

REPORT SUMMARY SHEET

BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Purpose

To update the Committee on the development of a Bus Service Improvement Plan as required by the National Bus Strategy and to seek delegated authority to approve the final document.

Summary

The report (see Appendix 2 for detail) sets out the objectives and features of the proposed West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan. The working draft of the plan is at Appendix 4.

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

The Combined Authority has actively reviewed its key activities and work programme to reflect changing priorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific issues relating to the Covid-19 situation that impact on or are addressed through this report are as follows:

Development of a Bus Service Improvement Plan as a bid for funding to improve the local bus network will contribute positively to clean and inclusive growth, assist businesses and residents seeking employment;

Recommendations

1. That the Joint Committee note the work that has been done on the development of a Bus Service Improvement Plan.
2. That the Joint Committee grant delegated authority to the Chief Executive of the West of England Combined Authority (as it relates to the Combined Authority area) and the Chief Executive of North Somerset Council (as it relates to North Somerset), in consultation with the Chief Executives of the constituent councils, to approve the joint Bus Service Improvement Plan for submission to Government by 29 October 2021.

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REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 15 OCTOBER 2021

REPORT TITLE: BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

DIRECTOR: KATHRYN VOWLES, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF
INFRASTRUCTURE

AUTHORS: ANDY STRONG, BUS IMPROVEMENT MANAGER

Purposes of Report

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1 Background / Issues for consideration

Bus Strategies

- 1.1 *Bus Back Better - a National Bus Strategy for England (NBS)* was published in March 2021. Whilst acknowledging investment by the private and public sectors - including a spotlight on our *metrobus* - it highlights the failings and negative features of the deregulated market that has been in place outside London since 1986 and sets out a new vision for a cohesive network of attractive, high-quality bus services.
- 1.2 The overall vision and aims of the NBS are:
- To get overall bus patronage back to its pre-Covid level and then exceed it;
 - To make the bus a practical and attractive alternative to the car for more people;
 - To make buses more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper;
 - To offer a London-style bus network: fully integrated services, simple multi-modal tickets, more bus priority measures, high-quality information for passengers, services that keep running into the evenings and at weekends and turn-up-and-go frequencies in cities;
 - Significantly more ambitious bus priority schemes in cities and congested places, taking a whole-corridor approach to improve journey times and punctuality;
 - To create a virtuous circle: increasing usage, but also reducing operating costs so better services can be sustained without permanently higher subsidy.
- 1.3 The West of England Bus Strategy was adopted in June 2020 after extensive consultation. It contained an analysis of the local bus network and set out proposals to reshape and develop the network to make it more efficient and more attractive to passengers within the existing envelope of funding. One of the core principles would be frequent radial and orbital bus services connecting at interchange hubs. Publication of the NBS has provided an opportunity to review the West of England Bus Strategy in the light of the impact of the pandemic, use it as the basis for our Bus Service Improvement Plan, review and re-set our targets, and bid for funding to deliver improvements.

Bus Service Improvement Plan

- 1.4 The NBS requires local transport authorities (LTAs) to develop an ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in collaboration with local bus operators, highway authorities, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people. The final plan must be submitted to Government at the end of October 2021 as part of a bid for funding. Guidance on development of a BSIP was published in May 2021 and guidance on bidding for funding was published in August 2021.
- 1.5 Baroness Vere wrote to all LTA Leaders on 6 September as follows: *“The National Bus Strategy, published in March, sets out why a BSIP is essential. It is a shared vision for transformed bus services which are key to delivering wider societal and economic goals, and the extent of its ambition will influence how the £3 billion of funding for buses is allocated. I expect your authority to produce an ambitious and challenging Improvement Plan, in keeping with the notification of intent it published on the 30 June.”* The full letter is reproduced in Appendix 3.

- 1.6 Government makes it clear in its guidance that BSIPs should be outlines rather than detailed and granular documents. Any commitments in them will not be taken as definitive or immutable. Even so, the guidance is very explicit about the features that the bus network must have to meet the vision of the National Bus Strategy and the content of a BSIP. It must include proposals to improve the local bus network to the standard described in paragraph 1.2, estimate the costs of so doing and, in addition, it must:
- Take account of cycling and walking schemes, complementing those forms of travel;
 - Include targets for punctuality, journey times and patronage with reporting of progress against those targets every six months;
 - Be updated annually and reflected in the Joint Local Transport Plan.
- 1.7 The BSIP will aim to achieve a more co-ordinated network with convenient and reliable bus services, affordable fares with daily and weekly capping and simplified payment systems. Details of the proposed features of the future West of England bus network are in Appendix 1. Our BSIP will set out the measures that we and bus operators will take over time to deliver that. Ultimately, though, what can be achieved will depend on (i) the level of funding awarded by Government and (ii) the recovery of demand for bus services after the pandemic.
- 1.8 One of the mandatory requirements of a BSIP is to include an assessment of the local bus network as it stands and to set targets for improvements. Progress towards those targets must be reported every six months. The assessment must take account of the views of passenger groups, MPs, the business sector etc. We invited views from these stakeholders in July/August 2021 and the results will help inform the priorities for investment.
- 1.9 At the end of September 2021, bus patronage in the West of England was at 63% of its pre-Covid level. Recovery has been slow, and consistently lower than in other city-regions. In July / August 2021, we carried out a survey of local employers and large retailers to try to gauge the longer-term impact of changes in lifestyles on public transport. The results are reported in the draft BSIP.
- 1.10 Development of the joint BSIP has been carried out to a very challenging timescale set by Government. At the time of writing, work was still going on - with expert support - to edit the content into a suitable layout for publication and submission to Government. A working draft forms Appendix 4 to this report. The final document will be laid out and designed professionally. The text will be structured to reflect the requirements in the published guidance.
- 1.11 Members with transport responsibilities considered the working document at a special meeting on 27 September and their comments - together with those from their officers - will help shape the final BSIP. Approval is being sought from Joint Committee for the Chief Executives to approve the final version prior to submission to Government on 29 October.
- 1.12 At its meeting on 25 June 2021, the West of England Joint Committee approved a recommendation for the West of England CA and North Somerset Council (NSC) to work together on submission of a joint BSIP and to publish a formal Notice of Intent

to develop an Enhanced Partnership (see below) as the delivery model. That Notice was published on 28 June 2021.

- 1.13 In the development of the BSIP, engagement has taken place with officers of Wiltshire, Somerset County and Gloucestershire County Councils on cross-boundary issues. Each LTA is responsible for developing a BSIP and determining bus service levels for its own area.

Enhanced Partnership

- 1.14 The delivery model for the West of England BSIP will be an Enhanced Partnership (EP) - a statutory agreement between LTAs, bus operators and highway authorities under which each party makes legally-binding commitments to improve bus services and the facilities associated with them. It has the potential to bring about improvements quickly and it puts in place a framework under which future improvements can be delivered as and when funding becomes available. Details of the features that can be included in EPs are in Appendix 2.
- 1.15 Government expects all LTAs to have an initial EP in place by April 2022, apart from those that have published an intention to develop franchising of bus services, and it has made continued payment of discretionary funding to bus operators and LTAs absolutely conditional on development of a BSIP and EP.
- 1.16 Government strongly recommends that the initial EP should “memorialise” all existing agreements such as quality partnership schemes, voluntary partnership agreements, traffic regulation conditions, current expenditure on bus service support, traffic regulation orders for bus priorities, bus shelter maintenance expenditure etc.

2 Consultation

- 2.1 Extensive public consultation was carried out on the West of England Bus Strategy in February / March 2020 and nearly 2,000 responses were received. In view of the short timescale, public consultation is not required for the BSIP, but the views of passenger groups, MPs and the business sector must be sought and reported. We invited views from these stakeholders in July / August 2021 and received 55 responses. The results will help inform the priorities for investment.
- 2.2 When we have been notified of the awards of the funding bids to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and the Bus Transformation Fund, we may seek further advice from our communities on the priorities for investment and revenue support.
- 2.3 As part of the statutory process to make an EP, a short technical consultation on the content of the EP Plan and the first EP Scheme must be carried out with bus operators, organisations that represent passengers, neighbouring local authorities, the Traffic Commissioner, the Police, Transport Focus and the Competition and Markets Authority. One of the purposes of that exercise is to give bus operators an opportunity to object formally to any proposed features of the EP.

3 Other Options Considered

The option of not developing and submitting a Bus Service Improvement Plan was considered but dismissed because Government has advised LTAs and bus operators that it is the only pathway to access funding to support recovery and improvements to the bus network and, potentially in future, Bus Service Operators' Grant.

4 Risk Management/Assessment

4.1 The key risks that the recommendations will address are:

- (i) Potential loss of discretionary funding from Government to support commercial bus operators and our bus service contractors during recovery from the pandemic;
- (ii) Potential loss of opportunity to bid for transformation funding to make longer-term improvements to the bus network and help support recovery after April 2022;

4.2 The risks associated with implementation of the recommendations *and appropriate mitigations* are:

- (i) Insufficient revenue budget in longer-term to maintain enhanced bus network after transformation funding ends;
 - *Maintain regular dialogue with bus operators through the EP. Use our evaluation tool to help prioritise bus revenue support if necessary.*
- (ii) Insufficient revenue budget to maintain enhanced bus network if demand recovers more slowly than anticipated;
 - *Maintain regular dialogue with bus operators through the EP. Use our evaluation tool to help prioritise bus revenue support if necessary. Make evidence-based case to Department for Transport for additional funding if necessary.*
- (iii) Award of transformation funding at much lower level than bid based on BSIP, leading to insufficient funding to deliver full BSIP.
 - *Adjust delivery programme to match award in accordance with our priorities and seek funding from other sources.*

5 Public Sector Equality Duties

5.1 The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

5.2 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected

characteristics.

- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

5.3 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

5.4 The proposals in this report will help to develop and maintain a network of bus services offering good access to public transport for all members of the community.

6 Finance Implications

6.1 The revised budget for developing a joint BSIP and EP estimates a total cost of £800k. The Department for Transport has already paid £100k Capability Funding to the West of England CA and £163k to North Somerset Council (NSC). The balance will be funded from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) or, failing that, approval has been granted for Feasibility and Development Funding to cover any shortfall.

6.2 There will be a requirement for additional staff resources at both WECA and NSC to service the joint EP after it has been made and to carry out the ongoing reporting and review work arising from the joint BSIP. The extent of this requirement and the associated cost will be outlined in the bid and will be refined as the work progresses. Any additional resource requirements will be funded from the money received from Government if the bid is successful.

6.3 Funding to deliver the BSIP is the subject of bids to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and to a pot of £3 billion Bus Transformation Fund (BTF). The capital element for the West of England CA will be funded by the CRSTS. The capital element for NSC and the revenue element for both areas will be funded by BTF.

6.4 The bid to the CRSTS was submitted to Government on 17 September 2021.

Advice given by: Malcolm Coe, Director of Investment and Corporate Services

7 Legal Implications

7.1 Enhanced Partnerships are enshrined in the Transport Act 2000 (as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017). Government has published detailed guidance on the statutory process to develop an EP and on its expectations for Bus Service Improvement Plans. The guidance is being followed.

7.2 A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed between the West of England CA and North Somerset Council to cover the joint work on developing the BSIP and EP. Further consideration will be given to the arrangements to manage the EP jointly after its launch.

Advice given by: Shahzia Daya, Director of Legal Services

8 Climate Change Implications

- 8.1 In July 2019, the West of England CA declared a climate emergency, recognising the huge significance of climate change and its impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the region's residents. The Combined Authority is committed to taking climate change considerations fully into account as an integral part of its governance and decision-making process.
- 8.2 The recommendations will have a positive impact on emissions, resilience, consumption of non-renewable resources and pollution by creating a virtuous circle of growth in the use of buses and by co-ordinating bus operators' plans to move to zero-emission fleets.

9 Land/property Implications

None.

10 Human Resources Implications

There will be a requirement for additional staff resources at both WECA and NSC to service the joint EP after it has been made and to carry out the ongoing reporting and review work arising from the joint BSIP. The extent of this requirement and the associated cost will be outlined in the bid and will be refined as the work progresses. Any additional resource requirements will be funded from the money received from Government if the bid is successful.

Advice given by: Alex Holly, Head of People and Assets

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 - Objectives and features of the proposed West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Appendix 2 - Features of Enhanced Partnerships
- Appendix 3 - Letter from Baroness Vere to Local Transport Authority Leaders (6 September 2021)
- Appendix 4 - West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan (**WORKING DRAFT**)

Background papers

- West of England Bus Strategy (June 2020)
<https://travelwest.info/app/uploads/2020/02/West-of-England-Bus-Strategy.pdf>
- Bus Back Better - a National Bus Strategy for England (March 2021)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-back-better>
- National Bus Strategy: Bus Service Improvement Plans (May 2021)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985379/bus-service-improvement-plans-guidance-to-local-authorities-and-bus-operators.pdf

- National Bus Strategy: Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans using an Enhanced Partnership (July 2021):
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/959501/bus-services-act-2017-enhanced-partnerships-guidance.pdf

Note: An amended version containing a template Enhanced Partnership is expected to be published in October 2021.

- Notice of Intent for the West of England CA and North Somerset Council to develop a joint Enhanced Partnership:
<https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NOTICE-OF-INTENT-TO-PREPARE-AN-ENHANCED-PARTNERSHIP-PLAN-AND-SCHEME.pdf>

APPENDIX 1 - OBJECTIVES AND ATTRIBUTES OF THE PROPOSED WEST OF ENGLAND BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)

1 Joint Committee on 25 June 2021 approved seven high-level objectives for the BSIP and the EP Plan, based on the aims and vision in the National Bus Strategy, the vision and objectives in the adopted West of England Bus Strategy and the published guidance on BSIPs. Those objectives and their attributes (our ideal network) are listed below. This has been the starting point for our discussions with the bus operators and highway authorities. We propose to bid for funding to achieve all these high standards - although delivery will be contingent on the amount of funding actually awarded and on recovery of patronage levels.

2 The attributes listed below are all achievable (with funding) within the framework of an EP and associated voluntary agreements between bus operators, although operators will retain the freedom to set their own fares. We aim to build on the funded projects in progress already to provide more bus priorities and develop tap on / tap off ticketing.

3 Transition to an ideal network with all the attributes listed below will take several years and it is unlikely that the award of funding currently on offer will enable us to achieve it. There will be an ongoing need for revenue support to maintain high service levels and low fares, in addition to a higher level of spending on bus infrastructure maintenance.

4 The high quality of the bus network in London is sustained by revenue from the Congestion Charge and a specific Government grant, whereas the only source of funding for bus revenue support currently available to the West of England CA is the Transport Levy on the constituent councils. Various revenue streams are available to NSC and the constituent councils in their roles as highway authorities and planning authorities, however. They own the assets on the highway and the legal mechanisms by which to impose charges and generate these revenue streams. Joint Local Transport Plan 4 contains a section on potential revenue streams.

BSIP objectives and attributes (our ideal bus network)

Objective 1 - High mode share for buses of overall travel market

- *Good access to bus services from all parts of the area*
- *Good access from bus network to passenger destinations*
- *Positive contribution to decarbonisation plans and air quality improvements*
- *Positive contribution to sustainable housing and employment growth*
- *Declining need for subsidy as market grows organically*
- *Ambitious targets and trajectory for modal share and bus patronage*
- *Robust civil enforcement of moving traffic offences, parking and traffic restrictions*
- *Extensive bus priorities - particularly on main urban routes - as continuous as possible and part of a whole-corridor approach*
- *Consideration of Key Route Network powers*
- *Good co-ordination of road works*

Objective 2 - High quality bus service

- *Cohesive, comprehensive and simple route network including co-ordinated radial and orbital services in the Bath, Bristol and Weston-super-Mare urban areas with easy interchange between them*
- *Standard all-day routes with evening and weekend services on urban and inter-urban routes*
- *Turn-up-and-go daytime frequencies (at least 5 buses per hour) and evening frequencies of at least 4 buses per hour on core urban routes (including orbital routes)*
- *Good frequencies on principal inter-urban corridors and in smaller urban areas*

- 24/7 services - where appropriate - on core urban and principal inter-urban corridors
- Feeder services to interchange hubs to boost the frequency of connections from places away from main roads, connecting to the major routes with integrated ticketing
- Demand-responsive services to low-density areas where appropriate - possibly operated by community transport providers
- Basic minimum standard of accessibility to network from rural areas, based on population
- High standard of punctuality
- As far as possible, journey times comparable to or better than car travel
- Sufficient capacity to meet demand
- Provision of service to new developments at an early stage, funded by developer contributions
- Regular service reviews but no more than two change dates per year
- Public consultation on proposed changes to routes
- Good links to rail services, with buses connecting with first and last trains where appropriate
- Consistent, clear and distinctive branding for the whole public transport network (rather than the operator or mode), incorporating any strong local or route-specific brands
- Unique service numbers within the network (apart from urban services in Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare) with no suffixes

Objective 3 - High quality waiting environment

- Bus stops, bus stations and interchanges to be accessible, safe and inclusive by design with good facilities
- High quality, branded interchanges at key locations, including rail stations
- Branded, distinctive shelters at all stops wherever practical (except alighting points) with high standard of cleanliness and maintenance
- Defined, paved waiting areas at urban stops and hardstandings at rural stops with cycle parking where possible
- Good pedestrian accessibility to adjacent residential areas and passenger destinations
- Bus stations protected from closure and redevelopment

Objective 4 - High vehicle standards

- Progression to zero emissions through bids for Government funding when available, and Euro VI emission standard in the meantime
- High levels of cleanliness, comfort and security for passengers
- Full accessibility with ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to the wheelchair space
- Dual-door vehicles on core urban services
- High level of mechanical reliability
- Consistent, clear and distinctive branding for the whole public transport network (rather than the operator or mode), incorporating any strong local or route-specific brands
- "Next stop" audio-visual information, WiFi and charging as standard
- All vehicles equipped with tap on / tap off readers

Objective 5 - High level of passenger satisfaction

- Bus Passenger Charter to set out what standards passengers can expect, including punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, accessibility, proportion of services operated and redress
- Public consultation on route and network changes
- One customer service contact point for whole network
- Measurement of passenger satisfaction to include value for money and provision of information
- Targets for punctuality and journey times

Objective 6 - High quality information

- Bus Information Strategy adopted and implemented
- Consistent, distinctive and readily-identifiable branding for the whole public transport network on all media

- *Easy access to information via Travelwest website and app, including times, accessibility information, fares and live running*
- *Roadside timetable posters at all stops except alighting points*
- *Timetable leaflets and comprehensive area booklets for whole network*
- *Printed and interactive maps for whole network and town/city plans for urban areas*
- *Maps at interchange stops and local centres, showing pedestrian routes and road crossing points to destinations*
- *Fares information - including multi-operator tickets - on Traveline*
- *Real-time information system to cover all operators' services*
- *Targeted information on route and network changes*
- *Consistent naming of bus stops and interchanges*
- *Bus stops in urban areas to carry route number tiles*
- *Easy access to comprehensive information via website and app, covering all operators, including times, accessibility information, fares and live running;*
- *Full information on local bus services in railway stations.*
- *Heavy promotion and marketing, including bus links to rail services and scenic routes*
- *Introductory offers to promote the network to non-users*
- *Continuous marketing and promotion of network and multi-operator tickets*

