

**Brighton & Hove Bus and Coach Company Limited
(the “Company”)**

The following Section 172(1) Statement and Corporate Governance Report have been extracted from pages 7 to 16 of the Company’s Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 3 July 2021. All references to “Group” in this document mean The Go-Ahead Group plc (registered number 02100855).

Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006

This report sets out how the directors comply with the requirements of Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 and how these requirements have impacted the Board’s decision making throughout the year ended 3 July 2021.

The role of the board and how it operates

The board is responsible for creating and delivering long term sustainable value for the business. The board is accountable for balancing the varying interests of the business, including those of its ultimate parent The Go-Ahead Group plc (the “Group”), colleagues, customers and the communities it serves.

The composition of the board and how it operates is set out under Principle Two (Board Composition) of our Corporate Governance Report which follows the strategic report in the Company’s 2021 Annual Report and Financial Statements (pages 5 to 9 of this document).

Board governance

The board has chosen to apply the Wates Corporate Governance Principles for Large Private Companies for the year ended 3 July 2021. These principles provide a code of corporate governance for large private companies to raise awareness of good practice and over time to help to improve standards of corporate governance. They also support directors to meet the requirements of Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 by providing guidance on the following areas:

- Purpose and Leadership;
- Board Composition;
- Director Responsibilities;
- Opportunity and Risk;
- Remuneration; and
- Stakeholders.

The Corporate Governance Report, which evidences how the Company applies the principles, follows the strategic report in the Company’s 2021 Annual Report and Financial Statements (pages 5 to 9 of this document) and is also available on the Company’s website: www.buses.co.uk

Compliance with section 172(1) of the Companies Act 2006

The directors are mindful of their duty to promote the success of the Company for the benefit of its shareholder (and in turn the wider Group), whilst also having regard to the interests of a range of other stakeholders. In doing so, the Board’s desire to act fairly for its shareholder, maintain a reputation for high standards of business conduct, and consider the long term consequences of the decisions they take, have underpinned the way it operates at the business. Further details are provided below:

Section 172(1)(a) and (e) - the likely consequences of any decision in the long term and the desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct

At Brighton and Hove Buses and Metrobus, actively listening to and engaging effectively with our wide variety of stakeholders is key to ensuring responsible decisions are made. We appreciate the need to ensure that the decisions we take create value for all our stakeholders and support creation of long-term sustainable value so that, ultimately, we can continue to be a vital part of the communities we serve. Please refer to Principle 6 in the Corporate Governance Report on pages 8 and 9 of this document for further details on why and how we engage with our stakeholders and examples of how we responded.

The Group’s devolved management operating model is a key feature of the board’s decision-making process, with the Group executive directors acting as an intermediary and ensuring there is two-way feedback between

the Group Board and Company Board. In line with this approach, the viability of a number of principal decisions (for example, acquisitions, disposals and major capital investments) will first be considered at our Company Board meetings. If approved, the Group executive directors will then submit a proposal to the Group Board. This process supports the board performing its duties in compliance with the matters set out in paragraphs a-f of section 172 of the Companies Act 2006.

The board annually approves the three year corporate plan and monitors performance throughout the year using detailed reports on operating and financial performance. Through the regular review of key performance indicators and key strategic programmes, actions are formulated to mitigate any potential negative impact on the long term success of the Company and leverage any new opportunities for growth.

The directors take the reputation of the Company seriously which is not limited to only operational and financial performance. The strong reputation and positive stakeholder relationships we have developed over many years have never been more important than during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the year, the Company worked closely and collaboratively with key industry partners and stakeholders to find solutions which ensure that bus service provision remains at the right level, government policy is brought into effect, and transport operators receive funding to enable essential services to be delivered. This has included working with the Department for Transport through our trade body the CPT, our local authority partners, transport and public health professionals and elected members, and other key stakeholders such as business partners, schools, colleges and universities, and organisations representing the needs and rights of disabled people.

