

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

INTALINK BUS STRATEGY



February 2020

**Passenger Transport
Environment and Infrastructure**





Foreword

In May 2018 Hertfordshire County Council adopted a new Local Transport Plan to set out its priorities for the future of the county's transport system. It represents a clear change of policy direction, and a firm commitment to move travel behaviour towards use of more sustainable modes and away from over-reliance on the private car.

This **Intalink Bus Strategy** sets out in greater detail our plans to grow the local bus network to support this shift. The Hertfordshire bus network already moves over 30 million passengers per year and we have big ambitions for growth. This will involve giving greater priority to bus services in traffic, making sure information is easy to access and raising standards of operation across the county.

However, buses currently carry just 3% of journeys to work in Hertfordshire, less than half the national average. 53% of journeys to work by all modes are under 10 miles, and many more residents travel to stations to access rail services to London daily. There is clear potential for growth, and Local Transport Plan 4 acknowledges that with 175,000 additional residents by 2031, it will not be acceptable in environmental, economic or social terms to continue to depend on cars in the way we currently do.

The county's geography makes it challenging to run bus services efficiently, and while there are many areas where the network operates well, we want to work in close partnership with bus companies to make it even more successful.

We will continue to support important services which cannot be operated commercially, and look at new ways to serve passenger demand in such areas.

We will use new powers granted to us by the recent Bus Services Act to strengthen the existing Intalink partnership to ensure together we deliver more for passengers.

Derrick Ashley
Hertfordshire County Councillor
Executive Member for Growth, Infrastructure,
Planning and the Economy

Executive Summary

Bus services play an important role in Hertfordshire's transport network, and in the context of the county council's Local Transport Plan 4, increasingly so. Buses can support much more efficient movement of people than is achieved in single occupancy cars, and deliver the county council's vision for:

“Hertfordshire to continue to be a county where people have the opportunity to live healthy, fulfilling lives in thriving, prosperous communities”.

The Transport User Hierarchy places a greater emphasis on a reduced need to travel, active travel and public transport modes, prioritising these above use of private car. Efforts should be made to make bus travel more attractive to existing and potential users, to make the bus the mode of choice for more residents, shifting from unsustainable patterns of car use.

Nationally, the Bus Services Act 2017 provides transport authorities new powers to improve their local bus networks, and the county council considers an Enhanced Partnership will be an effective way to do this. Hertfordshire County Council has been working closely with local bus operators, local authorities and the Department for Transport to develop strong partnership proposals, and hopes to be amongst the first in the country to be adopted.

The county's bus network is mostly operated commercially, with no direct control from the county council. By working closely with operators it will be possible to support bus companies to attract new customers to their commercial services, through infrastructure to support improved reliability, better information and new technology. In turn, passengers will benefit from operator investment in strengthened commercial services.

This document sets out the county council's proposals to do this by prioritising bus services in traffic, improving the image of bus travel, upgrading bus infrastructure, better integrating the network and smarter use of data and information.

For the minority of services which are directly contracted by the county council, this document also sets out how resources will be prioritised to ensure maximum value for public money, and priorities for future service enhancement where resources allow.

Contents

1. Introduction

Role and value of buses in Hertfordshire

Mode shift from private car

Access to key services

2. Context

National context

Legal framework

Current bus network

Local Transport Plan 4

Intalink Quality Partnership

Bus Services Act 2017

Contracted bus network

New mobility services

Air quality

3. Objectives and Action Plan

Prioritising bus services in traffic

Improving the image of bus travel

Upgrading bus infrastructure

Closer integration of the bus network

Smarter use of data and information

4. Monitoring

Appendices

Value for Money criteria

Core infrastructure corridors and service development priorities



1. Introduction

Bus passengers make a substantial contribution to the UK and local economy, accounting for more than 30 million journeys per year in Hertfordshire¹, and over four billion nationally. Over 30,000 Hertfordshire residents commute by bus to work and school every day², but this currently represents just 3% of all journeys to work and around 9% of journeys to school³. Amongst bus trips, around half are to access work or education, and half for shopping, personal business and leisure.

The bus network directly contributes to the county council's ambition to provide all residents the opportunity to thrive, prosper, be healthy and safe, and take part. Buses make more efficient use of road space to move people than individual private cars, helping to reduce congestion. They are able to emit less air pollution and carbon dioxide per person than private cars, and can provide a lifeline to those living in social isolation.

Bus services play two distinct roles in Hertfordshire: they serve an important social function, providing access to services and recreation, and they provide mass transit of individuals on key urban and inter-urban routes more efficiently than by private car.

¹ Department for Transport bus statistics table 0109

² Census 2011 table and SaverCard usage data

³ Hertfordshire County Council Traffic and Transport Data Report 2018

1.1 Mode shift from private car

Around 100,000 additional homes are planned to be built in Hertfordshire by the mid-2030s⁴, and forecasts indicate that it will not be possible for current car-reliant transport system to continue without significantly increasing the negative impacts on the environment, economy and society as a whole. The role of public transport in moving people as efficiently as possible is a central one.

1.2 Access to key services

For residents in rural areas, and those without a private car, the bus can provide access to education, healthcare and other essential services. These rural services, while important tend to have lower passenger use than more urban based networks.

They can be complemented by Community Transport car and minibus schemes, and transport services provided by the health and education sectors, particularly where demand cannot sustain a conventional bus service. New technology to support more demand responsive services may also play a greater role in these areas in the near future.

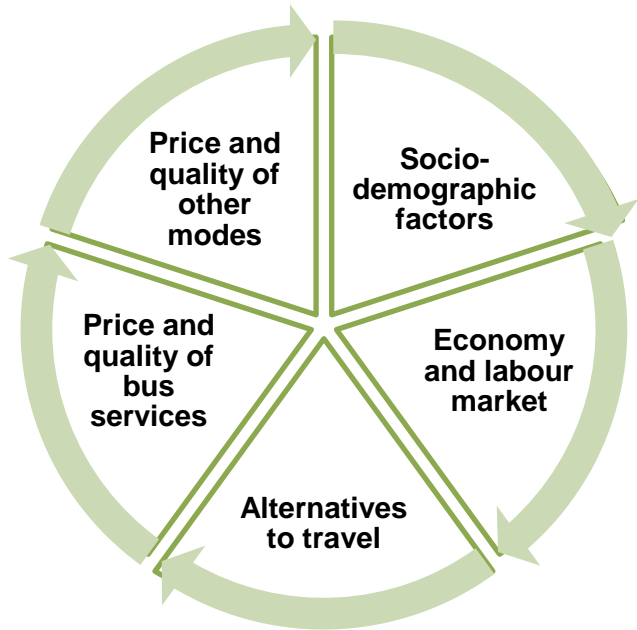


⁴ Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4

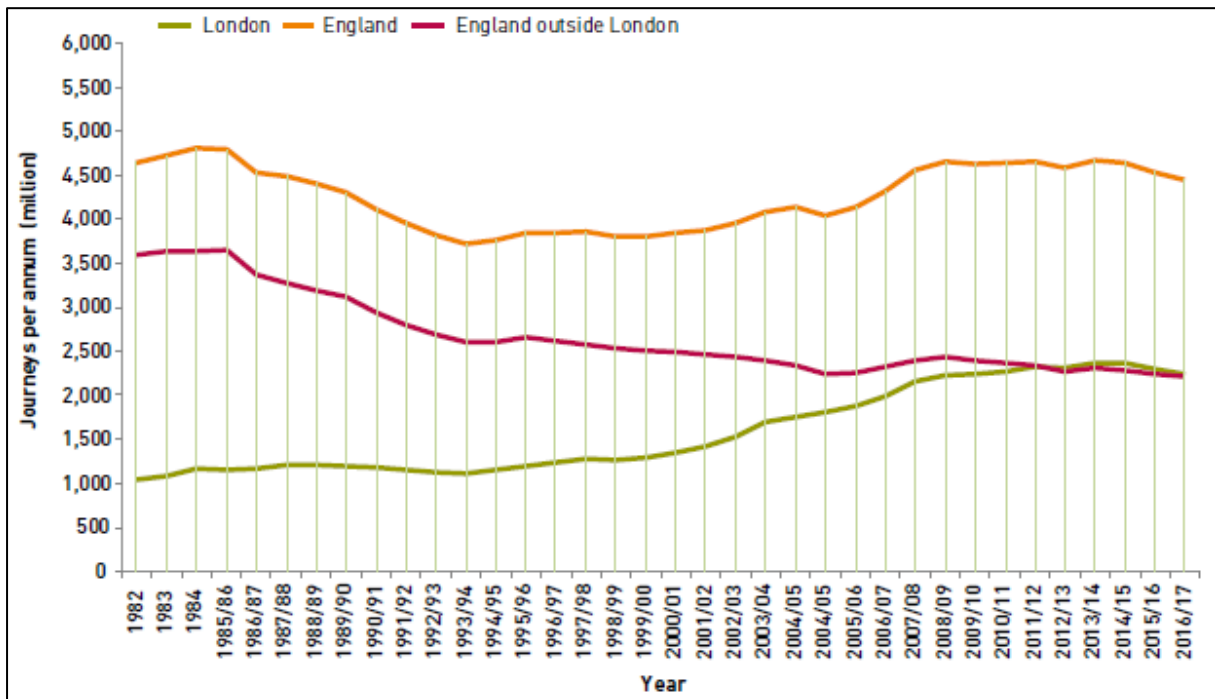
2. Context

2.1 National context

Nationally, bus patronage is declining, having fallen from 4.6 to 4.4 billion journeys 2012-2017⁵. This relates to a wide range of factors, including increasing population with access to a car and the relative cost of motoring; a greater degree of flexible working and self-employment; growth in online services; and the impact of increasing congestion and rising fares.