Objective 7 - Low fares, simple ticketing and easy means of payment

- *Low flat fares in Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and other urban areas*
- *Lower point-to-point graduated fares outside urban areas*
- *Multi-operator ticketing to be the norm - branded as part of the network branding*
- *Daily and weekly capping using tap on / tap off readers*
- *All operators equipped to take contactless payment, EMV ticketing and m-ticketing*
- *Contactless payment to be the norm but cash retained for the time being*
- *Integration of multi-operator bus ticket and multi-modal ticket into one family of tickets*
- *Simplified range of tickets but more flexible ticketing for part-time commuters*
- *Harmonisation of ticket zones, ticket types and conditions*
- *Standard discounts for children to age 19 and students*
- *Consideration of free travel for under-11s, to encourage family travel*

APPENDIX 2 - Features of Enhanced Partnerships

- 1 The Bus Services Act 2017 updated previous legislation on partnerships between local transport authorities (LTAs) and bus operators, and it created a new model called an Enhanced Partnership (EP).
- 2 An EP is an agreement between the LTA and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services. It includes a clear vision of the improvements that the EP is aiming for (an EP Plan) and accompanying actions to achieve them (set out in one or more EP Schemes). It must have the support of a majority market share of local bus operators - and any relevant highway authorities if it includes measures related to traffic regulation orders, parking enforcement etc.
- 3 An EP Plan must include an analysis of the current market, the impact of congestion and local passengers' experiences. It must set out what interventions are needed to improve local bus services, but it is basically a framework within which EP Schemes can be delivered as and when funding becomes available. Much of this content is also required for the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 4 An individual EP Scheme can set requirements that all bus services operating in the area, whether new or existing, must meet - with the agreement of the majority market share of bus operators. Those requirements may include vehicle age and standards, livery and local branding, common ticketing zones and fares conditions, standard discounts for groups such as children, students, jobseekers etc, prices of multi-operator tickets and co-ordination of timetables.
- 5 An EP Scheme cannot regulate fares set by individual operators nor can it require an operator to operate loss-making services.
- 6 An individual EP Scheme does not have to contain commitments by the LTA, but it is highly unlikely that it would receive support from bus operators if it did not. The requirements on an LTA may include provision of new bus stop infrastructure, new bus priority measures, marketing campaigns to promote bus services, changes to parking provision and enhanced enforcement, commitments to restrict roadworks on key bus corridors and application to Government for powers to enforce moving traffic offences. Many of these features are within the gift of the highway authorities, so their involvement in an EP is essential.
- 7 There is no prescribed model for governance of an EP but there is a statutory process to follow for amendments and additional EP Schemes. Government recommends that an advisory stakeholder forum be set up - possibly with an independent chair - to facilitate open discussion about current deficiencies in the market.
- 8 The only active EPs have been made by Hertfordshire County Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority. They both took two years to bring to fruition but Government has challenged other LTAs to develop theirs in nine months - to be completed by April 2022.
- 9 Government published updated guidance on EPs in July 2021. It strongly recommends that the initial EP should "memorialise" all existing agreements such as quality partnership schemes, voluntary partnership agreements, traffic regulation conditions, current expenditure on bus service support, traffic regulation orders for bus priorities, bus shelter maintenance expenditure etc.



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To: To Local Transport Authority Leaders
(in England, outside London)

6 September 2021

Dear Councillors,

Bus Service Improvement Plans and future government funding

I am writing to you today with regards to the development of the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs), which I have asked all Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to publish and send to the Department by 31 October.

The National Bus Strategy, published in March, sets out why a BSIP is essential. It is a shared vision for transformed bus services which are key to delivering wider societal and economic goals, and the extent of its ambition will influence how the £3 billion of funding for buses is allocated. I expect your authority to produce an ambitious and challenging Improvement Plan, in keeping with the notification of intent it published on the 30 June.

Where LTAs are not also highways authorities, please forward this letter to elected leaders of your Local Highways Authorities, since they will be crucial in delivering bus priority measures. As stated in the BSIP guidance, close co-operation with authorities that have relevant highways and traffic powers is essential.

Buses support the local economy by improving connectivity and reducing congestion, which affect all road users and cost urban economies at least £11 billion a year. Buses can be key to levelling-up, with users disproportionately drawn from less advantaged social groups and places.

However, buses should not be seen or promoted only as transport for those without an alternative. There is clear evidence that they can be made attractive enough to draw people away from their cars, for example by installing bus priority lanes, reviewing parking policies and increasing frequency of services. For this reason, buses are also vital in ensuring the economy meets its target for Net Zero carbon emissions.

Buses can also play a greater role in enabling access to work. In cities outside London, 77% of jobseekers do not have regular access to a car, van or motorbike. Having found employment, affordable bus travel helps ensure that work pays and can be sustained for everyone.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach here. The crucial test is whether the BSIP delivers for the community it serves, and whether the views of operators have been listened to and taken into account. In assessing the overall quality of BSIPs, the Government will give particular weight to measures which support local bus markets as they emerge from the pandemic, for example bus priority and targeted fares reductions. This will help to ensure the best outcomes for current and future bus users.

I look forward to seeing your plans for genuinely transformational changes to bus services, which should ensure everyone finds travel by bus simple, quick and affordable. I would like to thank you for all of your efforts in developing your BSIPs at pace to meet the deadline for submission of 31 October 2021.

*Yours,
Charlotte*

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON

West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan

October 2021

Please note: This is a working draft. Further work is going on to restructure, edit, design and complete the document.

Foreword

Our joint Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is our response to the National Bus Strategy and it follows on from our own West of England Bus Strategy, which was adopted last year. The BSIP sets out our ambition to get back to the strong, steady growth in bus use that we had prior to the pandemic and to move forward on decarbonising our transport system as part of our commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

Our BSIP proposes a partnership with bus operators to make the most from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and Bus Transformation Fund investment and bring about a major uplift in the quality and coverage of the whole local bus network.

We are very well-placed to deliver our proposals because we have a strong track record of working across the region and a good relationship with local bus operators. The Greater Bristol Bus Network, metrobus and complementary programmes of bus investment drove improvements in bus journey times, punctuality, vehicle emissions and passenger information - all contributing to a consistent growth in passenger numbers.

We've all been affected one way or another by the pandemic. It has changed the way society operates - especially in working patterns and the need to travel. Some of that change will be permanent and it means that we can no longer leave the provision of bus services largely to commercial decisions by the operators. From now on, Local Transport Authorities will have a much greater say in how the bus network responds to the changing needs of residents and businesses. This point is made by the Government in the National Bus Strategy and it's why they expect us to produce a BSIP in collaboration with operators.

Undoubtedly, the car remains the greatest competitor to the bus and it will remain dominant unless the bus 'offer' is improved dramatically. To make the bus a natural choice, it has to be convenient - taking our residents where they want to go at times they need to travel; bus journey times must be competitive with the car; there has to be easy access to information to find the right bus and know when it's coming; bus travel has to be good value for money - with easy payment and flexible ticketing; and - most importantly - it should be clear who is responsible for public transport and who to go to when things go wrong.

Our shared ambition is to achieve all these outcomes and make the bus a viable option for far more of our residents, to help us tackle traffic congestion, air pollution, carbon emissions, and the social and economic challenges facing us all in the coming decade.

Signature

Signature

DAN NORRIS
Mayor of the West of England

CLLR DON DAVIES
Leader, North Somerset Council

Executive summary

Our aim for the West of England is achieve at least 100 million bus passengers per year within 10 years. To help achieve this:

- We want everyone in the West of England to have access to a bus or dial-a-ride service, with all communities above 1,000 population having at least an hourly bus service on Mondays to Fridays between 0700 and 1900;
- We want higher bus frequencies in our towns and urban areas, offering a good range of destinations and connections. We therefore aim to increase the frequency of at least 20 bus routes across the West of England over the next 5 years;
- We want bus services to support the 24/7 economy, so we will develop standards for early morning, evening, night and weekend services. We aim to spend at least an additional £2 million securing improvements to these services over the next 12 months;
- We want fares to be simple, cheaper and affordable with multi-operator ticketing as standard;
- We want family travel to be affordable, so we will work with bus operators to explore ways of achieving that.
- We will present our bus network as a single system with every vehicle and bus stop identifiable as part of the network;
- We will commit to excellent standards of information and customer care in a Bus Passenger Charter.
- We want bus journeys to be reliable and consistent with at least £200 million invested in infrastructure over the next 5 years to help speed up services and improve punctuality;
- We want every bus stop to act as a shop window for our bus services, with all 5,000 stops in the West of England being improved over the next 5 years and new stops created promptly to serve areas of growth and development;
- We want every bus to meet Euro VI emission standards by 2025 and be zero-emission by 2033, with the first electric buses entering service within 2 years.

Section 1 - Overview

This West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is produced jointly by the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council in their role as local transport authorities.

The decision to produce a joint BSIP was a natural one, given the history of joint working in the sub-region and the operational features of bus services in the area.

Also, North Somerset Council has an aspiration to join the West of England Combined Authority and therefore, to be consistent with the BSIP guidance, wants to ensure that it meets its BSIP obligations by working in partnership.

The two partners adopted a Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP4) in March 2020 and a joint Bus Strategy in June 2020.

Travel patterns in the region are based predominantly around the wider Bristol Travel-to-Work area and this aligns well with the two partners' outer boundaries. The principal local bus operator - First West of England Ltd t/a First Bus - covers the whole of this area too, with some overlap into Somerset and Wiltshire. Apart from the Weston-super-Mare town network, the majority of bus services from North Somerset run into the West of England CA area.

