



Worcestershire County Council - Passenger Transport Strategy: Executive Summary

2019-2030

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Worcestershire County Council - Passenger Transport Strategy: Executive Summary

Introduction

The Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy has been developed to support Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan 4. The Strategy sets out how Worcestershire County Council, working with its partners, aims to make passenger transport improvements for the benefit of all our residents.

Passenger transport services form the 'backbone' of Worcestershire's transport networks. It is widely recognised that the most successful economies boast strong, well-integrated passenger transport networks which enable the efficient movement of people. This is particularly important in growing economies such as Worcestershire, where significant growth is planned.

The Strategy will look at ways for residents and visitors to access services across Worcestershire. It recognises that passenger transport plays a key part in supporting this access.

The Need for a Strategy

Bus use in Worcestershire has declined over the last 50 years which reflects the national trend. Worcestershire is committed to improving journey times and reliability for all road-based transport, the quality of the local environment and making passenger transport services more attractive for our residents.

Worcestershire County Council recognises that the Strategy is required to support the scale of planned future growth which includes, for example, housing and employment within the county.

There is now less funding available to support passenger transport services, so it is important to develop a Strategy which prioritises the limited funding in a way which will sustain the commercial transport network, while still meeting Worcestershire's transport needs in the most efficient and cost-effective way.





Worcestershire County Council is dedicated to providing good quality, best value services to its residents. Like all councils across the UK, Worcestershire has faced significant budget reductions in recent years, which limits the ability of the Council to subsidise and support the passenger transport network, particularly when set against fuel price inflation and other cost increases facing the bus industry. It is essential that Worcestershire County Council monitors spending carefully and ensures that we use clear and consistent criteria when we make funding decisions.

The Strategy cannot be developed in isolation and in preparing it, the Council has taken account into account existing strategies, the size and population of the County and current financial conditions.

The Passenger Transport Network

The main purpose of Worcestershire's passenger transport network is to provide an efficient, resilient and integrated system which provides access for everyone to a wide range of services and facilities which are essential for a good quality of life. These include employment, education, health, retail and leisure.

Our priorities will include home to work and home to school journeys. A healthy commercial network is critical in delivering this.

The main providers of passenger transport services in Worcestershire are commercial organisations that operate local bus services on a profit-making basis, as envisaged when the local bus service market outside London was de-regulated in 1985. It is important for Worcestershire residents that commercial bus networks are attractive, efficient and stable. Well-run networks can meet the needs of local people by providing a transport network which reduces congestion, vehicular emissions and provides access to a wide range of employment and wider life-enhancing opportunities.

While commercial bus services are outside the Council's direct control, we will work in co-operation with commercial operators to help deliver an efficient, reliable bus network which meets the needs of the people of Worcestershire and encourages increased use of local transport services. We hope to encourage operators to achieve this by:

- Working closely with them to identify problems and find solutions to ensure an efficient and integrated network
- Ensuring passenger transport operators do not suffer unduly from congestion resulting from planned roadworks.
- Working with them to improve reliability and punctuality of services
- Developing quality partnerships with operators
- Supporting integration, ensuring that journeys using more than one means of transport are feasible with seamless transitions at key transport hubs including rail stations
- Working with key local businesses and employers to encourage promotion of passenger transport services

What is the Worcestershire Transport Passenger Strategy?

The overarching objective of this Strategy is to ensure that residents and visitors have a level of access to services and facilities which will contribute to enjoy a good quality of life.

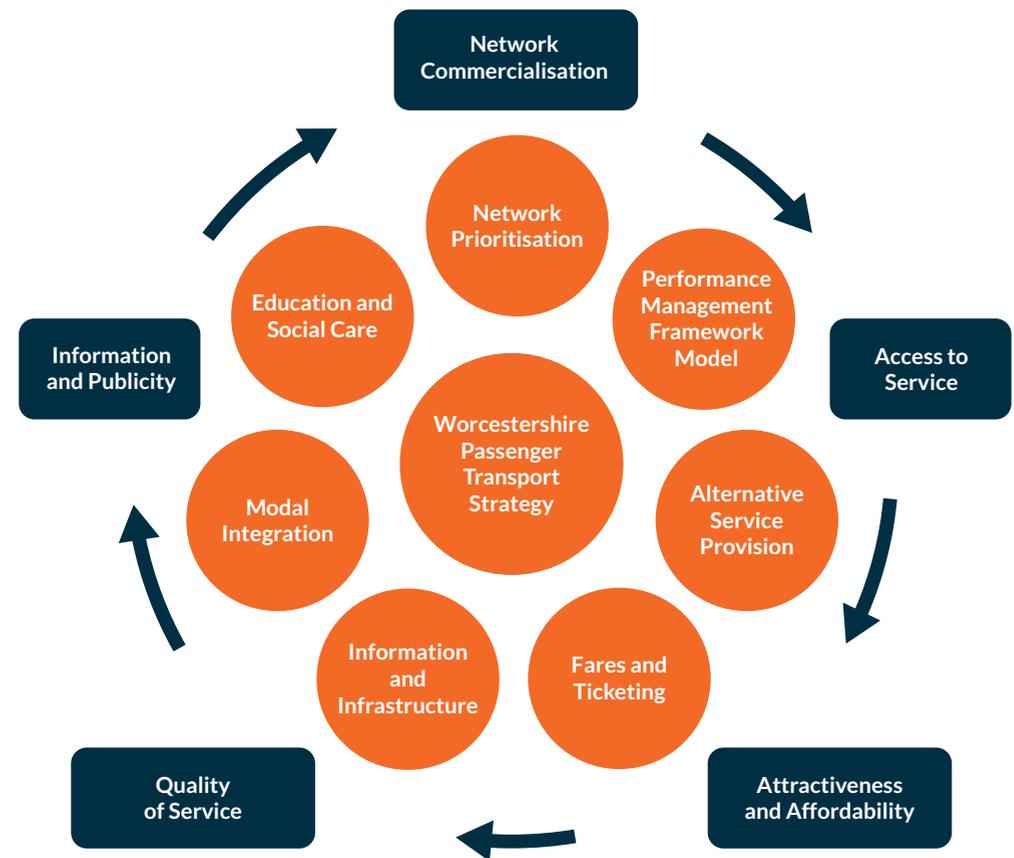
The Strategy sets out some specific objectives that the Council believes are essential if we are to achieve our overall objective. These objectives will enable Worcestershire County Council to maintain and improve services, while continuing to achieve best value. We will aim to implement a Strategy which is inclusive and provides options for both urban and rural travel.