The greatest decline has been in major city regions (6.6% since 2011/12), but there have also been falls in non-metropolitan areas (3.9%) and London (3.6%). The Transport Select Committee has invited evidence from industry stakeholders and will report back with recommendations later in 2019.



Long term trends in bus patronage in England⁶

⁵ Confederation of Passenger Transport research

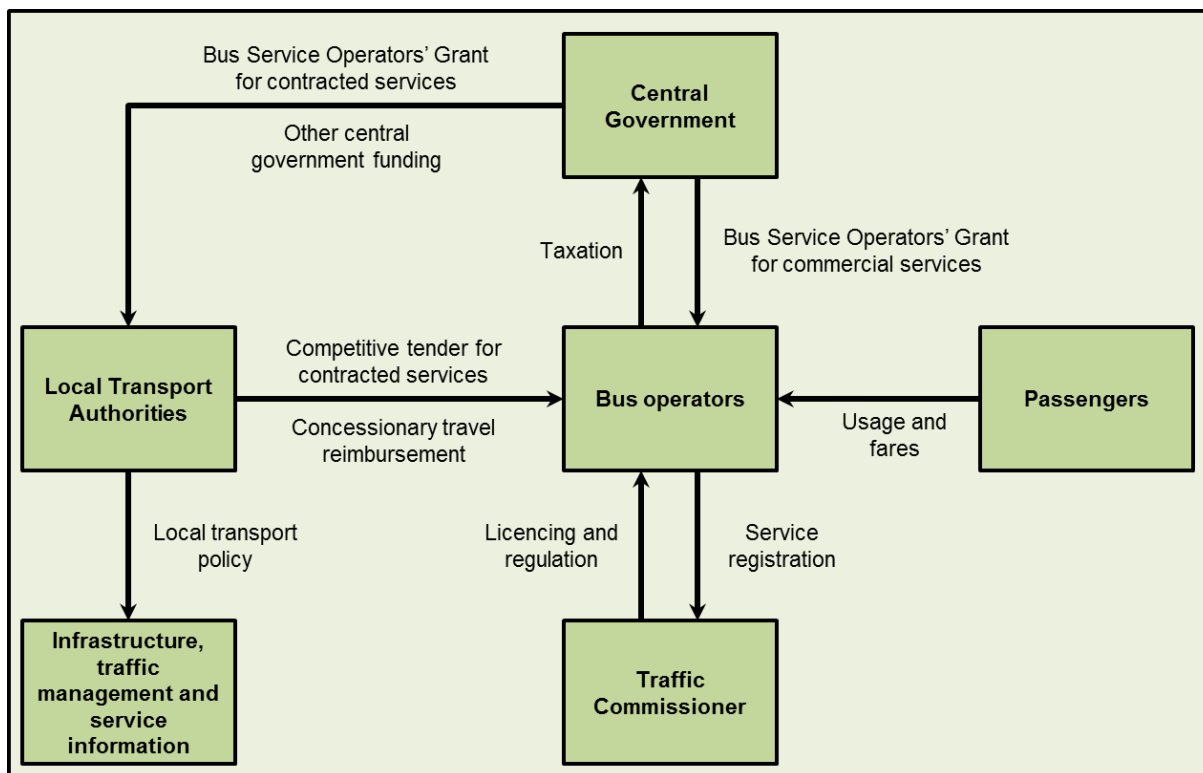
⁶ Hertfordshire County Council Traffic and Transport Data Report 2018

2.2 Legal framework

The structure of the bus industry in England outside London is largely unchanged following deregulation initiated by the Transport Act 1985. Market competition was introduced, with private sector bus companies able to register any service it considers viable to operate on a commercial basis in response to demand, without public subsidy. Fares are also deregulated and for commercial services can be set by operators at any level.

Services within London remained regulated and continue to be specified by Transport for London. Operators are licenced by, and register their services with, the industry regulators, the Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain.

Local authorities were given powers to “fill the gaps” in the commercial market, by securing bus services considered socially necessary but not provided by the commercial market. They do so by tendering contracts for services which are run by private operators alongside their commercial services.



Regulatory and funding interactions in the bus industry, in England outside London⁷

⁷ Confederation of Passenger Transport research

Subsequent Transport Acts (2000 and 2008) introduced some regulatory powers to support local authorities in interacting with the bus network. The 2000 Act placed a requirement on local transport authorities to prepare a Bus Strategy containing policies to support bus services and provide relevant facilities and services in connection with them. The 2008 Act provided additional powers including Voluntary Quality Partnerships, Statutory Quality Partnerships and Quality Contracts.

Hertfordshire established three Quality Network Partnerships in response to these powers, in St Albans, Watford and Hemel Hempstead, working with stakeholders to establish initiatives such as joint ticketing, information and marketing improvements and infrastructure delivery. The partnerships subsequently merged with the county-wide Intalink Quality Partnership.

The 2000 Act established the Bus Service Operators' Grant to benefit bus passengers by providing higher levels of service than would be possible without significantly increasing fares. Following reforms in 2014 where commercial services are concerned this is paid directly to operators, while grant associated with contracted services is paid to the local transport authority, and is calculated to rebate fuel duty, as well as incentivise local carbon, smartcard and automatic vehicle location technology.

Statutory provision of concessionary bus travel for elderly and disabled people was introduced by the 2000 Act, and extended by the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 to provide free off-peak local bus travel anywhere in England for those eligible. Local Transport Authorities are responsible for administering the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, and in Hertfordshire the scheme also provides for free peak travel.

Most recently the Bus Services Act 2017 has introduced more radical powers for certain local transport authorities to take more direct control over local bus networks through Franchising powers, comparable to the role of Transport for London. It also introduces new partnership arrangements (Advanced Quality Partnerships and Enhanced Partnerships) which replace those introduced in previous legislation, as well as some specific requirements on the provision of information.

2.3 Current bus network

Up to date maps and timetables for all of the Hertfordshire bus network are maintained at:

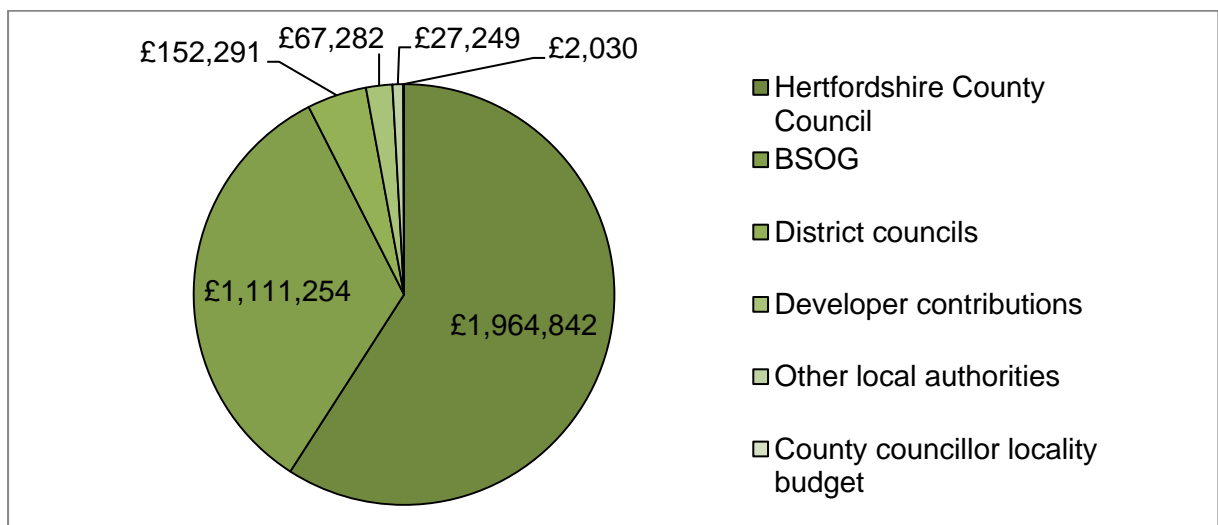
www.intalink.org.uk

Hertfordshire’s bus network operates in a “de-regulated” environment, with the majority of services operating on a commercial basis, run by private bus companies for profit.