Other benefits from developing a joint BSIP include efficiencies for both partners and bus operators by avoiding duplication, simplifying engagement and discussion and planning investment. We have a strong track record of success in working with bus operators to deliver public transport initiatives - such as the Greater Bristol Bus Network, Bath Rider and AvonRider ticket schemes, Bath Transport Package and metrobus. The impact of this partnership working is illustrated in the consistent growth in bus patronage locally - contrary to the national trend outside London.

The area to be covered by the first Enhanced Partnership Scheme will be the whole area covered by this BSIP - that is the combined areas of the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council. This includes the urban areas of Bath, Bristol, Chipping Sodbury, Clevedon, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Nailsea, Portishead, Radstock, Thornbury, Weston-super-Mare and Yate, and the surrounding rural areas. A map of the geographical area is attached in Appendix 1.

The West of England BSIP will cover the period up to 2030, with delivery in two phases:

- (i) up to 2025
- (ii) from 2025 onwards

Delivery of the first phase will depend on the award of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) (for capital expenditure in the West of England CA area) and Transformation Funding (for capital expenditure in the North Somerset Council area and revenue expenditure in both areas).

Delivery of the second phase will depend on the availability of future streams of funding. CRSTS covers the period from 2022-23 to 2027-28 and a bid was submitted in September 2021.

Delivery of both phases will also depend on organic growth as the local bus market recovers from the pandemic, adjusts to changes in lifestyles and takes advantage of the new funding opportunities to meet the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy.

The West of England BSIP will be reviewed jointly by officers of the West of England CA and North Somerset Council in October every year, updated and reported to the West of England Planning, Housing & Transport Board (comprising the Mayor of the West of England and relevant Executive Members of Bath & North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council). Updated versions of the BSIP will be published, along with six-monthly reporting of progress towards targets, on the websites of the West of England CA and North Somerset Council.

The West of England BSIP will be aligned with the Joint Local Transport Plan, Local Cycling & Walking Investment Programme, Bath Transport Delivery Action Plan and Bristol Transport Plan by specific cross-references in future revisions to those documents. It will serve as the 18-month review of the West of England Bus Strategy - to which the LTAs were committed.

WORKING DOCUMENT

Section 2 - Current bus offer to passengers

The principal local bus operator is First Bus, which carries 90% of total passenger journeys. Its vehicles are garaged at 4 depots in the area and 1 in Somerset. There are 16 other bus operators locally and 3 long-distance coach operators, some of whose services are partly registered.

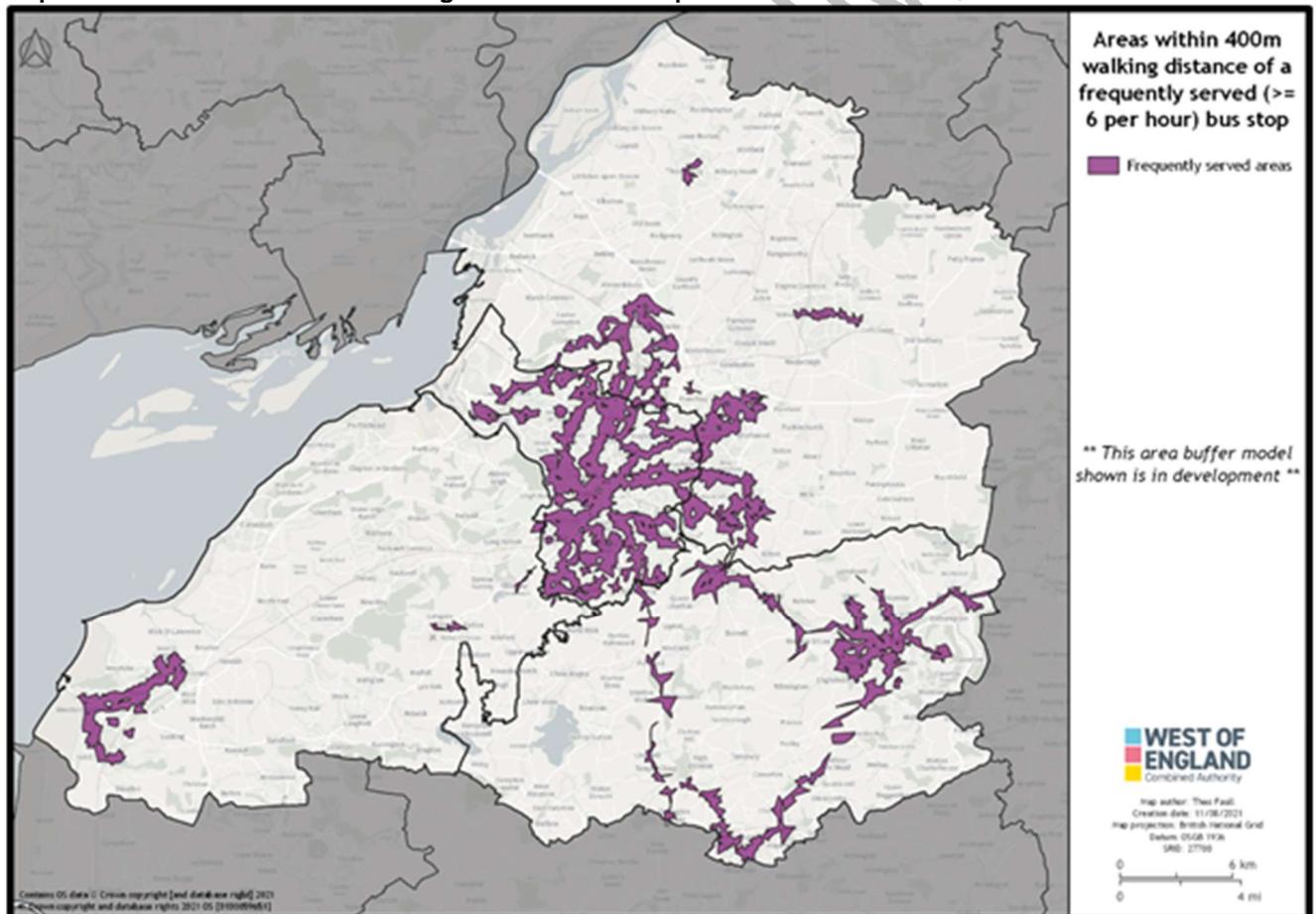
Prior to the onset of coronavirus, roughly 20% of bus journeys in the BSIP area were made by holders of concessionary passes for persons who are older or who have a disability.

Bus network coverage

The West of England Bus Strategy includes a detailed analysis of the bus network in 2019, so a summary of the key points is given here.

Roughly half the population of the BSIP area (amounting to 560,000 residents) live within 400m walking distance of a frequent bus service (at least 6 buses per hour)

Map xx - Areas within 400m walking distance of a frequent bus service



Bus service frequencies in the West of England 2019

Although there are no remote areas more than ten miles from a city or town in the BSIP area, rural communities suffer from problems common with other rural parts of the country - such as limited access to employment opportunities and services, poor public transport and lack of affordable housing.

Bus services are focussed on radial corridors in the urban areas of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare. 7% of all local bus services run to a high frequency - that is 5 buses per hour or more over most of the working day.

About a quarter of bus services are medium frequency, that is 2-4 buses per hour and service levels of 1 or 2 buses per hour operate on the main inter-urban corridors.

The commercial route networks in the three main urban centres are, with a few exceptions, radial services that terminate in the centres. In Bath and Bristol, there are fewer cross-city services than had been the case a decade ago - mainly to avoid spreading the impact of unpredictable delays from one side of the city to the other. This reduces connectivity and efficiency of operation.

There are very few orbital services around the cities and those that exist operate to low frequencies. Bus operators do not regard them as viable and are not willing to cross-subsidise them, so they rely on revenue support.