The directors seek to ensure high standards of ethical conduct, honesty and integrity in our business practices. The board seeks to have a workforce that more accurately reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. Please see Section 172(1)(b) section below for further details.

During the year, the board approved the Company's modern slavery statement (available on the Company's website). The board also considered the data, and narrative, relevant to the Company's Gender Pay Reporting in preparation for external publication, including proposed improvement plans to enhance performance. Please see Section 172(1)(b) section below for further details.

Section 172(1)(b) - the interest of the company's employees

The directors understand the importance of the Company's employees to the long-term success of the business. For details of how the Company proactively engages with its workforce, please refer to Principle 6 in the Corporate Governance Report on pages 8 and 9 of this document.

Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the Company's employees, customers and other stakeholders remains the main priority for the board. We have continued to build on precautionary measures to meet the challenges of COVID-19, with such actions including enhanced cleaning regimes, air intake filters, window open fixtures and hand gel dispensers on our buses. Additionally, we have implemented measures to reduce potential transmission and aid social distancing. These include a no change policy, which has seen cash reduce to 5% of passenger boarding, provision of protective equipment for customer facing colleagues, customer information to help people choose quieter services, working from home policies, increased levels of engagement with colleagues from front-line workers to those furloughed earlier in the year and greater access to enhanced mental health programmes and helplines – including the creation of a companywide colleague support network.

The Company's workforce is represented by trade unions and employee representatives and the board strive to foster positive working relationships with them. Our Dignity and Respect Partnership with Unite the Union is as strong as ever, with outstanding levels of collaboration throughout the pandemic. This has helped to keep colleagues informed and up to date on all government changes and safe working practices.

The Company places a premium on an inclusive and diverse workforce, enabling all colleagues to reach their full potential, to be empowered and engaged with a strong commitment to personal development. During the year, we have continued to see the positive impact our inclusion and diversity initiatives can have. Our dignity and respect partnership with Unite the Union, supported by our diversity and inclusion group, has continued to facilitate further progress in this important area. Additionally, our community engagement on hate crime action has continued to develop alongside our programme of work on racial equality. We have extended our unconscious bias training and supported the creation of an employee led network to provide mutual support and to create a vehicle to engage on issues of race, culture and ethnicity.

Further work was also carried out on disabilities with the Company formally becoming a Disability Confident Employer within the Department for Work and Pensions scheme. We were also the first bus operator to achieve the highest 'Leader' level of accreditation within the Department for Transport's Inclusive Transport leaders scheme.

Being a fair and responsible employer, which offers competitive terms and conditions and ensures colleagues are recognised and rewarded for their contribution and commitment, remains fundamental to our business model. Throughout the year, the board's decisions and behaviours in response to COVID-19 have continued to be guided by our three strategic priorities set at the beginning of the pandemic: (i) protect our colleagues; (ii) to protect our customers and communities; and (iii) to protect our business.

Section 172(1)(c) - the need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others

The board regularly reviews how the Company maintains positive relationships with all of its stakeholders, including suppliers, customers and others.

The directors understand the importance of the Company's supply chain in delivering the long-term plans of both the Company and the Group. Through our Sustainable Supply Charter, we demonstrate high standards of integrity, responsibility and professional conduct. We endeavour to support our suppliers to improve the sustainability of their business. We support the Group's compliance and endeavour to pay suppliers in line with the Prompt Payment Code and, when the reduction of supplier services has been necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have applied a fair and structured process in line with the Company's Sustainable Supply Chain Charter.

Customers are at the heart of the business and the board is dedicated to providing them with safe, convenient and reliable services. Customer satisfaction is a strong indicator of how well we are meeting customers' needs and the directors monitor this through annual surveys conducted by the independent watchdog, Transport Focus, although this year's review was suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We conduct an annual survey of our key stakeholders to understand what they think about the business, what we do well and where we can improve further.

Please refer to Principle 6 in the Corporate Governance Report on pages 8 and 9 of this document for further details on how we engage with our customers and suppliers.