A minority of services (around 5% of trips) are run under contract to the county council, to cater to demand in some areas where services or journeys would not be commercially viable. This also includes support for journeys at particular times to particular areas on otherwise commercial routes. The county council prioritises its fixed local bus budget of around £1.7 million per year using criteria to ensure best value for public money (see **Appendix 1**).

Additional money for bus services comes from the government’s Bus Service Operators’ Grant, and some other local authorities, including neighbouring county and unitary councils for cross-boundary routes, and district councils for certain services within Hertfordshire.

Priorities for service development and new services, where funding provides opportunities to “pump prime” enhancements (such as developer contributions through Section 106 funding and Community Infrastructure Levy, or government grants), are set out in **Appendix 2**.



Funding sources for contract bus services in Hertfordshire 2017/18

Around fifty bus operators of varying sizes have services registered across the county, with Arriva operating approximately half of the market share. Two further operators, Uno and Centrebus, together represent around a further quarter of the market, and the remainder is operated by other companies.

Transport for London and other neighbouring authorities also contract services which serve towns on the periphery of the county, and contributions from new development and successful bids to government funds support enhancements to the network.

Recent successes include securing funding for an operator innovation fund, which supported several promotional campaigns and investments in new technology. Developer contributions are currently being used to pump prime several service enhancements, with more expected to come forward as developments progress, including brand new services at High Leigh in Hoddesdon and Bishops Stortford North.

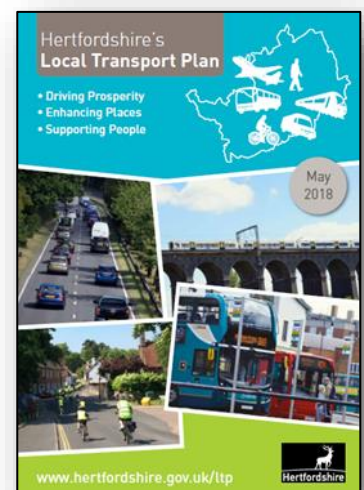
The county council also supports bus travel through the:

- Provision of highway infrastructure such as bus stops and real time passenger information display equipment
- Provision of publicity and information on all local bus services through a range of media, including digital and at bus stops
- English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (elderly and disabled bus passes)
- SaverCard local concessionary travel scheme for young people
- Statutory provision of home-to-school transport for entitled pupils
- Securing contributions from major developments towards bus network enhancements

2.4 Local Transport Plan 4

In recognition of the significant housing growth planned in future years and the anticipated increase in travel demand, the county council has adopted a new approach to transport planning which caters for all forms of transport and seeks to encourage a switch from the private car to sustainable transport wherever possible.

The county council's Local Transport Plan 4 establishes a Transport User Hierarchy to prioritise the needs of sustainable



Local Transport Plan 4

travel modes (and alternatives to travel) above single occupancy car journeys. This places a policy commitment on the county council to consider in the design of any transport scheme or strategy, in priority order:

1. Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel
2. Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)
3. Passenger transport needs
4. Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs
5. Other motor vehicle user needs



It also commits to a long term major project to develop the concepts of Sustainable Travel Towns, and a Bus Rapid Transit scheme along the east-west A414 corridor. This will be investigated further through Growth and Transport Plans and an A414 Corridor Strategy.



Illustrative impression of a Bus Rapid Transit service

Local Transport Plan 4 policies also require the county council to:

- Support a network of cost effective and efficient bus services to promote accessibility and respond to the changing bus network
- Deliver bus infrastructure improvements including bus priority measures, focussed primarily on a core network of routes
- Work with bus operators through the Intalink Quality Partnership to promote bus services and other network improvements
- Consider its position in light of new powers enabled by the Bus Services Act 2017

2.5 Intalink Quality Partnership



The Hertfordshire Intalink Quality Partnership is a well-established group of public transport operators and local authorities working together, voluntarily, to improve the passenger experience of services in the county. In recognition of the importance of many stakeholders in the Hertfordshire public transport network, membership includes the county, district and borough councils, bus operators and train operating companies.

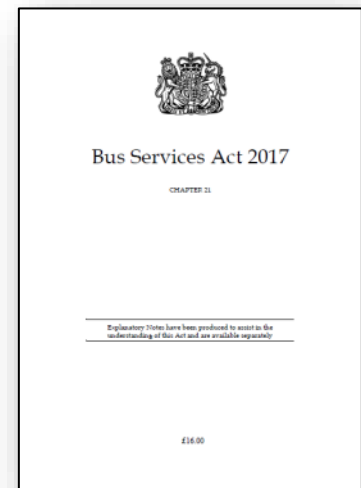
Since 1999 the Partnership has promoted bus travel with integrated travel information at bus stops and train stations, online, through mobile apps and real-time passenger information. The Partnership has developed a distinct common brand, multi-operator ticketing products, upgraded bus stops and stations, and facilitated discussion between bus companies and the better integration of public transport services.

An Intalink Quality Partnership agreement sets out quality standards on marketing, presentation and performance that operators are required to meet.

2.6 Bus Services Act 2017

The Bus Services Act 2017 provides a new toolkit of interventions to support Local Transport Authorities and bus operators in improving bus services. It introduces two strengthened partnership working arrangements, new powers to contract bus route franchises, and improved ticketing and open data legislation.

Hertfordshire County Council's assessment of the new powers enabled by the Act, suggests:



Bus Services Act 2017

- *Franchising* could provide benefits for passengers, by using income from profit-making routes to offset the costs of services which are not commercially viable. It does, however, carry large financial risks and entail resources not currently available to the county council, and without a Directly Elected Mayor is only available with the consent of the Secretary of State. It is also an approach that is very unlikely to win support from any bus operators.

- *Enhanced Partnerships* provide a framework for collaboration with bus operators with stronger leverage than voluntary partnership working, allowing a wide range of agreed facilities, measures and service requirements to be statutory. There is also potential for bus registration powers to be devolved from the Traffic Commissioners.
- *Advanced Quality Partnerships* would allow a more limited range of commitments to be secured on a voluntary basis, and would in effect be a roll-forward of best practice already delivered in the county. It would therefore be the lowest risk of the three options, but enable most restricted progress.

Comparison of Bus Services Act 2017 powers

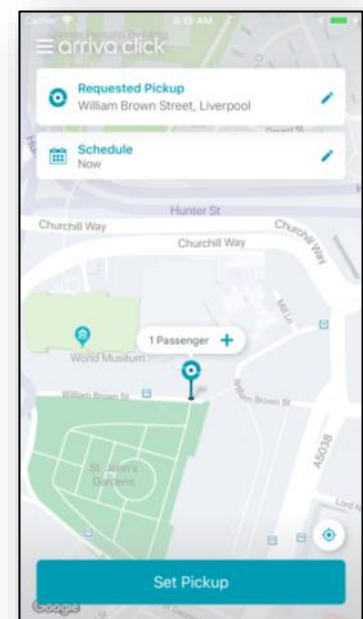
Power		Advanced Quality Partnership	Enhanced Partnership	Franchising
Ticketing	Issue and accept multi-operator and multi-modal tickets	✓ (but not set price)	✓	✓
	Specify how fares and tickets are marketed	✓	✓	✓
	Specify single operator fares	x	x	✓
Vehicle specification	Specify vehicle emissions standards	By agreement	✓	✓
	Specify vehicle livery and branding	x	✓	✓
	Specify on-bus electronic information equipment	x	✓	✓
Other powers	Specify frequencies or timings	By agreement	✓ (in specific circumstances)	✓
	Exclude operators not meeting standards	✓	✓	✓
	Devolved Traffic Commissioner registration powers	x	✓	Not applicable

2.7 New mobility services

Consideration of the future of public transport should extend to new and emerging “disruptive technologies” including Uber-style Demand Responsive Transport, new ways of accessing data and making payment, and in the long term, autonomous vehicles. Although the Hertfordshire experience is limited to date, as these become more commonplace they have potential to significantly alter the nature of bus travel.