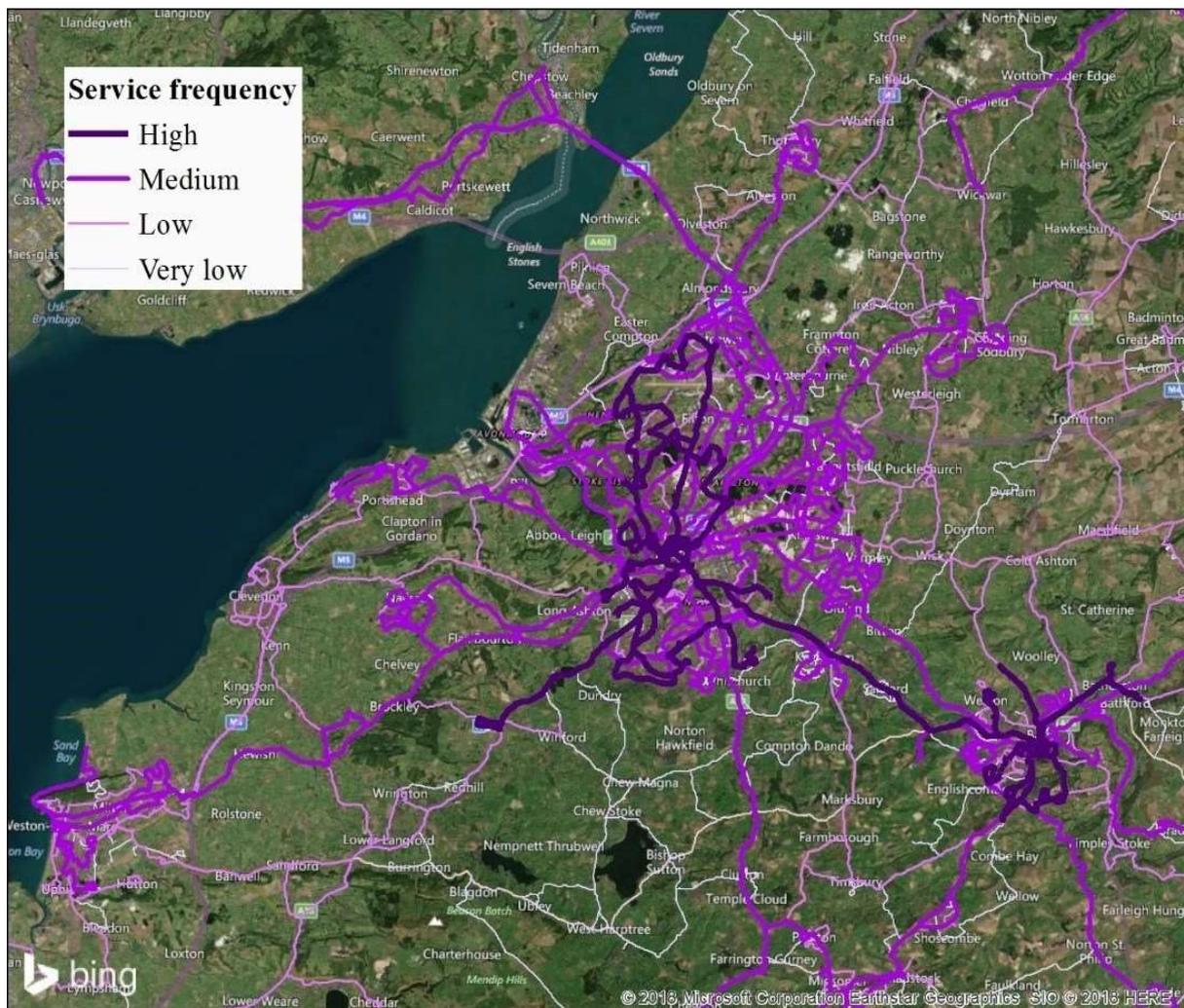
Also, there are few inter-urban limited-stop services to provide fast services giving comparable journey times to cars.

Not all commercial bus services operate all day, seven days a week. About 6% of the financial support provided by the LTAs is directed at evening and Sunday add-ons to commercial services.

Rural areas have a comparatively sparse bus network and, generally, it is reliant on revenue support. Many villages have only 1 or 2 buses per week and are used predominately by shoppers. Journey times by bus from outer terminals in rural areas to cities centres are generally much longer than by car because the bus services take circuitous routes in order to serve as many communities as possible on the way. There is very little provision of evening or weekend services to rural areas away from the main inter-urban corridors.

Both LTAs have engaged with local representatives of the Department for Work & Pensions about the BSIP. A key issue they raised was how the public transport network can support people who have shift work or working patterns beyond the more usual 9-5. Our proposals in Section 4 to redesign the route network and establish service patterns from early morning to late evening (with night services where appropriate) should address this issue.

Map xx - Bus service frequency by corridor 2019



Source: Technical Note 1, West of England Bus Strategy

Punctuality

In 2017 less than 80% of bus services ran on time, with delays of up to 15-20 minutes, representing the worst performing Integrated Transport Authority in England, with some other authorities achieving 90% of services on time.

metrobus

metrobus is a high-quality Bus Rapid Transit network of four limited-stop routes focussed on Bristol city centre, covering over 50 km of route mileage. It features bus lanes and segregated busways, 90 bus stops with high-profile shelters and iPoints (to sell tickets and give real-time information) and low-emission buses fuelled by biomethane. Many of the features of the metrobus network will become standard for our bus services and infrastructure in future, subject to funding.

The metrobus network has maximum fares and set standards for ticketing. All ticket sales are off-bus, either through vending machines at iPoints - for all tickets (multi-operator and single operator) on smartcard and paper - or through m-ticketing for operators' own single operator tickets.

We have plans to develop the metrobus network and intend that future routes should have a greater proportion of their mileage as segregated busway.

Vehicle kilometres on local bus services

Million vehicle kilometres						
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Bath & North East Somerset	10.7	11.2	11.4	9.1	8.7	6.9
Bristol	23.7	26.2	25.8	17.7	17.5	20.0
North Somerset	4.8	4.9	5.0	7.2	7.1	6.8
South Gloucestershire	6.3	5.4	5.5	7.7	8.0	8.6
Total	45.5	47.7	47.7	41.8	41.3	42.2

Source: DfT Public Service Vehicle Survey

Passenger journeys on local bus services

Prior to the onset of coronavirus, bus patronage in the West of England had been growing consistently over the past fifteen years - in contrast to the trend across most of England. At the imposition of lockdown in March 2020, passenger numbers fell dramatically, then rose and fell over the following eighteen months to reflect changes in the rules and the re-opening of the economy.

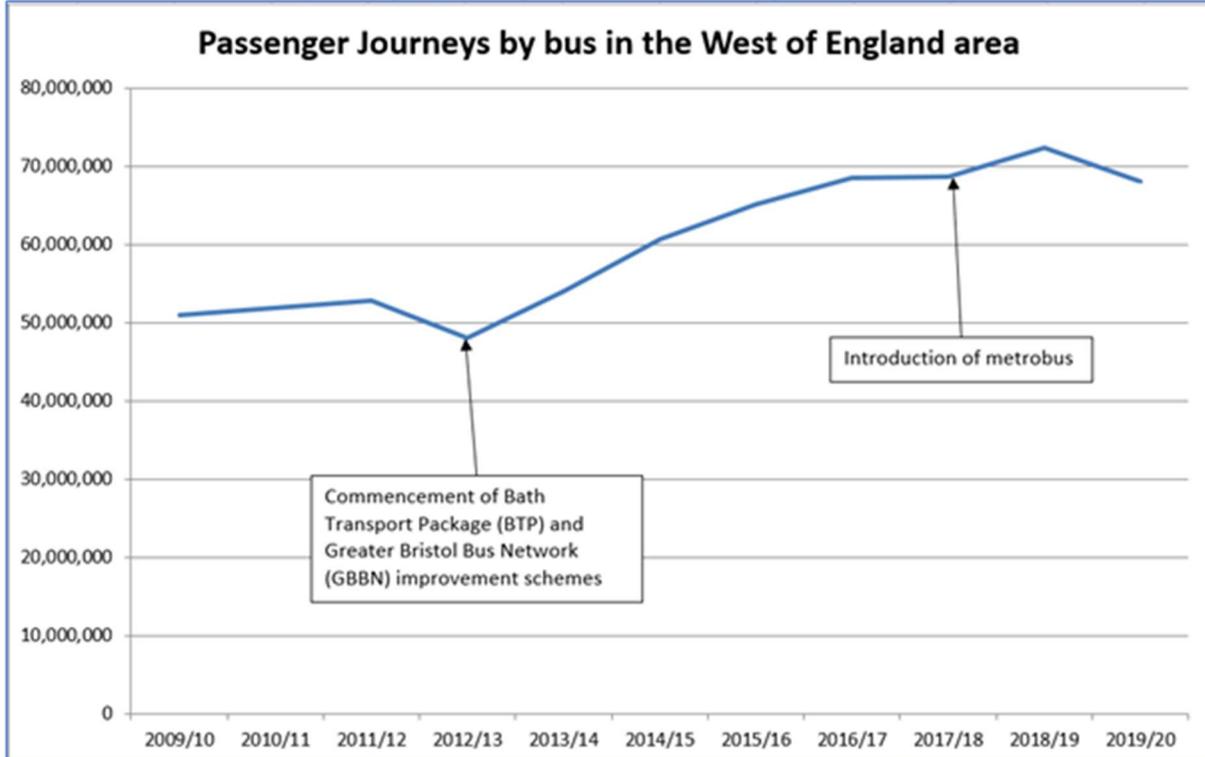
Demand for bus services had recovered to only 63% of its pre-Covid level by mid-September 2021, whereas bus operating mileage was over 90% of the pre-Covid level. General road traffic was back to its former level.

Table xx: Passenger journeys on local bus services by local authority area (million)

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Bath & North East Somerset	12.2	12.9	12.4	11.9	14.7	12.0
Bristol	32.7	35.7	39.1	38.4	42.8	40.3
North Somerset	5.7	6.0	7.7	7.6	5.5	5.3
South Gloucestershire	8.0	8.8	10.6	10.4	9.3	8.4
TOTAL	58.6	63.5	69.8	68.3	72.3	66.0

Source: Department for Transport statistics

Table xx: Trend of bus passenger journeys in the West of England



The number of bus journeys per head of population has increased steadily too, with Bristol and Bath & North East Somerset featuring in the Top 10 of places around the country outside London for that statistic in recent years. The region has had relatively high car ownership for many years.

There is still much scope to get more modal shift because our residents make less than 10% of commuter journeys by bus, despite 40% of such journeys being of less than 2 kilometres distance.

Fares & ticketing

The average single bus fare in the West of England BSIP area is £1.79 and the average single passenger journey length is 5.76 km. Journey lengths tend to be higher in rural areas because of the dispersed nature of settlements.

Table xx - Average bus fare per kilometre in the West of England BSIP area

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Vehicle kilometres	45,500,000	47,700,000	47,700,000	41,800,000	41,300,000	42,200,000
Passenger journeys	58,600,000	63,500,000	69,800,000	68,300,000	72,300,000	66,000,000
Average fare	£1.64	£1.67	£1.69	£1.71	£1.75	£1.79
Fares increase	3.54%	1.47%	1.24%	1.06%	2.23%	2.43%
Average fare per kilometre	28p	29p	29p	30p	30p	31p

Source: DfT Public Service Vehicle Survey

First Bus sells single tickets, day tickets and season tickets for periods between a week and a year. Return tickets are not available. Flat fares are charged within the Bath urban area, the Bristol urban area, and Weston-super-Mare. Graduated fares are charged elsewhere.

