

# Imagine an Excellent Bus Service for Leeds



# Executive Summary

*'Imagine an Excellent Bus Service for Leeds'* was a unique community engagement project undertaken by Leeds Civic Trust, hosted throughout the summer of 2021.

The purpose of the project was simple: we wanted to hear from the people who live, work, study or visit the metropolitan area of Leeds, to see how they think our bus services could become excellent. We wanted to hear from everyone and anyone in Leeds, whether they were regular bus users or, and perhaps more importantly, those who don't use the buses, to understand what would persuade more people to use the bus. We gathered this qualitative information through a competition of ideas, an online interactive map, an online perception survey, and a series of online discussion groups.

Across the survey and discussion groups, we found that the main factors which discourage people from using the current bus services are expensive fares; complicated ticketing; unreliable bus services; journey times that take too long; the buses being inconvenient for people; a lack of accessibility; a lack of frequent bus services; cleanliness of the vehicles, seats and bus stops/stations; and a lack of safety. Understanding the lived experiences of passengers and the factors which discourage them from using the bus services is vital for understanding how to improve the service and increase patronage.

Bringing together all the ideas submitted across the competition, interactive map, perception survey and discussion groups, our key overall findings were that people consider an excellent bus service to be:

- Reliable
- Frequent
- Quick
- Affordable
- Connected to the trains
- Safe
- Easy to use
- A pleasant experience
- Accountable
- Accessible for all
- Eco-friendly
- Comfortable



Within each of the above themes, the report details the ideas submitted by the general public. Within our interactive map and survey, our research also highlighted the areas within and around Leeds which need to be better connected to the bus service. These include access to greenspaces, leisure destinations, retail centres across Leeds, hospitals and railway stations. Participants also discussed excellent bus services from elsewhere around the UK and globally, and how their features could be replicated in Leeds.

Overall, this project highlights some short-, medium- and long-term improvements which could be implemented today. Some ideas are overarching and strategic, some are simple, low-cost solutions, but each would go a long way in creating an excellent bus service for Leeds.

**At Leeds Civic Trust we want our city to be a sustainable, liveable and fair place to live in which transport helps people to lead rich, productive and healthy lives.**

Hearing from people who live, work, study or visit Leeds, we believe this project has ignited a wider conversation about our bus services, and how the general public believe the services could be improved in the short-, medium- and long-term. Advocating for positive development in our city, we hope that some of the ideas and suggestions outlined in within this report are implemented over the coming years, and we'll strive to ensure that the civic voice in Leeds is always considered.

Making a great city, better, one of the aims from Our Vision 2020-20251 is to promote high quality sustainable development, and our bus services play a vital role in achieving that future. Leeds is the biggest city in Europe without a metro or a tram system and even if we did have a mass rapid transit system, buses would still be important. We cannot wait for these alternatives to become available before we take action.

**We hope that some of the ideas and suggestions outlined in within this report are implemented over the coming years.**



## Leeds Civic Trust

Founded in 1965, the Leeds Civic Trust is a voluntary, non-political body, open to anyone who wants to participate in and influence the development of Leeds. We work with a variety of partners to improve Leeds as a place to live, work and play.

In line with these objectives, we seek to promote sustainable transport in the city. In 2018, we published our new agenda for sustainable transport in Leeds in the form of a Transport Vision which responds to the imperative of the climate emergency and has other big benefits including improving air quality, increasing road safety, enhancing street life, and improving public health through active travel.

## Imagine an Excellent Bus Service for Leeds Project

This final report gathers the ideas and suggestions which have been put forward in the consultation.

Throughout, the project has been managed by members of the Transport and Liveable Leeds group at the Leeds Civic Trust. This report and the proposals will be publicly available and shared with the WYCA which is the Local Transport Authority, Leeds City Council (LCC), bus operators and other interested parties.

More details and the full project report is available on-line at [www.excellentbusesleeds.org.uk](http://www.excellentbusesleeds.org.uk) and [www.leedscivictrust.org.uk](http://www.leedscivictrust.org.uk)

A printed copy of this report is also available on request.

If you wish to discuss the project, please contact us at [office@leedscivictrust.org.uk](mailto:office@leedscivictrust.org.uk)

