable and current provision by Lincolnshire's Call Connect does not meet needs. If patterns emerged then next step would be to introduce timetabled or semi-scheduled elements. • Wisbech area - Wisbech and villages north of A47 between Wisbech and Guyhirn are served by limited fixed bus route services. DRT could improve levels of availability and choice of destinations, connecting with other bus services so to reach more distant destinations, including March, Peterborough or King's Lynn. • East Cambridgeshire – Ely and nearby villages have had previous successes such as the previous pilot and initiatives such as the Ely Zipper service. A DRT service could provide more flexible travel options and integration with other types of service such as buses and trains to more distant destinations. • Longstanton area – While Longstanton benefits from Park & Ride Facility on the Busway between St Ives and Cambridge, much of the surrounding area is poorly served by transport links. A DRT zone that encompasses Over, Swavesey, Boxworth, Dry Drayton, Madingley, Bar Hill, Oakington and Longstanton could demonstrate the principle of connecting peri-urban populations to the busway. This service could be branded as an extension of the busway itself. <p>Procure an areawide DDRT back office.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Combined Authority taking responsibility for the back-office system would allow consistency in interactions with users. A change in transport operator would not require a different application. Such a unified approach would create a seamless experience for the users, with the familiarity of one app aiding re-usability. <p>Design and implement integrated ticketing between DRT and scheduled buses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated ticketing is seen as a key ingredient of success in an evaluation of 6 Local Link DRT services in Greater Manchester. Integration aids ease of use, promoting the mode of travel through being hassle-free, affordable and legitimises viability through being seeing as synonymous with scheduled buses. <p>Undertake a feasibility study into the scope of a potential MaaS application for CPCA area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration with other transport modes within a single platform will provide users with an easier and more intuitive experience. MaaS may help raise awareness of DRT services and how it can complement planned fixed-route transport. |
| 2.18 | <p>Review of the existing Ting Service</p> <p>CPCA officers have undertaken an initial review of the Ting service which is operating in Huntingdonshire. The review was undertaken to identify any improvements which could be made to enhance the performance of the service. The recommendations of the initial review highlight a mix of operational and technical improvements. These improvements include: reducing trips which abstract from schedules bus services and trips which are wholly within St Neots. Review the pricing of the service. Improve the data provision to CPCA to enable more effective monitoring of performance.</p> <p>The improvements identified will be discussed with the operator and CPCA officers will review the performance of the service and the operator's response to the proposed improvement to inform a further recommendation on the Ting service.</p> |

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| 2.19 | <p>Engagement on Bus Network Review and opportunities</p> <p>CPCA officers will work with Leaders and local authorities to undertake engagement on the services which are to be reviewed and to identify opportunities to enhance the network. CPCA officers will undertake the engagement ahead of the recommendations which are planned to be brought back to CPCA Board in November. The review and engagement will be developed to support feedback from communities, education establishments and businesses. Inputs from this engagement will help to inform both the review of the current network and what changes might be possible, within the available budget.</p> |
| 2.20 | <p>BSIP+ Options</p> <p>CPCA and partners have been working to develop a draft BSIP. Ahead of the competition of the BSIP, the Department for Transport confirmed a revenue allocation for CPCA for this and next financial year. The total allocation was £4.6m. DfT has defined the types of interventions the funding is intended to be used for, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding must be spent on bus measures. • Funding decisions should be based on local circumstances and need. • The Authority can enhance the frequency of existing services, expand routes or provide new services using this funding. • Ensuring existing connections are maintained. • Ambitious new fares initiatives • The funding should not be used to support generic marketing or advertising |
| 2.21 | <p>In developing the draft BSIP the following priorities emerged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing the bus network so people can depend on it to get to important places such as healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and employment centres • Providing bus priority to improve the reliability of existing services • Providing a multi-operator ticket which is available across CPCA (including support for young people) • Transforming the quality of stops and shelters, with reliable real-time information on-street and online • Expanding the Electric Bus fleet <p>Of these priorities, enhancing the network and providing a multi operator ticket provide the ‘best fit’ to the requirements of the BSIP+ funding. The analysis will be further developed and a recommendation on the use of BSIP+ will be proposed alongside the final recommendation for the Bus Network Review.</p> |
| 2.22 | <p>Supporting actions Bus Network Review</p> <p>The bus network review is yet to be complete, but the following further actions have been identified through the work to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment is needed by CPCA in Marketing and Promotion to increase patronage. This should align with activities proposed by operators to encourage use of the services. There is also an important role for local councillors to support and promote bus services. • Investment into monitoring and evaluation officer/contract is needed to increase rigour in the data available to support network planning. By working more closely with operators, CPCA will be able to identify concerns and promote successful services. • CPCA should undertake a review of tendered service contracts to support cooperation and enforcement. <p>These actions will be further developed, and recommendations brought back to the TIC and CPCA Board to summarise next steps for the bus network review.</p> |

3. Background

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| 3.1 | <p>Bus Network Review</p> <p>The Bus Network Review is being undertaken to support decisions on the future network. To inform the development of the approach, officers have reviewed the approach of other transport authorities, including Liverpool City Region, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Hertfordshire, and Oxfordshire. All authorities consider the need for a service and the affordability of the service. Walking distance to a bus</p> |
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| | is the most common metric to establish need. Cost per passenger journey is also the most widely used metric for measuring the performance on contract. |
| 3.2 | All of these authorities shared the common challenges of managing the affordability of the network in the face of increasing pressures on local budgets. The approach undertaken for the Bus Network Review is largely consistent with the approach adopted by others. |

4. Appendices

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| 4.1 | None |
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5. Implications

Financial Implications

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| 5.1 | The recommendation for extending 51 of the bus service contracts for 12 months from April 2024 and to extend the Ting contract until March is within the agreed MTFS. |
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Legal Implications

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| 6.1 | The extension of contracts has already been provided for within the contracts agreed with bus service providers. Some of the existing contracts under consideration include annual break point and the option to extend for a further year. Where services need to be retendered, this will be undertaken to enable services to continue. |
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Public Health Implications

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| 7.1 | There is no significant Public Health Implications of the recommendations in this paper. |
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Environmental & Climate Change Implications

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| 8.1 | Bus services play a pivotal role in mitigating environmental and climate change. When effectively utilised, buses reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the roads, leading to decreased traffic congestion and, consequently, reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Buses present a more sustainable mode of transportation, emitting fewer pollutants per passenger compared to cars. Encouraging the use of public buses can significantly contribute to our efforts to combat climate change, improve air quality, and reduce the carbon footprint of transport. |
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Other Significant Implications

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| 9.1 | There are no other significant implications associate to the recommendations in this paper. Future implications of decisions on bus reform will be presented to the TIC as required. |
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Background Papers

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| 10.1 | Bus Update, including Framework, 18 January 2023 TIC Paper |
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