

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 14 March 2023

Decision No: (CAB 22/23 36266)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	Cabinet Member for Transport and District Regeneration
SUBJECT:	Enhanced Bus Partnership
AUTHOR:	Iain Steane

THE DECISION

- (i) To approve the creation of the Southampton Enhanced Bus Partnership and to publish a Notice of Intent as required by section 138F of Transport Act 2000.
- (ii) To approve the draft Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme and finalise the EP Agreement, following consultation with the Director Governance & HR and Executive Director Place, and to commence the Partnership from 17th April 2023.
- (iii) To delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and District Regeneration, to determine all matters recommended at the Enhanced Partnership Board as set out in the EP Scheme and in line with agreed Council budgets and the Policy Framework.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The National Bus Strategy set out a recommendation for Local Transport Authorities (LTA) to establish either an Enhanced Partnership or Franchising Agreement. It was agreed at Cabinet in June 2021 that Southampton City Council would pursue an Enhanced Partnership. This was followed by the publication of Southampton Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which sets out the ambition for buses in Southampton.

The draft Enhanced Partnership 'Plan' and 'Scheme' have been developed in accordance with guidance published by the Department for Transport and with the Transport Act 2000 and subsequent amendments. Cabinet are required to approve for the partnership to be legally 'made' the Enhanced Partnership and for it to commence from 17th April 2023.

The Council's representatives on the Enhanced Partnership Board will require authority to determine relevant matters recommended by the Board, including variations to the Enhanced Partnership 'Plan' and 'Scheme'. Decisions will be subject to remaining wholly within Council budgets and the Policy Framework.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

1. Do-nothing

An Enhanced Partnership is a formal mechanism for collaboration between the Council and local bus operators. The Enhanced Partnership 'Plan' (the Bus Service Improvement Plan - BSIP) and 'Scheme(s)' are key policy tools that enable the Council to unlock funding from Central Government for buses and local transport schemes. Not having an Enhanced Partnership in place could mean that Southampton is unable to unlock future funding and therefore, is unable to deliver the ambitions set out in the BSIP and the overarching Connected Southampton Transport Strategy (LTP4).

This approach is not recommended as not having an Enhanced Partnership in place could therefore damage the Council's reputation and relationship with bus operators and Central Government at a time of significant change to the bus network.

2. Franchising

Franchising bus services was considered and not recommended at Cabinet in June 2021. This was due to the need for the Council to take on greater powers and control of local buses, including setting standards, timetables, fares, networks etc.

Franchising currently is only within the remit of Mayoral Combined Authorities and for Southampton would require the approval of the Secretary of State. Franchising typically takes longer to achieve, requiring additional resource, and would still require an EP to be in place beforehand.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 14 March 2023

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Judy Cordell

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*