Section 172(1)(d) - the impact of the company's operations on the community and environment

As a public transport operator, the Company has far reaching impact on the Group (as its ultimate parent company) as well as its customers, employees, regulators and the communities it serves. The Company aims to align its business values, purpose and strategy with the social, economic and environmental needs of its stakeholders, embedding responsible and ethical business policies and practices in everything it does.

The company has a wide-ranging and proactive community engagement programme, partnering with many organisations across its operating area on a range of local projects. These measures aim to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of our services, and to support local health, economic and social development.

Despite the pandemic, excellent progress continued this year on air quality and carbon reduction as 24 zero-in-the-zone emissions buses arrived adding to the 30 first such buses in the previous financial year. Exciting opportunities to move into hydrogen also drew closer through the culmination of work with several public sector agencies including the European JIVE 2 project. Our overall carbon footprint reduced over a four-year period by 16% and will reduce by a further 24% over the next three years through improved miles per gallon, new technologies in our fleet and reductions in energy usage in our premises.

For further information on the impact of the Company's operations on the community and environment including engagement, please refer to Principle 6 in the Corporate Governance Report on pages 8 and 9 of this document and our 2021 Sustainability Report, which is available for download from our website.

Section 172(1)(f) – the need to act fairly as between members of the company

The Company is owned 100% by Go-Ahead Holding Limited. However, the Company's ultimate parent company and controlling party is the Group.

The Group operates a devolved operating model. Whilst day-to-day management of the Group's activities, governance and oversight has been delegated to the Group executive directors, the directors of the Company both individually and collectively support them in this role and the Company is operated as an autonomous business unit. Board meetings are held on a monthly basis with the Group executive directors in attendance who scrutinise and challenge the local management team's execution of strategy. These more formal meetings are supported by several cross-business forums (such as safety, IT, engineering, HR, diversity and inclusion, commercial, operations and finance) that serve to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, ideas and best practice. This approach encourages the right balance between local and Group initiatives and facilitates fair discussion and decision-making. It also ensures that we deliver more operating collectively than we would independently.

For details of how the Company engages with the Group, please refer to Principle 6 in the Corporate Governance Report on pages 8 and 9 of this document.

Corporate Governance Report

The board has chosen to apply the Wates Corporate Governance Principles for Large Private Companies for the year ended 3 July 2021. These principles provide a code of corporate governance for large private companies to raise awareness of good practice and over time to help to improve standards of corporate governance.

We have adopted the disclosure in our 2021 Annual Report and Financial Statements and set out below is how we have applied the Principles over the past year throughout our work.

Principle 1 – Purpose and Leadership

Our purpose is to give those we serve the freedom to connect with the people and places they value most. This is at the forefront of our thinking, reflected in all our policies and decisions, and in the way we prioritise the use of collective resources. We are also guided by our locally derived values around mutual respect, teamwork and building collaborative relationships, inside and outside the business. We are an organisation which strives to be proactive rather than reactive, continually setting new and meaningful standards that add real value for people and the choices we can offer them. Our purpose and values are fully aligned with those established by our parent company, The Go-Ahead Group plc (the Group).

Our values are brought to life most effectively through our actions rather than communication campaigns and we have progressively built an understanding throughout the organisation of living our values, and of staying true to our core purpose. This approach has been tested by the pandemic like never before.

The pandemic presented a significant challenge for the Company and tested our commitment to our purpose and values. Despite the challenges faced during this time, we found this to be an opportunity to embrace our chosen values and undertook a completely restructured approach to the way we run our business, emphasising greater levels of inclusivity, safety, risk management, design and communications throughout the Company. This new approach has driven extraordinary levels of collaboration both internally with Unite the Union and externally with our local authorities on highways and public health matters. While COVID-19 has prompted some difficult decisions, we strive to maintain compassion and respect in our decision-making and the expansion of communication channels, in addition to our more conventional approaches, has continued to guide the Board towards these goals.