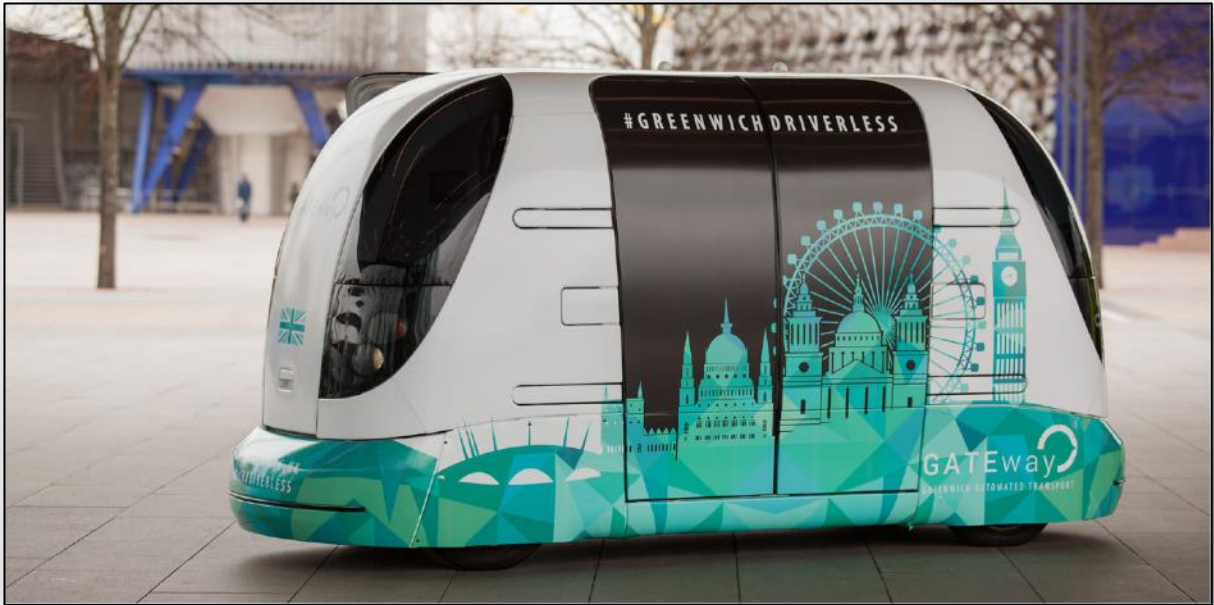
Demand Responsive Transport (for example Arriva’s “ArrivaClick” and Oxford Bus Company’s “PickMeUp” services) may provide opportunities to more efficiently serve areas with little or variable passenger demand. It can also provide direct, almost door-to-door travel where existing journeys are complex, using app-based technology to book and automatically plan routes.

In this way, providers consider Demand Responsive Transport between a traditional bus and taxi service: providing greater convenience than a conventional bus services, and lower travel cost than a taxi. The county council will consider pump priming such services where there is a case for doing so, and will work with providers to support and evaluate the implementation of services which come forward.



ArrivaClick in Liverpool

Mobility as a Service is a combines multiple transport modes with technology and data to facilitate integrated journey planning, booking and payment. All transport needs are purchased in a regular subscription package, with mode selected on the basis of effectiveness for each trip, regardless of cost or ownership perceptions. Although currently at an early stage, the technology is expected to have major implications for the way people consume travel, particularly in the context of decreasing take up of private car amongst younger people.

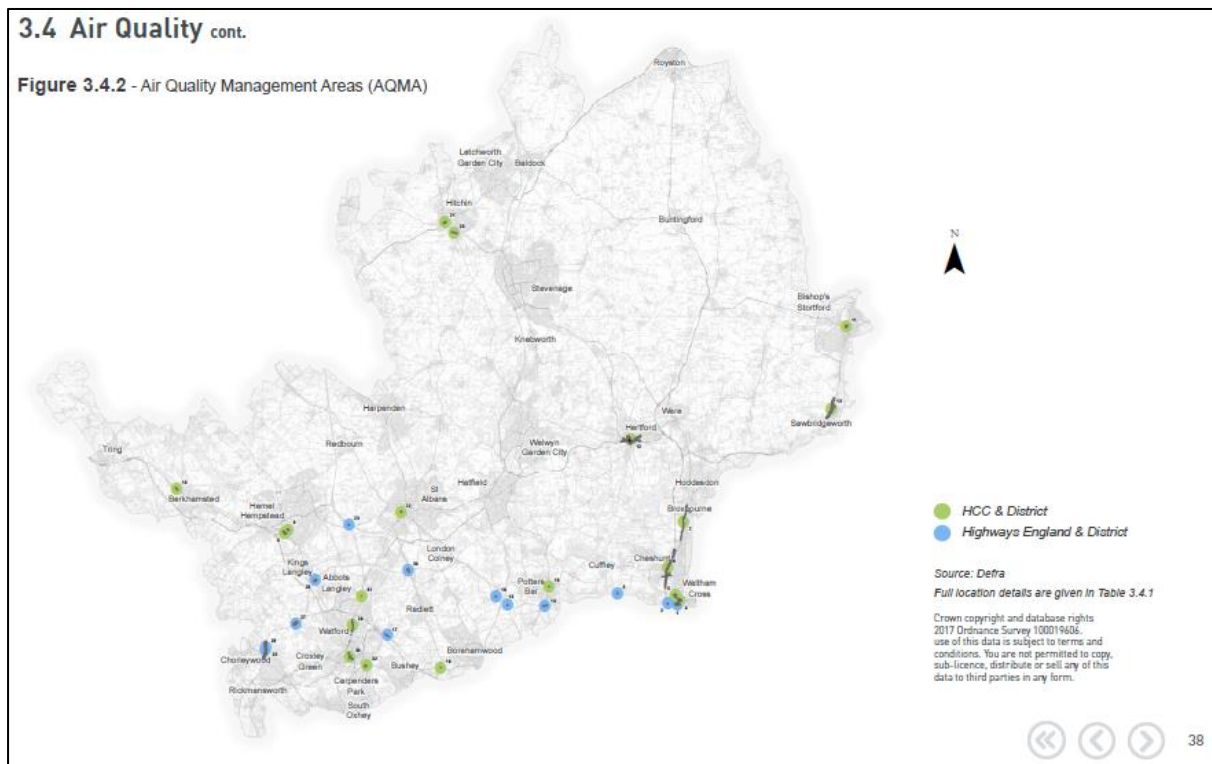


Autonomous vehicle trial in Greenwich

The emergence of such technology, as well as autonomous “driverless” vehicles, will radically change the face of bus travel and the county council must position itself to embrace and influence the vehicle ownership, usage, and operating models which prevail. Trials are already taking place in the UK and overseas of technology, including the GATEway project in Greenwich in 2016, and the commissioning of an autonomous bus by Stagecoach in 2018. A “Future Mobility Strategy” is being developed by the county council to inform its position on the emerging agenda.

2.8 Air quality

Across Hertfordshire there are around 30 declared Air Quality Management Areas, where regulatory limits are breached. These generally relate to Nitrogen Dioxide emissions from road traffic on both county council and Highways England managed roads, and district councils are responsible for preparing and implementing an Air Quality Action Plan.



Air Quality Management Areas in Hertfordshire⁸

Bus services have strong potential to positively contribute towards improving air quality in the county. Bus trips can replace unnecessary single occupancy car journeys, and industry research demonstrates the significant reduction in air pollutant emissions associated with moving towards cleaner “Euro VI” diesel, electric and other alternative fuel technology for passenger transport vehicles⁹.

Funding has been made available to support the government’s “Road to Zero” strategy, including through the Low Emission Bus Scheme, with further opportunities through the Clean Air Fund to bid for investment to support uptake of this technology.

⁸ Hertfordshire County Council Traffic and Transport Data Report 2018

⁹ Greener Journeys analysis

3. Objectives and Action Plan

Following considerable stakeholder engagement and research, five objectives have been identified to improve bus travel in the county.

Intalink Bus Strategy objectives
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Prioritising bus services in traffic2. Improving the image of bus travel3. Upgrading bus infrastructure4. Closer integration of the bus network5. Smarter use of data and information

On assessment of the key issues affecting bus services in the county, and the powers enabled by the Bus Services Act 2017, the county council considers that the most appropriate way forward at this time is to develop an **Enhanced Partnership** (see **Draft Intalink Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme**).

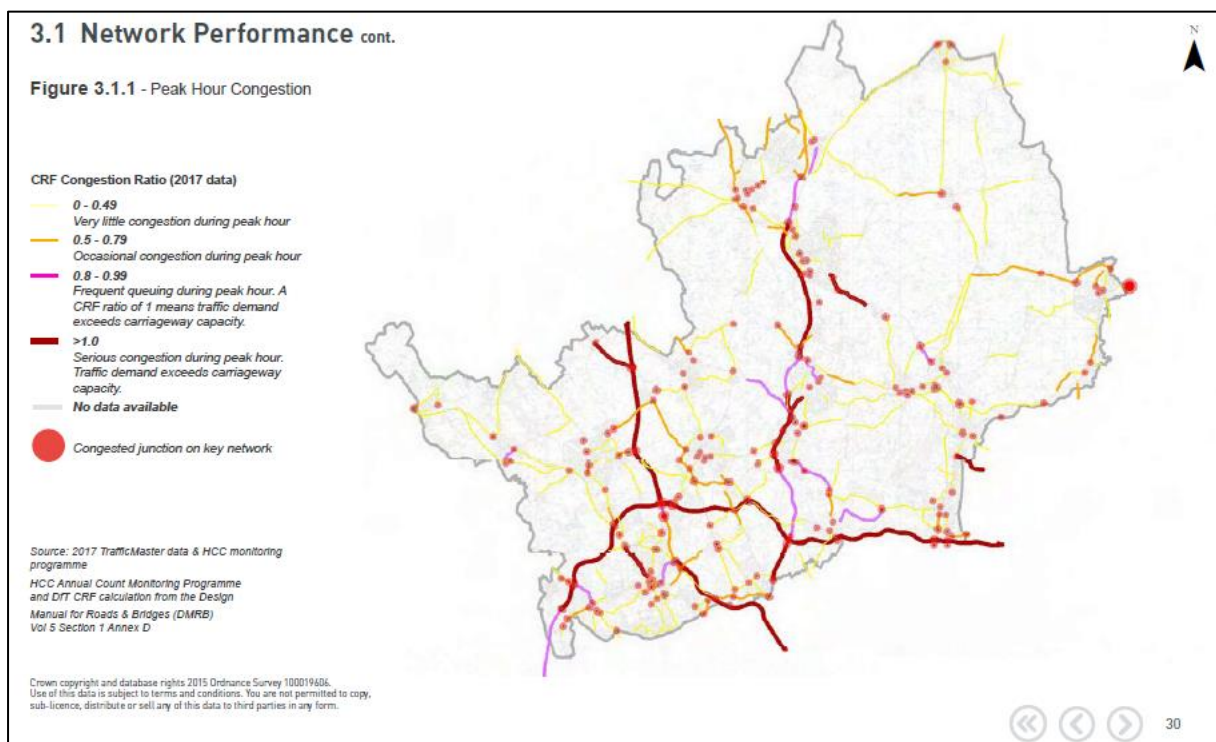
While some parts of an Enhanced Partnership become statutory requirements of the county council and bus operators, good progress has already been made on a voluntary basis through the existing Intalink Partnership. An Enhanced Partnership will enable Intalink to further raise these standards, through the close joint-working of all partners.