Other operators of commercial services sell single and return tickets and, in some cases, day tickets and season tickets. Operators of contracted services are required to sell single and return tickets within the maximum prices set by the LTA.

All operators offer discounted fares for children up to age 16 and some offer discounts up to higher ages or for students. The largest child discount (50%) is offered by First Bus.

First Bus has invested in m-ticketing (on smartphones) and contactless payment, with a trial of daily and weekly capping in the Bristol Zone. M-tickets were priced lower than equivalent on-bus tickets to incentivise sales and this move has been very successful. Over 50% of ticket sales by First Bus are now through digital smartphone channels.

Some other operators offer m-ticketing and contactless payment, but many of the smaller operators have not had the resources to invest in the latest ticketing and payment technology. This is a barrier to introducing multi-operator tickets on smartphones.

Multi-operator ticketing

The Rider multi-operator ticket scheme is managed by the West of England Bus Operators' Association (WEBOA) and offers day and week tickets covering four zones:

- (i) AvonRider - adult and child/student
- (ii) BathRider - adult and child/student
- (iii) BristolRider - adult and child/student
- (iv) WestonRider - adult day tickets only

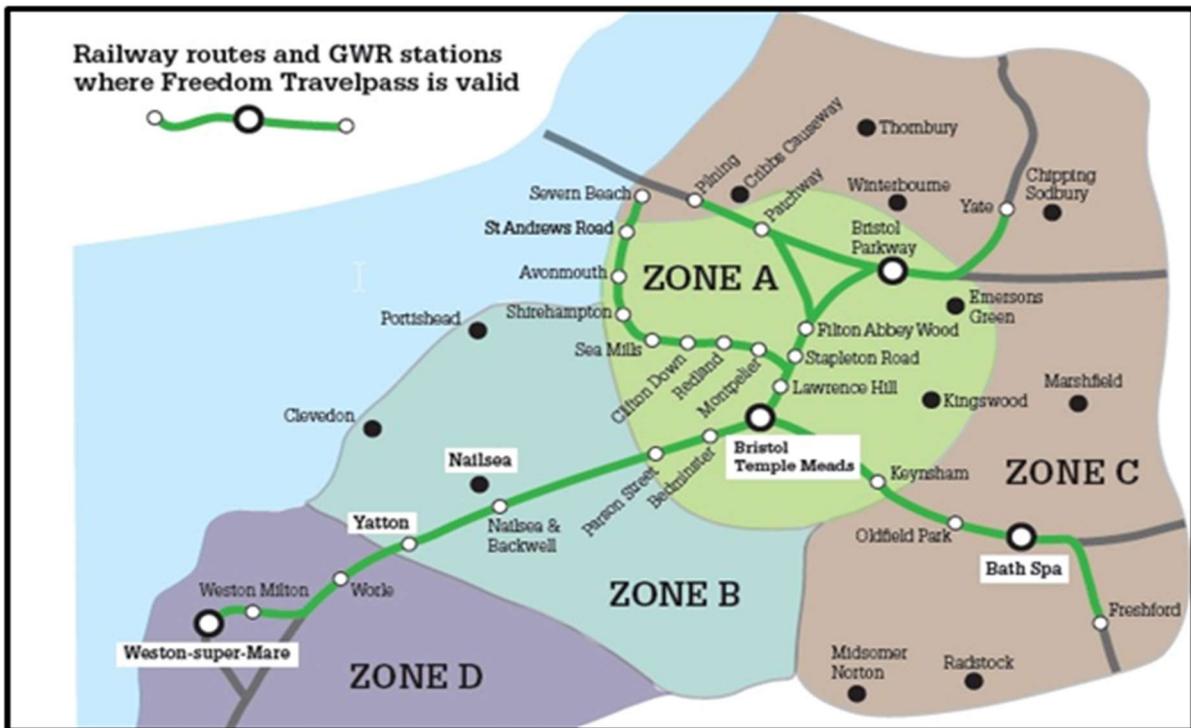
The zones broadly match the ticket zones used by First Bus. All but a few local operators participate in the Rider scheme. Adult tickets are available as paper tickets and on smartcards. Child/student tickets are on paper only. None of the range is currently available as an m-ticket or as part of the capping trial in Bristol.

Prices of Rider ticket are set by the operators at a premium above the cost of equivalent single-operator tickets, with a few exceptions. The price difference is particularly noticeable in respect of child tickets.

Rider ticket sales are less than 1% of total ticket sales in the area, reflecting a lack of promotion, limited ticket range, high prices and the network coverage of the principal operator.

Multi-modal ticketing

Freedom Travelpass is a multi-modal ticket range managed by Great Western Railway (GWR), valid on all rail services and the larger operators' bus services in the BSIP area. Day and week tickets are available for combinations of four zones at adult and child prices. Tickets are only sold at rail stations and on trains. It is not well-publicised or promoted. Initial discussions took place between GWR and the Rider scheme a few years ago about integrating the ticket ranges into one "family" of tickets but the idea was not pursued.



Freedom Travelpass zones from Travelwest website

PlusBus is an add-on to single and return train tickets as well as season tickets, offering unlimited travel on the major operators' bus services. There are zones covering Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare.

Information

Roadside timetable posters

There more than 5,000 local bus stops in the BSIP area and roughly 55% of them have a printed timetable display listing scheduled times for all bus services serving that stop. In respect of services that were changing frequently over the course of the pandemic, we showed a link to Traveline and Travelwest for timetable information instead of reprinting the posters regularly.

Real-time information (RTI)

There are more than 1,000 RTI displays at local bus stops and interchanges. Approximately 900 of them are equipped with an audio messaging function, which is particularly helpful for passengers with visual impairments. Key fobs are used to activate audio announcements.

We use live messaging on bus stop RTI displays to inform passengers of disruptions and changes. We have the option of using the whole screen to display messages, or we can show a scrolling message along the bottom line of the display for minor disruptions and general information.

Traveline

Traveline South West is the dedicated bus information website that covers the BSIP area: www.travelinesw.com . Key components include:

- Plan Your Trip - journey planner for trips across Great Britain as a whole
- Get Departure Times - for next departures from bus stops using real time information
- My Regular Trip - a personal journey plan for regular trips
- Stop Timetables - list of departures from favourite stops
- Route Timetables - for viewing, downloading and printing individual timetables
- Route Maps - for viewing, downloading and printing individual route maps.
- Contact details for operators and authorities
- SMS text message service for next departures

The national Traveline service provides an app, which replicates the services available from the website.

Travelwest

Travelwest was launched in 2012 to create a central information resource for all travel modes in the BSIP area. Key components of the Travelwest website www.travelwest.info include:

- Multi-modal journey planner
- Live arrival times
- Routes and timetables
- Fares and Travelcards
- Travel updates and service changes
- Disruptions to public transport
- Help centre

Operators' websites

ADD TEXT

Operators' apps

Many local bus operators have developed their own apps, in addition to their own online websites and resources. Operator apps are popular amongst passengers where they are used as a platform for ticketing.

iPoints

Large totem displays - iPoints - have been installed at 90 locations across the region to provide information and sell tickets. They are a key feature of the metrobus network and have also been installed at key interchange points in town centres and at Bristol Airport.

On-board information

Many bus services now have on-board RTI systems in the form of either LED or TFT displays. These displays are used to provide useful information to passengers on the route, including upcoming bus stops. Many buses are also now equipped with audio Next Stop announcements as well as pre-recorded safety information.

Most buses have static poster panels which can be used for information such as maps, service and fares information as well as any other messages. Some operators provide service-specific information on scenic routes which carry a lot of visitors.

Local bus fleet

The total fleet operating registered local services in the West of England comprises 1,159 buses, of which 695 are garaged within the BSIP area. The age profile is as follows:

Year	2021 Age	Totals	
2016-2021	0-5	261	22.50%
2011-2015	5-10	407	35.10%
2006-2010	10-15	313	27%
2001-2005	15-20	146	12.50%
1996-2000	20-25	14	1.20%
1991-1995	25-30	15	1.20%
1986-1990	30-35	1	0.08%
Unknown		2	0.17%
Total no. of buses		1159	

The fleet garaged within the BSIP area meets the following exhaust standards:

	Number of vehicles	%
Euro II	2	0.20
Euro III	39	5
Euro IV	159	22.9
Euro V	160	23.3
Euro VI	324	47
Hybrid	11	1.6
Ultra-low emission bus (ULEB)	0	0
Total	695	

Customer service

The LTAs can be contacted by the public through postal and email addresses, social media accounts and telephones, and details are advertised across the bus network and online.

Current customer service channels / recompense

Bus user groups / customer panels / meet the manager sessions

LTA financial support for bus services

More than 90% of the local bus network (in terms of passenger journeys) was operated on a commercial basis prior to the pandemic. The West of England CA and North Somerset Council have 86 contractual arrangements for non-commercial bus services and contribute to the cost of 5 cross-boundary bus services. Together they spend £10.7 million per annum in financial support for local bus services.

Table xx - LTA support for non-commercial bus services in the BSIP area in 2021-22

	Core funding	Devolved BSOG*	Developer contributions	Total
West of England CA	£8,033,026	£1,135,938	£810,340	£9,979,304
North Somerset Council	£613,847	£68,153	-	£682,000
TOTAL	£8,646,873	1,204,091	£810,340	£10,661,304

* - Devolved Bus Service Operators' Grant - more correctly called Local Authority Bus Subsidy Ring-Fenced (Revenue) Grant

A full list of the routes and route mileage supported is in Appendix 2.