The Company's three key strategic objectives are based on those of the Group. Whilst our focus remains on (i) protect and grow the core as we navigate the impacts of COVID-19, we remain committed to (ii) winning new bus contracts to achieve more balance in our portfolio and we have long been a very positive contributor to (iii) developing for the future of transport progress of which has been accelerated by the pandemic, as evidenced by examples such as our adoption of hydrogen fuel cell technology, advanced flexible ticketing using tap on tap off, and the continued lead we show in pushing the envelope in accessible bus travel. Progress on achieving our strategic objectives, is measured through a set of KPIs including customer satisfaction scores, punctuality, number of bus incidents, employee turnover, number of commercial passengers, revenue growth and operating profit.

During 2020/21, the Company was also heavily supported by government funding to maintain service provision during the COVID-19 pandemic. In July 2021, we welcomed the Department for Transport's (DfT's) commitment to continue to provide funding for regional bus services in the coming months while passenger volumes remain suppressed. It is critical that a full timetable of services is available so people can continue to travel safely and conveniently on reliable bus services as restrictions begin to ease. Government support is also essential in preserving the bus network which will be vital in supporting societal and economic recovery in months and years to come.

Principle 2 – Board Composition

For the year ended 3 July 2021, the Board comprised the Group Chief Executive and the Group Chief Financial Officer (the Group executive directors), the Managing Director, Finance Director, Operations Director and Engineering Director. Following the year end, Elodie Brian resigned as Group Chief Financial Officer and a director of the Company with effect from 27 September 2021. She was replaced in these roles by Gordon Boyd who was appointed as Interim Group Chief Financial Officer and director of the Company with effect from and including 28 September 2021 up to and including 28 March 2022 when he resigned. David Brown retired as Group Chief Executive and director of the Company with effect from 5 November 2021 and was succeeded in these roles by Christian Schreyer with effect from the same date.

All directors on the Board during the year were full time employees of either the The Go-Ahead Group plc (the Group) or the Company. This size and composition of the Board are appropriate for our business and ensures that the Board has the appropriate balance of skills, knowledge and experience.

The Group Chief Executive chairs the board and promotes a culture of open and constructive debate. This role is separate to that of the Managing Director who is empowered to operate the business autonomously with the support of the local management team.

Board meetings are held on a monthly basis, excluding August, with the Group executive directors in attendance who scrutinise and provide independent challenge of the local management team's execution of strategy.

In addition, there are cross business forums that operate at Managing Director, Finance Director, Operations Director, Engineering Director and Commercial Director levels. When circumstances permit, the Group Chair visits annually to conduct a deep dive into execution of strategy and there are regular visits by Group Non-Executive Directors that challenge both our strategy and objectives.

The Managing Director reports to the Group executive directors directly on day to day management issues including risk and is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Group's policies and procedures.

The board is committed to developing a more diverse workforce, including at the most senior levels. For further details on the work we have undertaken on diversity and inclusion throughout the year, please see our Section 172 Statement on pages 1 to 4 of this document.

The board believes that continuous director training and development supports board effectiveness. With the ever-evolving regulatory landscape in which the Company operates, it is critical that the board maintains a good working knowledge of the transport sector and how the Company operates within its sector, as well as being aware of recent and upcoming developments in the wider legal and regulatory environment. To assist the board in undertaking its responsibilities, regular presentations are provided from senior management. Where required, support is also provided from Group Company Secretariat.

Whilst a formal board evaluation does not take place, the Group executive directors' individual effectiveness was assessed as part of the Group's wider annual review. The individual director effectiveness for the other directors was assessed by functional key performance indicators and formal appraisal interviews.

Principle 3 – Director Responsibilities

The board holds eleven scheduled meetings a year with all directors expected, wherever possible, to attend all board meetings. The board receives regular and timely information (at least monthly) on all key aspects of the business including financial performance and KPIs, capital expenditure, contracts and tendering, health and safety, environmental data, operating and engineering performance, people and engagement, market and competition and industrial relations.