The Strategy will cover:

- Home to School Transport
- Public Transport
- Community Transport
- Social Care Transport

The Aims and Objectives are shown in the following diagram:



Aims:

The Strategy includes a number of aims:

- **Network Commercialisation:** Worcestershire County Council is committed to developing and enhancing the ability for operators to provide their services commercially (without financial support from the County Council)
- **Access to Services:** The County Council's aim is to provide good network coverage, operating times, frequency of the service and network integration; however, we also need to achieve best value .
- **Attractive and Affordable Services:** It is essential that transport services' costs are competitive. Technology will play a key role in achieving this aim.
- **Quality of Service:** Worcestershire County Council recognises that quality of service is essential in delivering successful passenger transport services.
- **Publicity and Information:** The Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy will ensure information about services is readily available and is easily understood, while balancing this with the cost effectiveness of production.



Objectives:

The strategy also includes a number of more detailed objectives which will support achievement of the strategic aims:

- **Home to School and Social Care Transport:** This objective will provide an opportunity to review current provision and enhance integration where appropriate.
- **Network Prioritisation:** This objective focuses on where Worcestershire County Council will prioritise resources and ensure best value. This also places emphasis on the commercialisation of the network.
- **Performance Management Framework Model:** Performance of services is essential in terms of achieving best value with funding available and it is recognised that new ways of thinking are required. This will enable services to be ranked for both existing and future service provision. The prioritisation of customer journeys will form an important part of the consultation.
- **Alternative Service Provision:** This objective will consider other services which can complement the network
- **Fares and Ticketing:** We will look at ticketing options which allow passengers to undertake their journey using more than one form of transport. This will take account of available new technology.
- **Information and Infrastructure:** This objective will ensure that information is provided in the most appropriate way and considers the requirements of the Bus Services Act (2017). We will also look at appropriate levels of infrastructure provision (e.g. Bus shelters) across the network.
- **Modal Integration:** This objective focuses on the need to consider all methods of passenger transport to achieve improved integration. This will include consideration of accessibility of services and cost effective passenger transport options.

Delivery

The delivery of the Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy will be led by the Worcestershire County Council Transport Operations Unit, which is part of the Directorate of Economy & Infrastructure. Service delivery will be guided by the Passenger Transport Strategy.

Partnership Working

Worcestershire County Council is committed to continued partnership working to secure delivery of the best possible transport service for the County. The Bus Services Act 2017 provides the platform to do this.

Community Involvement

Engagement with customers to identify current and potential travel patterns and needs is essential in achieving delivery of effective, integrated services.

The views and opinions of the public, service users and non-users, are vital to ensuring that the passenger transport services provided meet the needs of the community. In introducing new services, the Council will, whenever they can, communicate directly with the local community via their democratically elected County Councillor.

Procurement

In procuring passenger transport services and facilities, Worcestershire County Council follows strict tendering procedures in accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulations and The Public Contracts Regulations 2012. The Council will explore all procurement options at its disposal to ensure that best value is achieved, competition between suppliers is maximised and local suppliers are not disadvantaged.

The Council remains committed to providing the highest level of service possible to the people of Worcestershire and expects all of its operators to deliver professional, safe and reliable services.



Desired Outcomes:

The Strategy will seek to deliver the following outcomes::

- Creation of an inclusive Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy.
- Provision of a network which offers access to key services (rural and urban).
- A sustainable passenger transport network.
- A robust procedure for deciding where, when and how we financially support services.
- Implementation of relevant parts of the Bus Services Act 2017 which will benefit Worcestershire's residents.