Other factors that affect the use of local bus services

Parking provision

The introduction of Residents' Parking Schemes in Bath and Bristol in previous years has been one of the factors in the growth in bus passenger numbers.

Parking provision is split between public and private ownership, with most large, public car parks being located in Bath and Bristol city centres and Weston-super-Mare town centre. Charges are set to deter long-stay parking whilst still providing short-stay parking for shoppers and visitors.

In Bath city centre, there are 3,200 off-street public parking spaces - of which 2,200 are in local authority control - as well as 8,000 on-street spaces managed as Residents' Parking Zones (RPZs). In Bristol city centre, there are 9,000 off-street public parking spaces - of which 2,100 are in local authority control. In Weston-super-Mare, there are 4,500 off-street public parking spaces - of which around 3,000 are in local authority control.

All day parking in a public car park in Bath city centre is priced from £15, in Bristol city centre from £13.50 and in Weston-super-Mare town centre from £12.00 to deter all day parking by commuters.

Areas away from the major urban centres have greater private parking provision, which is less likely to feature charges to park. In particular, the Bristol North Fringe has 30,000 spaces provided by employers as well as significant retail parking provision including 7,000 spaces at The Mall regional shopping centre at Cribbs Causeway.

In small towns such as Portishead, Nailsea and Yate, free parking is provided for supermarket and other shopping for two or three hours.

The first RPZ in North Somerset is being introduced in Leigh Woods to complement the Clifton RPZ that was introduced in Bristol. Various location across Weston-super-Mare have been explored and the first schemes should be bought forward in the coming years. South Gloucestershire accommodates around 2,000 RPZ spaces.

Table xx: Annual spend on parking enforcement 2019-20

Bath & North East Somerset	??
Bristol	£6.5
North Somerset	£0.6
South Gloucestershire	£1.4
TOTAL	??

Bristol City Council issues between 50,000 and 60,000 PCNs for bus lane infringements per annum. South Gloucestershire issues around 23,000 PCNs for parking infringements per year, both by officer and via CCTV enforcement.

Bus lanes

All recent major public transport schemes in the West of England have included an increase in the number of bus lanes and other bus priority measures.

Table xx - Bus lane mileage in the BSIP area

	Bus Lane Mileage
Bath & North East Somerset	2.36
Bristol	21.19
North Somerset	2.43
South Gloucestershire	8.05
TOTAL	34.03

There is a funded programme in place already to increase the total bus lane mileage substantially and our BSIP includes an ambitious programme to take that further.

Views of passengers and stakeholders

Extensive public consultation was carried out on the West of England Bus Strategy in February/March 2020 and nearly 2,000 responses were received. The full consultation report is published at <https://travelwest.info/app/uploads/2020/02/Bus-Strategy-Consultation-Report.pdf>.

Respondents were asked to rank the key themes in the order of priority. The top six were:

1. A well-designed network that is simple, coherent and efficient across the region;
2. Giving passengers more reliable and faster buses through priority infrastructure and wider policy;

3. Modern, clean and accessible buses that contribute to reducing transport's harmful emissions;
4. High quality, consistent and easily-understood information;
5. Simple, smart and convenient ticketing; and
6. Better services for people in rural areas.

More recently, passenger groups, MPs and the business sector were invited to give their views on the merits and demerits of the local bus network as part of the development of the BSIP. This exercise was carried out in July / August 2021 and 55 responses were received. A full summary of the feedback is in Appendix 3 but five priorities for improvement were identified by more than two-thirds of respondents:

- Improved punctuality;
- Cheaper fares;
- Better waiting facilities;
- More frequent services; and
- More public consultation on changes.

Transport Focus published "*Bus passengers' priorities for improvement*" in September 2020. They asked 5,000 bus users and 1,700 non-users across England (outside London) to give their priorities. The full document is available at https://d3cez36w5wymxj.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/09095433/TF-Bus-passenger-priorities-Sept_20-WEB.pdf

The top five priorities for bus users were:

1. Buses running more often than they do now;
2. Buses going to more places you want them to;
3. More buses arriving on time at your bus stop;
4. Better value for money from bus journeys;
5. More journeys on buses running to time.

The top five priorities for non-bus users were:

1. Buses going to more places people want them to;
2. Buses running more often than they do now;
3. Better value for money from bus journeys;
4. Bus stops closer to home/destination
5. More bus services running on time;

The National Highways and Transport annual survey gives the perceptions of residents on a range of issues, including bus punctuality and reliability, the state of bus stops and the frequency of services. The results in 2020 show that many people in our villages and rural areas are disappointed with the frequency of bus service. The minimum service standards we propose in the BSIP will address this issue. The level of dissatisfaction with bus stops is unacceptably high too, so we aim to invest in every bus stop in our area.

The Chew Valley Area Forum Climate & Nature Emergency Working Group carried out a survey of local residents on public transport provision in early 2021 and it concluded that people would be more willing to travel by bus if there were a cross-valley bus service

connecting the villages with inter-urban bus services on the A37 to the east and the A38 to the west, coupled with an app-based planning, booking and tracking service.

Future demand for bus services

In June / July 2021, the West of England CA commissioned independent research on two major sources of travel - to work and to shopping - to gather evidence on what businesses were expecting and planning. A representative range of employers across the region were asked about their intentions in bringing workers back to workplaces. Also, we sought to understand expectations among retail businesses - including the food and drink sector - for recovery in footfall. Responses were given by 129 retailers and 650 other businesses.

Employers reported that levels of attendance at the time of the survey were around 60% of pre-Covid levels. They expected this to rise to 85% within three months, but to remain 10-15% below pre-Covid levels after 12 months.

Many of the reasons cited for lower attendance were inherently temporary, including furlough and reduced capacity due to social distancing, which bolstered their confidence that a relatively swift recovery could be expected.

More home working will be a significant factor affecting long-term commuting levels. 11% of respondent employers were considering permanent, full time home working, and a further 24% were considering partial home working. This seems likely to weigh down on commuting levels over the next year.

Currently, office lettings remain subdued, but vacancies are considerably lower than the last peak in 2012, indicating that confidence remains in the office market.

Evidence from the retail sector also points to a relatively fast recovery. Retail and food and drink respondents were optimistic - 65% expected that footfall would reach pre-Covid levels or higher by January 2022. Furthermore, 78% expected the same or higher footfall by July 2022. Retailers themselves projected a more optimistic view than representatives of shopping centres.

In summary, the research suggested that travel volumes might recover strongly in the autumn, stabilising at roughly 10% lower than before the pandemic, owing to shifts to home working and in retail patterns.

Over the next two or three years, however, the consequences are less clear, because freed-up offices may allow new or expanding businesses to occupy the same space, bringing workers back to city centres. These adjustments will take time to emerge, as businesses form plans and await tenancy breaks.

Caution should be used in interpreting these results, and the greater risk is that demand will be lower than that it is higher. Many factors influence the expectations of businesses. Workers may be reluctant to return to commuting, and may be able to exert influence in a tight labour market. Also, the optimism of retailers may not be reflected in the behaviour of consumers who are now used to shopping online.

Section 3 - Headline targets

General approach

To assess delivery of the BSIP, we are setting targets for four measures:

- (i) Customer satisfaction
- (ii) Journey time
- (iii) Passenger journeys
- (iv) Punctuality
- (v) Transition to a zero-emission vehicle fleet

Each target will be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely (SMART) and set for 2025 and 2030. Progress will be reported every 6 months, starting in April 2022.

Our targets are ambitious and directly linked to our BSIP measures to reduce car dependency and carbon emissions by promoting bus use. They build on our strong track record for successful delivery of major transport schemes.

Wherever possible, targets will be set for four geographical areas:

- (i) the whole BSIP area
- (ii) Bath urban area
- (iii) Bristol urban area
- (iv) Weston-super-Mare

Journey time

Working with bus operators, we will create a representative sample of bus journey times for each area, taken from the registered timetables. The sample will be checked every six months to report on any changes to journey times.

Prior to the pandemic, the average bus speed across the West of England remained around 8 mph during peak periods, despite the delivery of substantial bus priority measures over the previous two decades.

The proposals submitted in the CRSTS bid for the strategic corridors will ensure that buses have an advantage over private cars where road space is limited, and our initiatives on fares and ticketing will speed up boarding times.

Our headline target is to reduce average bus journey times on the designated corridors by 20% by 2030.

The West of England is at a key point in England's Strategic Route Network. Incidents on the M4 and M5 can lead to major disruption in Bristol city centre and on its radial routes, having a disproportionate impact on bus services. We will work with National Highways to improve the monitoring of the motorway network across the area and their diversion arrangements.

Punctuality

Punctuality is defined as percentage of buses running no more than one minute early or six minutes late at the start of their journey and at intermediate points. On frequent services, it is the excess waiting time. A frequent service is defined as one with at least 6 buses per hour operating at maximum intervals of 15 minutes between any two departures.

As now, punctuality will be measured by schedule adherence reports from our real-time information system, which covers roughly 90% of bus operating mileage in the area and which will be expanded to cover 100% of mileage. The West of England CA and North Somerset Council will continue to report separate figures for their own areas to the Department for Transport, for National Indicator 178.

In 2019, 80% of bus journeys started on time. Our target is to increase this to 95% by 2030, facilitated by bus lane infrastructure and improved enforcement.

We do not measure punctuality at intermediate timing points currently, but we propose to do so to monitor progress of the BSIP. Our target is that 90% of buses will be on time (within the parameters above) at intermediate timing points by 2030.

Our target for excess waiting time will be 5 minutes by 2030.

A higher level of punctuality will reduce the need for recovery time in schedules and thus ease the pressure for space at terminals and city centre bus stops.

Single passenger journeys

As now, data to be supplied by bus operators, counting the number of passenger boardings within the relevant area, as recorded on electronic ticket machines. We will work with operators to create a representative sample for each of the reporting areas.