The Group Board reviews governance processes, including policies and procedures, on at least an annual basis to ensure that these remain appropriate. The Company complies with the Group Policies and Procedures Manual and reports its compliance to the Group annually on a self-certification basis. A comprehensive Operating Company Board Procedures Manual is maintained which provides an overview of the governance and reporting framework within which the board operates. It includes formal procedures for the working of the board, delegated authorities, the timely provision of appropriate information and the duties and responsibilities of directors, including standards of conduct and compliance. This Operating Company Board Procedures Manual is based on the Manual used by the Group.

The board has established robust procedures for ensuring that its power to authorise conflicts of interest is operated in accordance with the Companies Act 2006. All directors are required to make the board aware of any other commitments and actual/potential conflicts of interest that could interfere with their ability to act in the best interests of the company. Authorisations are for an indefinite period, but the board retains the power to vary or terminate the authorisation at any time. The board believes that this system operates effectively.

The board believes in equal opportunities and applies fair and equitable employment practices. Our Code of Conduct states that all employees should be treated with respect and that their health, safety and basic human rights should be protected. All our colleagues are required to adhere to our Anti-bribery and Corruption policy.

Principle 4 – Opportunity and Risk

The Board seeks out opportunity whilst mitigating risk. Opportunities for long-term value creation are identified through monthly board reviews, engagement with external stakeholders and regular strategic business reviews performed by local management. In addition, we carry out an annual corporate planning process which seeks to identify and prioritise areas for investment and focus.

Examples would include reinforcement of our collaborative partnership with Crawley and West Sussex councils, and Brighton & Hove City Council where, during the year, we partnered with the NHS to provide on-bus vaccination centres in Crawley, Brighton and Surrey. In Brighton and Crawley, we are committed to supporting cycling and walking improvements, even in areas that present risks towards the journey times of our services. We believe this commitment towards supporting the wider strategy for movement around the city will help to deliver long-term benefits for our services, colleagues and the local community.

A summary of the Company's key principal risks and mitigations are as outlined in the Strategic Report.

Ultimate accountability of risk identification and management lies with the Managing Director, supported by all other directors on the board.

The assessment of key principal and emerging risks is embedded within the day to day operations of the Company. Such assessments are consolidated and reviewed as part of monthly board reporting as well as being reported to the Group twice a year in accordance with full year and half year results reporting. As part of this reporting process, risk reports are completed which outline the key principal and emerging risks facing the Company, provide an explanation of the procedures in place to mitigate and manage such risks and prioritise the most important risks from both an inherent and residual perspective. These reports are then discussed with the Group executive directors at bi-annual risk board meetings with discussion focused on the most important risk and control areas within the business. Following such meetings, the Group executive directors report to the Group audit committee with final approval being granted by the Group Board for key risks that could have a material impact on the Group performance, strategy or business model.

The level of risk the Company is willing to take to achieve its strategic objectives, together with the level of risk shock that it can withstand is aligned with that set out in the Group's risk appetite statement. The Company benchmarks its bi-annual risk reporting against the Group's risk appetite statement, with any key risks being identified and discussed with the Group executive directors at bi-annual risk board meetings.

Principle 5 -Remuneration

Remuneration arrangements are based on the principles that reward should be sufficient to attract and retain high calibre directors, senior management and the wider workforce.

For the local management team (Managing Director, Finance Director, Operations Director, Engineering Director and Commercial Director), remuneration is individually reviewed and determined by the Group Board in line with the Group's Senior Management Remuneration Policy (where applicable). Remuneration is structured to support both the financial objectives and the strategic priorities of the Group in a manner which is aligned with shareholders' and stakeholders' long-term interests. The directors' remuneration is disclosed on page 40 (note 7) of the Company's 2021 Annual Report and Financial Statements.