3.1 Prioritising bus services in traffic

Bus passengers suffer from the effects of general traffic congestion. Increased journey times require increased resources and costs to maintain a given frequency; the alternative is to reduce frequency, making services less attractive to passengers. Both outcomes reduce the profitability of services and undermine operators' ability to run routes effectively, reducing investment and ultimately level of service provided to passengers.

Recent research indicates a direct correlation between bus operating speeds and usage, suggesting with no bus priority investment, a 10% decrease in speed reduces usage by at least 8 to 10%¹⁰.

In Hertfordshire, traffic congestion is forecast to grow by 18% by 2031. Average morning peak traffic speeds in Hertfordshire’s urban areas are around 15 miles per hour, and as low as 13 miles per hour in some places. More adverse is the impact of daily or hourly variability in journey times, making it difficult to plan and maintain achievable timetables.



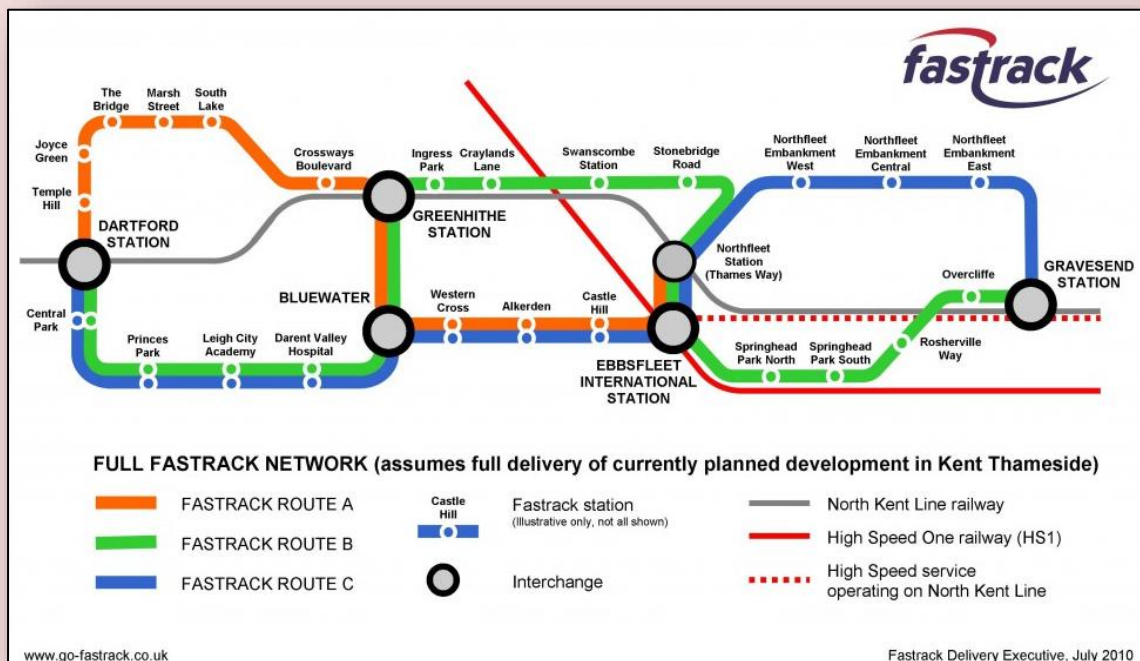
Congestion on the county’s major roads¹¹

Roadworks can have a similar effect on the road network as general traffic congestion in that they impede the flow of traffic and can increase bus journey times, impacting service reliability and punctuality. Where these are planned passengers and operators can be forewarned and appropriate temporary arrangements established.

¹⁰ Greener Journeys Impact of congestion on bus passengers 2016

¹¹ Hertfordshire County Council Traffic and Transport Data Report 2018

Case study: Fastrack, Kent



This bus rapid transit scheme promoted by Kent County Council was launched in 2006, but continues to play an important role in supporting sustainable travel in north Kent. The scheme is playing an integral role in underpinning access to major developments across the area, including proposals for up to 15,000 new homes at Ebbsfleet Garden City.

The existing network was largely funded through developer contributions from the major mixed-use commercial and residential development at The Bridge, Dartford, and incorporates a bus-only bridge over the M25. Future extensions and enhancements are planned to support the new developments at least 10 sites over 25 years, working towards a 40 kilometre network of busways and bus lanes.

Recent upgrades have included a 2015 joint venture with Arriva to invest in a fleet of 21 new vehicles with a refreshed Fastrack branding.

Actions:

1. Address bottlenecks impacting services in the short term

What: Co-operation between bus operators, the county council and district councils to identify and address congestion caused by traffic bottlenecks and parking.

How: Identification of hotspots of congestion for bus operators which impede the free flow of services, caused for example by unconstrained parking or road layouts, to be tackled by relatively minor changes to highway arrangements, parking availability and enforcement. While it is not possible to compile list of all schemes to be delivered during the life of this document, a mechanism for prioritising and

delivering these will be agreed.

When: Continued identification of issues and scheme preparation and delivery, during Years 1-5 and beyond.

Who: Bus operators, the county and district councils.

2. Identify opportunities for longer term bus priority packages

What: Identification of longer term bus priority packages through the county council's highway strategy development processes for future delivery.

How: Active operator engagement and consultation on emerging proposals through the county council's Growth and Transport Plans and other relevant strategies such as the A414 Corridor Strategy. This is best supported and informed by operator data and intelligence, and will involve lobbying for political support at county and district levels.

When: Continued strategy development, including identification of funding sources and delivery mechanisms during Years 1 to 5, to prioritise schemes for delivery during Years 6 to 10.

Who: County council to lead strategy development, informed by bus operator evidence

3. Mitigate the impact of roadworks

What: Liaison between the county council and bus operators to mitigate the impact of planned roadworks on bus services.

How: Regular and ongoing liaison between county council and bus operators to ensure that forthcoming planned roadworks are communicated to operators and passengers, and appropriate action taken where possible.

When: Ongoing from Year 1.

Who: Led by Hertfordshire County Council in liaison with bus operators.

3.2 Improving the image of buses

At its inception, the primary purpose of Intalink was to promote bus services. To date it has successfully delivered a range of innovative marketing campaigns across traditional and digital media, including online, social media and through apps.

Furthermore, to qualify for Intalink membership, operators must meet specific quality thresholds, although in practice limited resources means enforcement tends to be reactive rather than proactive, and they do not apply to operators outside the voluntary partnership. These standards cover basic responsibilities for publicising service information and the presentation of vehicles, for example production and display of timetable materials.

The nature of the bus network means that operator investment in fleet upgrades is determined by a commercial business case. This generally means corridors which are most profitable will benefit from the highest quality vehicles, although operators may choose to upgrade vehicles in an attempt to drive patronage on less well-used routes.

The county council has supported operators with this, for example from developer contributions and funding bids. There is also an opportunity for the county council to provide leadership in this area by increasing the vehicle specification on contracted services (for example by requiring younger minimum vehicle ages). It is important to consider carefully the implications for contract costs.

From the days of deregulation bus operators in Hertfordshire have liveried their vehicles in their own corporate schemes, which exacerbates the perception among passengers of a fragmented bus network. This is in contrast to London, where all buses carry a very strong and consistent recognisable branding. Any common referencing to Intalink is minimal, and currently voluntary.

Travel plans for business and residential development can be used to deliver mode shift to public transport, These set out targets and measures to be delivered by the developer or employer, and can include targeted information and financial incentives to promote bus use.

