

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the slide, framing the central white area.

# The National Bus Strategy: presentation to York Bus Forum

Julian Ridge, 18/05/2021

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# The National Bus Strategy: “Bus back better”

- ▶ Expected for some time
- ▶ Published 15/3/21
- ▶ Foreword by the Prime Minister
- ▶ High political importance
- ▶ BSIP guidance published 17/5/21
- ▶ More financial/ funding guidance to come

# What is the Bus Strategy: key dates and requirements

- ▶ Thorough and challenging - part of the levelling up agenda
- ▶ Sets out a view that, whilst commercial provision of the network has led to some good outcomes, different delivery mechanisms could be beneficial in some areas
- ▶ Local authorities and bus operators - need to form an Enhanced Partnership by June or lose ongoing CBSSG funding
- ▶ BSIP by October - then an annual process of monitoring and update
- ▶ £100k provided to LTAs to develop their Eps/ BSIPs and fill capability gaps

# Bus service characteristics

- ▶ Throws down the gauntlet to improve networks. Local authorities in the driving seat - but not without responsibilities either - e.g. delivery of bus priorities, traffic management
- ▶ Delivery will be either through an **Enhanced Partnership** or a **Franchise** in some/ all of their area
- ▶ Look at network characteristics
  - ▶ Coverage and accessibility
  - ▶ Service speeds/ punctuality/ reliability/ hot spots/ traffic management
  - ▶ Passenger facilities - shelters, stops, information, real time etc
  - ▶ Vehicle standards
  - ▶ Ticketing and fares
- ▶ DfT wish to see ambition to improve all of the above

# What does the Bus Strategy do? What doesn't it do?

## It does:

- ▶ Give a framework for development of bus networks
- ▶ Provide a clear statement of what DfT thinks a “good” bus network looks like
- ▶ Puts LTAs in the driving seat of partnerships, but with responsibilities
- ▶ Introduce a contractual mechanism into partnerships
- ▶ Bring some funding (but details awaited)

## It does not:

- ▶ Fundamentally change the costs and revenues from running buses
- ▶ Change the underlying factors which have acted to reduce bus patronage over the last 50 years
- ▶ On its own, overcome the challenge of Covid to networks
- ▶ Change some of the local characteristics of York which can be challenging (e.g. road layout, width etc)

## A particular challenge: Skills

If you were 30 when the buses were deregulated in 1986 you would be 65 now.

However, it is a good start.

# So, where to for York?

- ▶ Comes at a good time for devising policy
  - ▶ BSIP will form part of the new Local Transport Plan
  - ▶ Also devising climate change, air quality and economic development policy
  - ▶ Recovery from covid - new travel patterns
  - ▶ And, more generally, the city is changing
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- ▶ We can consult on BSIP alongside the other policies
  - ▶ We can explore the trade-offs inherent in BSIP/ LTP as part of this (in particular allocation of that scarce resource in York - roadspace)

# A stock take of York's network

## Good

- ▶ Functional partnership with a very good track record
- ▶ Operators engaged and focussed on growth
- ▶ High passenger satisfaction compared to other places in UK
- ▶ Lots of recent investment (e.g. in electric buses, Euro VI buses - much of which has been commercial)
- ▶ Patronage has *tended to* increase over recent years

## Criticisms

- ▶ Lots of operators - coordination on fares, frequencies etc historically difficult
- ▶ Affordability - esp for some groups (e.g. young people)
- ▶ Service speeds/ reliability/ some stubborn congestion
- ▶ Coverage - some gaps in services - Sundays/ evenings/ suburbs & villages
- ▶ Operation of QBP sometimes seen as opaque

Key challenge around recovery from covid and number of discretionary/ leisure trips on York network.

# So what next?

- ▶ Enhanced partnership decision: May 20<sup>th</sup> Exec
  - ▶ Funding guidance “soon”
  - ▶ BSIP development - over the Summer
  - ▶ Passenger consultation important in developing the BSIP
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- ▶ What do you think we should do?