During the year, the Group executive directors were remunerated by the Group. For further details of the remuneration policy which applied to the Group executive directors together with details of the remuneration paid to them in the 2021 financial year, please see pages 108 to 142 of the Group's 2021 Annual Report and Accounts.

Remuneration for bus drivers and engineers is driven by a collective bargaining process with remuneration for the remaining workforce, such as senior management and administrative roles, generally following suit and being set in line with this. This approach allows for the Company's local management team to set priorities and adjust remuneration to meet specific demands, taking into account the labour market, workforce aspirations, operating conditions and competitor activity.

During the year, the board considered the data, and narrative, relevant to the Company's Gender Pay Reporting in preparation for external publication, including proposed plans to enhance performance. In Brighton & Hove the mean pay gap of 5.1% (or 84p) is significantly lower than the 14.4% national average. Similarly, the median pay gap of 3.3% (or 47p) is significantly lower than the 15.4% national statistics. The mean bonus gap of 47.9%

(or £315.79) in favour of men can be attributed to more men receiving a bonus and because director roles, which attract a higher bonus payment, are currently occupied by men. The median bonus gap is 0% which has been consistent since 2017.

Principle 6 – Stakeholders

The Board is clear on the importance of good governance and effective communication to deliver our purpose and to protect the Company's brand, reputation and relationships with all our stakeholder community including the Group, workforce, customers, local authorities, suppliers and the local communities in which we work. The board believes that listening and engaging effectively with our key stakeholders is critical to ensuring that the right decisions are made which consider their needs and priorities. An established reporting process is in place, where the Company is required to report formally to the Group Board on what engagement has taken place with our key stakeholders and the outcome of such engagement.

The Go-Ahead Group plc (the Group)

The Group is the Company's ultimate parent. The board believe that effective communication and proactive engagement with the Group is paramount in establishing a mutual understanding of both the Company's and the Group's wider objectives. The Group executive directors, who also sit on the Company's board, form the primary communication route between the Company's board and the Group Board. This facilitates effective open, transparent and two-way engagement, the feedback from which forms part of the board's strategic discussions.

All Directors also participate in group wide forums such as the Bus Business Steering Group (BBSG), Finance Directors Forum, Operations Directors Forum, Engineering Directors Forum and the Commercial Directors Forum. Various other layers within the organisation also participate in Group-wide project and initiatives. These forums have improved collaboration and sharing of best practice across the business. They have proven invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic helping to shape the Company's response and actions through cultivating knowledge and lessons learnt across the Group.

Workforce

The Company regularly communicates to its employees in a variety of ways such as, for instance, internal media, newsletters and business updates, including weekly videos from the managing director and senior colleagues and daily news feeds via our employee engagement app. Weekly updates with Unite the Union also provide a useful measure of colleague engagement.

The board considers the results of all employee engagement surveys a good barometer of the workforce's confidence in the Company's strategic direction, optimism in the future and career opportunities. Quarterly "pulse" surveys are now performed to allow colleagues to provide anonymous feedback about their experience working at the Company, the results of which provide a measure of colleague engagement and help us identify areas of improvement. Pulse surveys conducted in March and June 2021 have highlighted opportunities to build further on the huge strides forward achieved recently, and the ongoing challenges of communicating with a workforce, the majority of whom are isolated in the cab of a bus for all but a few minutes of their time at work.

The Company has a formal whistleblowing policy in place where employees can, in confidence, raise legitimate concerns about wrongdoing within their workplace. This policy is reviewed by the board on an annual basis, with this year's review confirming that the policy remains fit for purpose and enables a good level of communication with colleagues at all levels of the business. The Company makes use of intranet sites, notice boards, staff intranet and induction processes etc to ensure that employees are fully aware of the process for raising concerns and providing a safe and secure environment for doing so. Employees also have access to a wide range of alternative and more informal channels through which to raise concerns. These include performance development reviews, job chats, blink engagement app, local blink groups, Dignity and Respect Campaign and manager conversations.