Case study: ML1 marketing campaign



The ML1 Maylands Link bus service was established using funding secured from the government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund in March 2013, to link Hemel Hempstead rail station with the Maylands Business Park. The service was initially operated by Arriva under contract and attracted around 150 passengers per day across a service operating in the morning and evening peaks, and at lunchtimes.

The county council used developer funding to maintain the service for a further year, at which point a review of the service removed the little-used lunchtime journeys. This was accompanied by a high profile multi-media marketing campaign over two months.

The campaign featured a dedicated branding design used across rail station ticket gate advertisement, bus shelter wraps, billboards and posters, social media platforms and business engagement with large employers. Each activity was targeted to particular groups of potential new passengers

The campaign resulted in a considerable increase in usage with around 30% more passengers per month following the campaign. Arriva operated the service commercially from March 2016, and while it was withdrawn later that year by Arriva, it has been operated by Red Eagle on a commercial basis since.

Actions:

4. Raise and enforce quality standards

- What:* Stipulate and enforce minimum standards, in terms of acceptable reliability, punctuality and vehicle emissions.
- How:* An Enhanced Partnership would make minimum standards a statutory requirement for most services registered in the county. Specific minimum standards would need to be agreed with operators.
- When:* Standards could be introduced from Year 1, with incremental improvement over the plan period, following operator consultation and adoption of an Enhanced Partnership.
- Who:* All bus operators responsible for complying with the agreed standards, with monitoring and support from the county council. Registration powers devolved from the Traffic Commissioner to Hertfordshire County Council would provide an effective enforcement mechanism.

5. Develop and implement a five year marketing plan

- What:* A five year forward plan for marketing campaigns.
- How:* Focus of network-wide and multi-operator marketing activities, approaches and channels to be prioritised and published in a regularly updated, evidence-based marketing plan.
- When:* A five year plan to be introduced from Year 1, with annual updates and regular progress reporting.
- Who:* Intalink to approve a regularly-updated five year marketing plan for delivery by Hertfordshire County Council.

6. Take a consistent branding approach

- What:* Unified branding of vehicles across all operators, incorporating common Intalink elements.
- How:* Externally by displaying Intalink vinyls in standard exterior positions, internally include the display of standard notices and could in future extend to a driver dress code. The approach would take account of existing corporate branding schemes and be agreed with operators.
- When:* Branding could be introduced from Year 1 and updated as required, following detailed consultation with operators.
- Who:* Intalink responsible for approving a detailed branding scheme, whilst all operators responsible for display, and the county council ensuring plentiful supply of

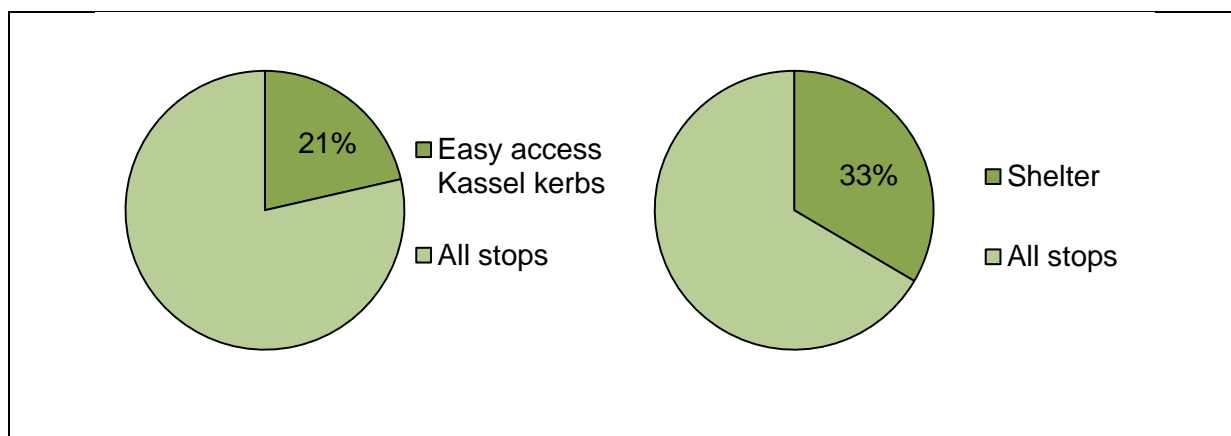
materials to operators.



3.3 Upgrading bus infrastructure

Bus interchanges support efficient multi-modal journeys, integrating bus routes and other modes, and capacity must be protected in key locations. The location, nature and design of interchanges is evolving and these should consider current and future growth requirements and capacity. Development space is at a premium and even with a declining high street, town centres are recognised for their potential in delivering dense residential development on brownfield sites and in accessible locations.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on transport authorities to ensure opportunities are taken to make the built environment more accessible for those with disabilities. There is an ongoing programme of bus stop improvements, and developer contributions allow this to be accelerated as these come forward. Requirements of the Bus Services Act 2017 also support the provision of on-board audio-visual equipment and accessible information.

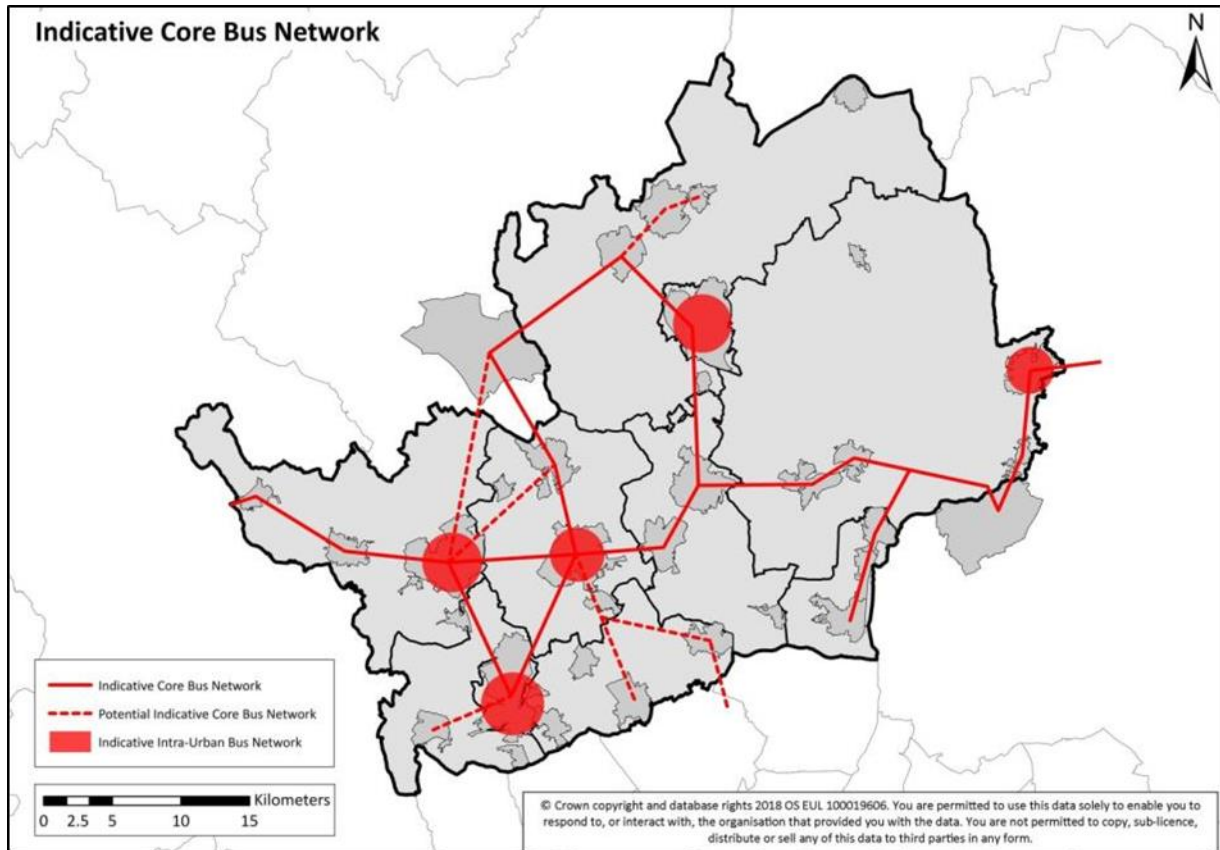


Infrastructure to support bus stop accessibility

Infrastructure improvements should also be targeted to enhance access to the bus network by walking and cycling. Opportunities to improve health through physical activity in transport are explored further in the Active Travel Strategy.

In addition to highway infrastructure, fleet investment can be used to target exhaust emissions through retrofitting and replacement, as well as making vehicles more appealing to passengers. Emissions reduction is particularly relevant to services operating through designated Air Quality Management Areas, though the cumulative negative effects of air pollution are widespread.

Local Transport Plan 4 recommends prioritisation of improvements around a network of core highway corridors to maximise the impact of investment, with investment coming forward elsewhere as finances allow. The corridors and towns should be well-served in terms of frequency and investment will support patronage growth on routes serving them. The county council will work with operators to co-ordinate investments for maximum effect, for example bringing forward infrastructure and vehicle upgrades together. **Appendix 2** details how these corridors have been prioritised.



