

A PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR BERKHAMSTED: MOTION

1. Background:

In light of the climate emergency, increasing car traffic through the town, and Berkhamsted Town Council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions, the Town Council wishes to consider options to mitigate these threats and improve access to the town centre by improving public transportation services for residents, possibly including the creation a new or enhanced bus services.

Berkhamsted Town Council wishes to conduct a study to enhance public transport within the town, making the facilities in the town more accessible without using cars.

2. Motion:

Berkhamsted Town Council believes that improved public transport provision could benefit the town, and may require new services. Berkhamsted Town Council resolves to develop a new public transport strategy for the town, investigate potential operational models, feasibility, desirability, impact and costs to deliver these improvements. The Town Council resolves to produce a report outlining options and recommendations which the Town Council can implement in due course. This strategy development is planned to be undertaken by an external expert consultant, under supervision from the Town Clerk and under scrutiny from The Public Transport Scrutiny Committee.

3. Objectives of improving bus service provision:

Community & inclusion:

- To provide a valued and appreciated services for Berkhamsted residents.
- To facilitate travel around Berkhamsted including to key destinations such as the High-street and the station.
- To provide a realistic transport option for those unable to drive, an encourage alternatives for those who can drive.
- To maintain or increase visitors to Berkhamsted Businesses.

Carbon emission and traffic reduction:

- To reduce carbon emissions and associated pollution from car travel in Berkhamsted.
- To reduce traffic into the centre of Berkhamsted while maintaining footfall to businesses.

Reduced cost of travel:

- To reduce daily transport costs for those moving around Berkhamsted and commuters.
- To provide an affordable alternative to parking in the town centre.
- To provide a casual option for those who may wish to use multiple transport solutions, such as walking into town, but use public transport to return home.
- Reduce the need for extra vehicles for each household.

4. Key requirements of improved bus services:

The town Council believes that public transport and bus services should be:

- Regular, enabling flexible use.
- Reliable, with high on time performance.

- Efficient, offering short journey times.
- Effective, with pick-up / drop off points easily accessible to [many / the majority of] homes in the town.
- Clean and comfortable.
- Have sufficient capacity that all potential users should be accommodated.
- Appreciated by Berkhamsted residents.
- Complementary to - rather than undermining - existing providers and routes.

The town council recognises that there shall be trade-offs between these objectives, and that some options may not be feasible, practical, or advisable.

Any external consultant's role is to use their experience to guide the Town Council on potential operating models and their various merits. They are expected to reference problems from previous projects and solutions found to be effective in similar towns.

5. Action:

Accordingly, Berkhamsted Town Council agrees to the following measures:

- That the Clerk shall research potential expert consultants to develop options to improve Berkhamsted public transport services.
- Under the supervision of the support services committee, the Clerk shall select and appoint any consultant.

An external expert consultant shall consider and advise upon relevant factors relating to future public transportation services. These shall include, but not be limited to:

- Optimal formats
- Optimal routes
- Frequency of services
- Consistency of services
- Timings to link with other public transport services
- Capacity
- Operators
- Pricing
- Tendering processes
- Pilot schemes: structure, timing, and management of a trial period
- Achievable performance objectives and definition of 'success'
- Operating hours
- Any other factors which the expert consultant or the Town Council deem relevant to the delivery of a successful public transport service.

A consultant should consider these factors, consult with relevant local stakeholders, and using their expertise, outline the various options available to the Town Council, followed by recommendations for preferred solutions.

Stakeholders shall include but not be limited to:

- Existing bus service providers in the area
- Local community groups
- Other public transport providers
- Relevant members of the public
- The members of the previous 'Bus working Group' such that they might share their findings

Any consultant shall also have to liaise with relevant local government bodies to investigate any legislative requirements.

Any consultant shall share their list of stakeholders with the Public Transport Scrutiny Committee at the start of their investigations, such that others can be included if necessary.

Any expert consultant shall also advise on how the town council can test and enact its chosen strategy, including lawful commissioning processes, trial periods, and exit strategies should these be necessary.

The options and recommendations should be communicated in a written report, accompanied by a presentation to the Town Council. Commercially sensitive elements of the report may be communicated in a separate section, not visible to the public.

6. Expert Consultant Profile:

(subject to finalisation by the clerk, but with the following expectations)

Any consultant should:

- Be knowledgeable regarding the operations and challenges in bus service operation, having worked in a professional capacity in public transport delivery at a senior level.
- Understand the basic principles of public procurement, and the requirement for non-discrimination.
- Be able to communicate the variety of options available to the Town Council, and explain the reason for any preferred solution.
- Be able to produce a high standard written report of their findings and recommendations.
- Be willing to present their findings to interested members of the public.
- Be able to lead consultation meetings with relevant local stakeholders, with the support of the clerk's team.

7. Administrative requirements:

Stakeholder consultations shall be minuted in summary form by an officer of the Town Council, but for commercial confidentiality reasons shall not be made public. A consultant may outline findings and key issues in an anonymised form where appropriate, and where this does not infringe the commercial confidentiality of the consultee. Where necessary a consultant can make use of Part II sections of Town Council meetings which are closed to the public.

Where the report outlines strategic and operational choices, the Clerk shall submit these to the Full Town Council for deliberation and decision.

8. Timing:

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Town Council recognises that behaviour patterns may shift after lockdowns end. Accordingly the consultant should not be appointed until there is a reasonable ability to assess potential user behaviour and requirements. This shall be at the discretion of the Town Clerk in consultation with any of the following committees of the Town Council: Full Council, Transport & Environment, Finance & Policy, Support Services, Planning.

9. Deliverables:

The expert consultant and clerk shall compile a report which outlines a strategic vision and the various options available to the Town Council in order to improve public transport services, these shall be accompanied by key considerations which impact the suitability of any given option. Any expert consultant shall recommend preferred options, giving appropriate justification. It is envisaged that this report will be authored by an expert consultant but submitted via the clerk.

10. Timeline:

The Town Council hopes to start the bus service in 2022. The report should be delivered in reasonable time in order to enable services to start in 2022.