Customers

We build our relationships with our customers through passenger-facing colleagues, customer events and social medial channels. Our customers' needs are constantly evolving, and these interactions enable us to better understand the needs of our customers. Social media plays an increasing role in our communication and engagement with our customers, providing a platform for customers to engage with the Company and for the Company to understand the needs and demands of our customers.

During the year, the Company has positioned itself very firmly as an active and sustainable mode of transport alongside walking and cycling and actively promotes the use of all three modes. This has been supported by

campaigns run to encourage customers back to bus focusing on the safety, value and connectivity we offer for both leisure and less discretionary journeys.

Additionally, we have launched a brand-new app to attract customers back to our services following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. As well as enhanced security, the app offers many new and improved features, making planning and using the bus even easier for our customers. Such features include service disruption information, new flexible ticketing options, better live tracking showing seating availability, digital timetables and easier to navigate menus. The app also drives better customer engagement as it has the functionality to provide feedback or ask questions, facilitating direct and instant feedback from our Customer Services team.

Suppliers

Our suppliers are fundamental contributors to the success of our business. Regular meetings and forums are held to manage relationships, understand challenges and to source, identify and implement new solutions and alternative ways of working. Having strong supplier relationship management with our key suppliers, particularly of parts and materials, has helped us to reduce costs and improve the reliability of our fleet. In 2021, the Group launched a new supplier assurance process to manage and onboard new suppliers building on the Cognate platform launched in 2019. This new process not only provides the Company with a validated pool of high quality suppliers, it also makes the supplier onboarding process smoother and simpler for both Brighton and Hove and Metrobus and the suppliers.

Local authorities

Working closely with local authorities enables us to contribute our private sector experience and expertise to the public agenda and produce better policy outcomes and service delivery in our areas of expertise. We have a constructive and strong relationship with the local authorities in which we operate. Collaboration is built through regular discussion and meetings in order to discuss local short-term priorities as well as to understand and influence the long-term strategic agenda. During the year, we substantially increased our engagement with our external stakeholders, such as local authorities and local politicians, through regular newsletters to keep them informed on all of the actions taken by Brighton and Hove Buses and Metrobus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Company welcomes the Government's new bus strategy and investment commitment that will align council's highway policy and delivery with the needs of buses for the benefit of passengers, our towns and communities, decarbonisation and air quality. The Company looks forward to working within 'Enhanced Partnerships' to help deliver the further improvement set out in the strategy and have already been working with local transport authorities to this end. Matching the commitment of councils, we are ambitious to maximise the opportunity, to level up the current inequality of buses in comparison to car use in terms of cost, convenience, road space allocation, prioritisation and car parking provision.

Local communities

Public transport is critical to the functioning of society and has been fundamental in supporting communities through the COVID-19 crisis and other emergencies.

We have touched upon our pandemic specific work in our communities above such as, for instance, our mobile vaccination units. Additionally, adjusting for Covid safety measures has enabled us to continue to support funding of local charities through the longstanding Santa Bus, staff charity events and our own community fund, enhanced by unclaimed change collected by customers.

Notwithstanding the pandemic, we have continued to engage with, learn from, provide support and add value to the communities we serve, striving to maximise opportunities bus services create. Examples during the year included progressing our work on hate crime prevention and reporting, building upon our strong relationships with Black History Group and the groups representing BAME communities. We look forward to renewing our Inclusive Leader status later in 2021, and to fulfilling our obligations that go with that status.

We have also joined with the work at national and local level to provide safer journeys for women and all vulnerable travellers. Accessibility for disabled people has continued to become increasingly embedded in our physical, process and communications design.

In making decisions, the board considers how the Company's activities may impact both current and future stakeholders, which includes impacts on the environment. Further details are provided in our section 172(1) statement on pages 1 to 4 and our 2021 Sustainability Report (available on www.buses.co.uk).