Indicative core infrastructure corridors identified in Local Transport Plan 4

Case study: Welwyn Garden City bus station



This recent £1 million investment by Hertfordshire County Council features a new custom designed bus enclosure will housing all seven bus stops. The new bus station provides covered waiting areas with seating for nearly 70 people, new lighting and up-to-the-minute real time departure screens.

An improved bus layout is designed to ensure easier safer access for both pedestrians and bus drivers. Buses enter the new stops 'nose-in' so there is no longer any need to walk in front of one bus to get to another, making the experience of catching the bus safer and less stressful.

A feature of the new bus station is a reproduction of the Welwyn Garden City Masterplan map designed by architect Louis DeSoissons in 1920. This map represents the ideals of the Garden City Movement and creates a feature of interest for visitors. Elements of the design are have also been incorporated onto the glass areas.

The area surrounding the bus station has been renovated with new block paving and kerbing, new street lighting as well as street furniture and landscaping.

Actions:

7. Co-ordinate infrastructure improvements along core corridors

What: Co-ordination of bus infrastructure improvements and fleet investment.

How: Prioritisation of bus infrastructure upgrades, such as bus stop and real time information screens, along core highway corridors served by high frequency routes. Investment could still come forward elsewhere where funding or programmes allow, for example from development or external funding bids.

When: Annual prioritisation of capital resources, and as funding bid opportunities arise.

Who: Led by Hertfordshire County Council, with support from operators for example in funding bids.

8. Protect and enhance bus interchange capacity

What: Making the most of opportunities to maintain and enhance capacity for bus interchange, facilitating access to locations such as town centres and between rail and other bus services.

How: Recognising the important role of bus services, and competing priorities for development, to ensure that public transport is not disadvantaged, and that facilities are fit for the future. Ensuring that operators are fully consulted on relevant highway plans and policies.

When: As relevant opportunities arise.

Who: Partnership working between the county council, developers, district councils and bus operators.

3.4 Closer integration of the bus network

Intalink facilitates integration of public transport in the county through its co-ordination of information, publicity, infrastructure improvements, discussion between operators and a range of ticketing products.

Multi-operator tickets have been available in Hertfordshire for some years but the inability to set up a reimbursement mechanism beyond the current basic “revenue stays with the operator who sold the ticket” model, has prevented further extension some of the possible ticket products, for example monthly period seasons. Existing multi-operator tickets are not currently smart or contactless, so there are opportunities for these schemes to catch up with other areas of the country where these methods of payment are readily available. Single operator M-tickets are available for some operators’ services through the Intalink app.

The ticketing products include the **Intalink Explorer** ticket which allows holders unlimited bus travel across Hertfordshire, and is available for day or weekly periods, and groups. **BUSnet** tickets are similar but limited to smaller geographical areas containing one or two principal towns, providing flexibility in travel options. **Plusbus** tickets are integrated rail and bus tickets, allowing passengers connected journeys from home to railway station by bus and then for the onward train journey.

Plusbus is currently undergoing a comprehensive review, with availability becoming more “smart”, and pressure from train operating companies is leading to Plusbus being withdrawn from railway stations where ticket demand is low. The situation could move from almost universal coverage of Plusbus in Hertfordshire to availability only at larger interchanges.

Hertfordshire County Council has led the Intalink Partnership since its inception and will continue to facilitate strong engagement and close co-operation with all passenger transport operators, to support the ambition for a single, integrated “network” of modes, operators and services. Each operator currently has its own approach to the provision of travel information, both in traditional and digital formats. This again helps to propagate the perception of the multitude of bus operators providing services across the county.

Case study: Uno contactless payment



The introduction of new electronic ticket machines on Uno services has enabled contactless purchase of tickets, using bank card and mobile phone payment. These were initially trialled on their Northampton routes, and rolled out in co-ordination with a company-wide fleet branding exercise and other technology such as free wifi and USB charging points.

Around 15% of Northampton fare payments are made using contactless, and the machines have now been rolled out to Hertfordshire routes.

Actions:

9. Increase the range of multi-operator and smart tickets

What: Continue to expand the availability of multi-operator and multi-modal smart tickets, including support for contactless payment.

How: Introduce monthly multi-operator tickets where operator reimbursement can be resolved (which would be assisted by smart ticketing), consider further BUSnet areas and respond to changes in technology and Plusbus by considering local schemes through negotiation with public transport operators.

When: Discussions to commence in Year 1.

Who: The county council, Department for Transport, bus and train operators.

10. Ensure public transport operator co-operation

What: Continuation of the existing close partnership working facilitated by Intalink.

How: Continued engagement of bus and rail operators, facilitated by the county council as a mutual partner, supporting improved network integration across services and transport modes. Intalink would continue to facilitate engagement amongst operators beyond the minimum statutory terms placed on all operators, and have responsibility for the ongoing work of the Partnership.

When: Intalink Partnership meetings, with other liaison as required.

Who: Bus and rail operators, county and district councils.

11. Co-ordinated publicity and information

What: Provision of co-ordinated publicity and information for the Hertfordshire local bus network, including timetables, where to board and ticket products.

How: Provision of information through the Intalink website and other digital media, and circulation of printed materials.

When: Delivered from Year 1.

Who: Hertfordshire County Council.

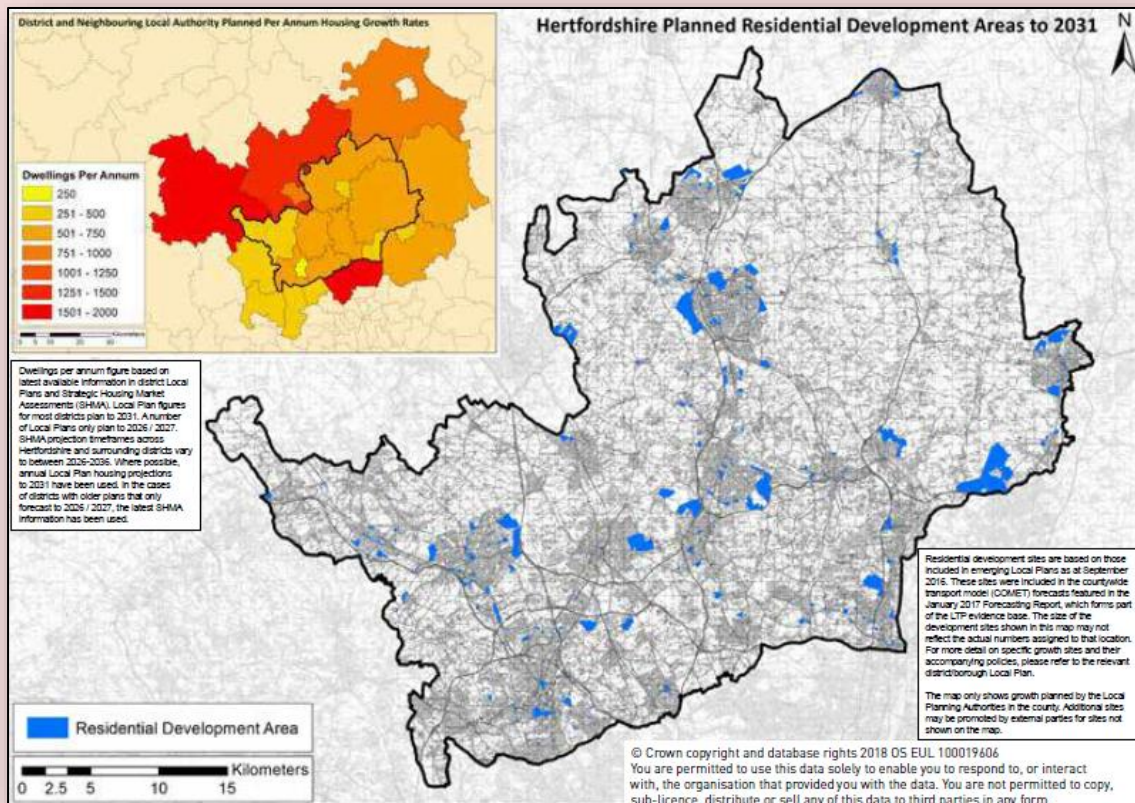
3.5 Smarter use of data and information

The majority of bus services in Hertfordshire are Automatic Vehicle Location equipped and can provide real time departure information for display on electronic screens positioned at sites across the county and the Intalink app. There is an active programme to increase the number of display screens, and to work with operators not currently equipped, in order to provide universal real time information coverage. The Bus Services Act 2017 will require all operators to publish open data on real time departures, routes, timetables, and fares.

The Intalink website and app were created some time ago and both require upgrade to incorporate further functionality and to take advantage of the latest technologies. There will be further focus on real time information being available across all devices and engagement with passengers to promote services and seek feedback.

In recent years the county council has developed a countywide multi-modal transport model, to inform planning and transport decisions. The model includes passenger transport data to indicate current and potential future demand flows, and could be used to provide evidence for new opportunities for public transport services and infrastructure investment. This information could be used for example by both the county council and operators to target underserved locations with good potential for bus travel with new services or target bus priority investment in areas of high congestion.

