

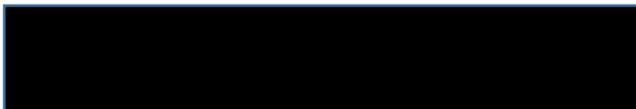
### Record of officer decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	<b>National Bus Strategy – contract variation</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	11 January 2022
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Interim Service Director Highways, Environment and Waste
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	Contract procedure rules section 6 – Operational decisions- Only assistant director or above are authorised to award and sign a contract.
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	Cabinet member for infrastructure and transport has confirmed that he wishes to consider the opportunity for bus franchising in Herefordshire. The contract variation request has been considered and is supported by commercial services and legal services.
<b>Decision made:</b>	To complete a contract variation for Integrated Transport Planning consultancy for the provision of additional consultancy services to assess bus franchising for Herefordshire as a variation to the current commission to develop the council's proposals for bus services in response to the national bus strategy. This work to be undertaken alongside the original commission and to conclude April 2022. The cost of the contract variation being £16,740.
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>Government published its National Bus Strategy (NBS) in March 2021 and this set out the approach it wished local transport authorities to take in developing improved local bus services with a promise of additional funding to support delivery of proposals. The government has provided £165k to the council to support its development of proposals.</p> <p>The council commissioned Integrated Transport Planning (ITP) in June 2021 to assist in progressing its response to the NBS. The decision to award the contract was taken 8 June 2021 and can be viewed <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>The cabinet member for infrastructure and transport confirmed that the council's approach would be to establish an enhanced partnership with local bus operators. The decision to progress an enhanced partnership was taken 18 June 2021 and can be viewed <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Whilst most local transport authorities, in line with government guidance, are progressing enhanced partnerships the council is keen to explore the possibility for an approach based on bus franchising. This takes into account the low service coverage across the county, instability in the local bus market and the need to consider all available options.</p> <p>On this basis, the cabinet member has asked officers to progress a technical assessment of the opportunity for bus franchising in Herefordshire and to answer the following</p>

	<p>questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we do it</li> <li>• How do we do it</li> <li>• What would it cost</li> <li>• How do we fund it</li> </ul> <p>The current commission with ITP is based on its technical competence in terms of public transport policy and strategy and also value for money as assessed through an open procurement process. Hence, it is considered that a contract variation, consistent with the council's contracts variation process, is progressed with ITP to undertake this work.</p>
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	<p>There are no equality implications arising from this decision.</p> <p>The cost of the contract variation can be afforded from the external funding provided by government (Capacity Fund), the aggregate contract value including this variation of £140,770 being within the budget envelope of £165k.</p> <p>Both commercial and legal services have confirmed that there are no commercial or legal issues arising from the variation.</p> <p>There is a risk that assessment of bus franchising could undermine the process underway to establish an enhanced partnership. This will be managed through cabinet member and cabinet briefings to ensure that the timescale to progress and introduce a bus franchise is understood, noting the importance of establishing the enhanced partnership in the short term in order to comply with government guidance and increase the chance of securing external funds.</p>
<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	<p>Not to progress the technical assessment of bus franchising. This is rejected as this would not support the request made by the cabinet member for infrastructure and transport.</p>
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	None

I am an officer delegated to make the decision

Signed:



**Print Name:** Phil Crossland

**Job title:** Interim Service Director - Highways, Environment and Waste