Case study: Comet model



To support the implementation of Local Transport Plan 4 and the county council's response to development proposals, a countywide transport model has been developed to supplement the more detailed modelling evidence available at small scale in certain areas of the county.

The innovative model is multi-modal and includes some commercially sensitive passenger usage data shared by bus operators under a confidentiality agreement. It also uses rail usage data from nationally published sources.

The more conventional highway elements can be used to forecast additional demand for car travel from strategic development sites, and interactions across the county.

The passenger transport elements can be used by local authorities and bus operators to better understand travel patterns across the county, provide evidence to identify new public transport service opportunities, test options and provide evidence to support lobbying for investment, inform business case for major passenger transport infrastructure schemes and assess the impact of new developments to establish the need for developer contributions.

Actions:

12. Expand real time information

What: Universal real time data coverage and continued screen roll out.

How: Provision of real time bus departure information using agreed data standards, for aggregation and publication through appropriate digital media such as at-stop screens, website and app.

When: Targeted support to those operators not currently able to provide a real time feed throughout Years 1 and 2, and capital investment in screens throughout.

Who: All operators responsible for providing a real time data feed, for aggregation and publication by the county council; county council to continue infrastructure roll out.

13. Upgrade website and app

What: Relaunch of Intalink website and app.

How: Refreshed website and app with improved real time information, fares and ticketing functionality, with consideration to future Mobility as a Service technology.

When: Initial app roll out from Year 1, with incremental feature additions, and website refresh in Year 2.

Who: Hertfordshire County Council to procure for approval by Intalink.

14. Share development planning data

What: Collaborative approach to embracing development proposals, working together to seek developer contributions, and two-way sharing of transport data.

How: County council engaging relevant operators with planning consultations and co-ordinating input for responses, and seeking bus passenger flow data to inform multi-modal transport modelling.

When: Continuous process as planning proposals emerge, and annually as required for modelling purposes.

Who: The county council and bus operators.

15. Pilot emerging technologies

What: Identify opportunities to pilot emerging technologies such as Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service as circumstances allow.

How: Bids to external funding sources and use of developer contributions to pilot experimental and emerging new technologies to test and influence the impact on the bus network.

When: As funding opportunities allow.

Who: Hertfordshire County Council to identify opportunities and co-ordinate funding bids with operators as required.

4. Monitoring

Although delivery of each of the fifteen areas of activity will be monitored separately, the following Key Performance Indicators will ensure that delivery against each objective and the strategy as a whole remains on track.

Performance	KPI	Baseline	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Local Transport 4 bus policy	Percentage of sustainable mode share for Hertfordshire residents (%)	40					
Intalink Bus Strategy	Total number of bus passenger journeys (million)	31.2					
Prioritising bus services in traffic	Proportion of bus services departing on time (%)	93.5					
Improving the image of buses	Passenger satisfaction with bus services (%)	Awaiting data					
Upgrading bus infrastructure	Proportion of accessible bus stops (%)	21					
Closer integration of the bus network	Multi-operator ticket sales per million km	Awaiting data					
Smarter use of data and information	Proportion of services with real time information (%)	Awaiting data					

Appendix 1: Value for Money criteria

The county council adopted the following criteria in 2015 to allocate its fixed budget for local bus services, and considers them fit for purpose to retain.

In general the county council will not provide funding for:

- a. Services or journeys operating in the evenings after 1930 hours
- b. Services or journeys operating on Sundays unless they directly serve hospitals in which case they would run until 1930 hours
- c. Special services for home to school transport unless there is a statutory requirement to provide free transport
- d. Services operating beyond the nearest suitable destination outside the county unless there is a funding contribution from the relevant neighbouring authority or a reciprocal cross boundary agreement

To manage within available financial resources at any given time for the bus network as a whole, the county council will take account of the following factors and needs in the order set out below in determining route and service patterns:

1. The availability of commercial / other bus services in the area
2. The cost per passenger on each service
3. The number of passengers
4. The level of use by elderly and passengers with disabilities
5. Other alternatives available, including choice of destinations and other travel modes, including community transport options
6. The net cost of contracts
7. The likely future role of the service
8. Travel by young people for whom the county council has a statutory duty to provide transport between home and school / college

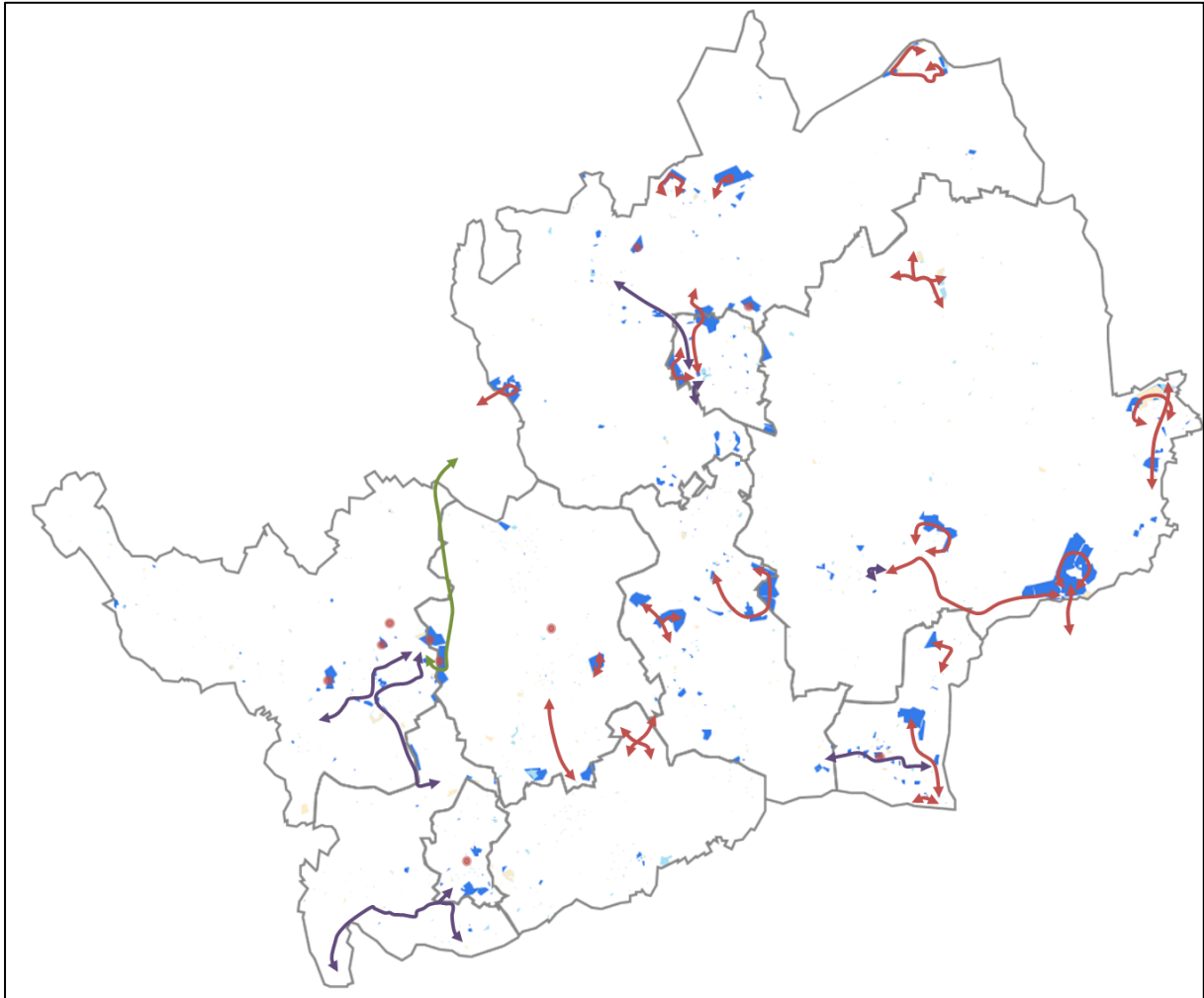
All services will be kept under review and the criteria may be applied to individual journeys or sections of route where the service as a whole meets the criteria.

For services where the county council contributes to a contract provided by another authority, the criteria adopted by the contracting authority will apply, subject to the county council estimating whether the service within Hertfordshire would meet its own criteria and whether it could provide the service more effectively itself.





For services funded through development, by other authorities or from other external sources, the above criteria will not apply during the funding period but the county council will adopt its own criteria if the service is transferred to county council funding.

Appendix 2: Service development priorities and core infrastructure corridors

1. Service development priorities map



Key

	New or enhanced services to support development		Service improvements identified by other strategies
	Other opportunities for future service enhancement		Strategic development sites (September 2017)

2. Core infrastructure corridors map

The following corridors were proposed as “indicative” in Local Transport Plan 4. These will be refined in response to further analysis and public consultation feedback.