The West of England Bus Strategy includes a target to double bus passenger numbers by 2036 from a 2011 baseline. This target was based on trip forecasts arising from the West of England Joint Transport Study (October 2017), and prior to the onset of coronavirus we were on track to meet that target, amounting to 106 million single bus passenger journeys in 2036-37.

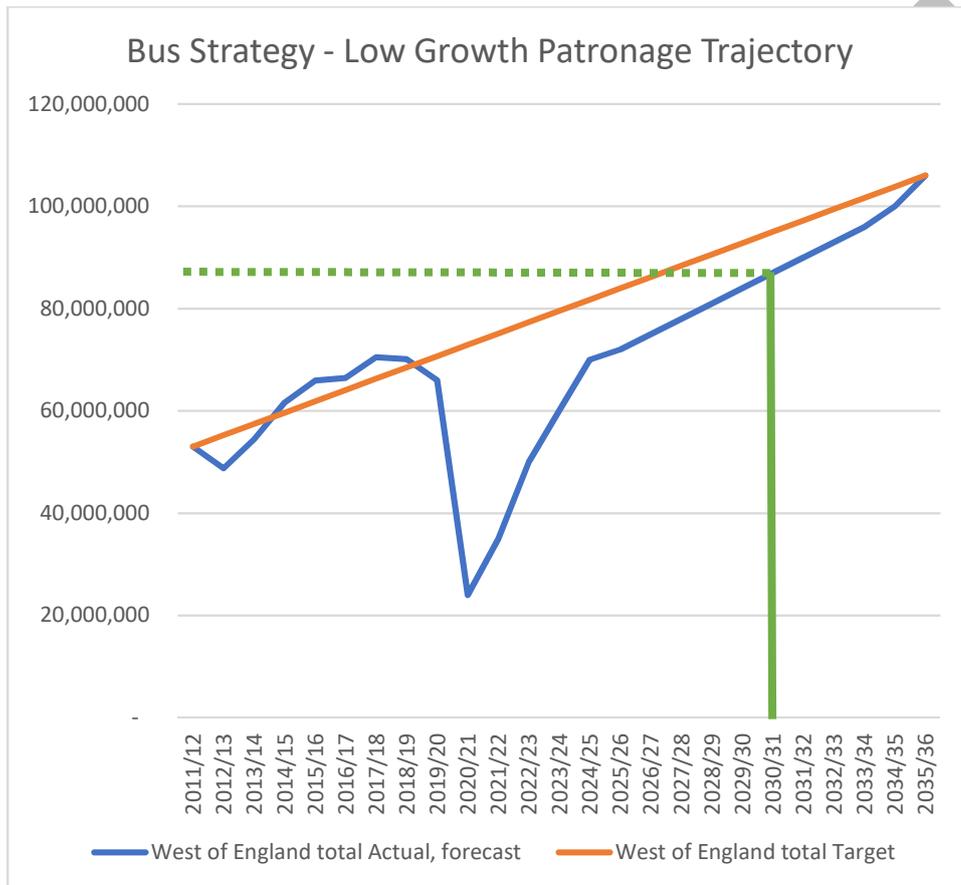
In line with the principles of the National Bus Strategy, our first priority will be to recover passenger numbers to pre-Covid levels. The lockdown is likely to have had a lasting impact on travel behaviour. There is anecdotal evidence of a growth in car dependency during the lockdown period, embedding a homeworking trend and a sustained reluctance on the part of some passengers to return to using the bus use.

We propose to set low and high growth scenarios for our single passenger journeys target, in recognition of the uncertainties faced by the bus market at present and in the absence of a confirmed level of funding from Government to deliver the BSIP. Both scenarios envisage passenger numbers returning to pre-Covid levels (70 million per year) by 2025. Further growth up to 2030 will be achieved by implementation of our BSIP, including an ambitious bus priority programme, enhanced bus service levels on a redesigned

interchange-based network, fares reductions and simplified ticketing, more extensive information and complementary policy-based interventions.

Low Growth Scenario

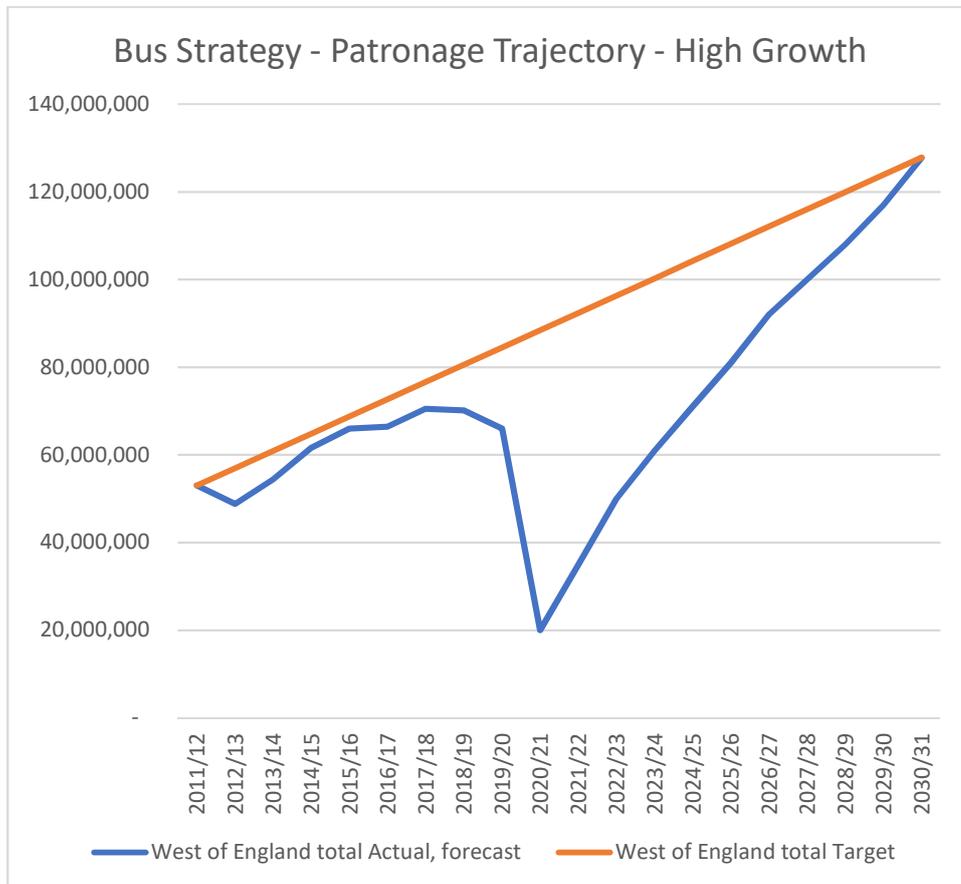
This envisages meeting the West of England Bus Strategy target by 2036 through accelerated growth in passenger numbers following a return to pre-Covid levels by 2025. To double baseline passenger trips by 2036, the 2030 target will therefore be 84 million passenger trips.



High Growth Scenario

The high growth scenario is linked to our aim for a carbon-neutral transport network by 2030. This envisages a halving in mode share for car-based commuting to around 30% by 2030 compared to 2011. This includes exceeding our pre-lockdown level by 2025-26 (81 million trips) and rapid bus passenger growth to 128 million by 2030-31. Such a level of growth will be dependent on the delivery of further policy interventions to reduce car dependency, which will be set out in our next Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP5). These are likely to include further restraint measures on car use including fiscal restraint, further parking restrictions and prioritisation of core corridors for movement of public transport, walking and cycling. Significant increases in mode share across all sustainable

transport choices will be required (particularly for longer trips) and the reshaped bus network will have a key role to play in meeting this ambitious goal.



Passenger satisfaction

Data to be supplied from the annual Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) carried out by Transport Focus. We will seek advice from Transport Focus on the best method of obtaining additional survey data to enable us to report on progress every six months.

The most recent BPS (in 2019) confirmed that 86% of bus passengers in the West of England were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” overall, compared to an average of 89% across England (outside London). Our targets are 89% for 2025 and 95% for 2030 in recognition of the impact of the BSIP measures.

In addition to the BPS, we will monitor other surveys of bus users and non-users, including the NHT survey.

Section 4 - Delivery

Our high-level objectives

The LTAs and local bus operators agreed on seven high-level objectives for our BSIP - based on the aims and vision in the National Bus Strategy, the vision and objectives in the adopted West of England Bus Strategy, research by Transport Focus on passengers' needs and expectations, and the guidance on Bus Service Improvement Plans. Those objectives and their attributes (the features that our ideal network would have) are listed below.

We propose to bid for funding to achieve these high standards - although delivery will be contingent on the amount of funding awarded. Our strong track record of delivery makes us confident that, by working in partnership and with sufficient funding, we can deliver a local bus network by 2030 that has all the attributes listed below, meeting our objectives and fully aligned with the aims and vision in the National Bus Strategy.

Objective 1 - High mode share for buses of overall travel market

- Good access to bus services from all parts of the area
- Good access from bus network to passenger destinations
- Positive contribution to decarbonisation plans and air quality improvements
- Positive contribution to sustainable housing and employment growth
- Declining need for subsidy as market grows organically
- Ambitious targets and trajectory for modal share and bus patronage
- Robust civil enforcement of moving traffic offences, parking and traffic restrictions
- Extensive bus priorities - particularly on main urban routes - as continuous as possible and part of a whole-corridor approach
- Good co-ordination of road works

Objective 2 - High quality bus service

- Cohesive, comprehensive and simple route network including co-ordinated radial and orbital services in the Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare urban areas with easy interchange between them
- Standard all-day routes with evening and weekend services on urban and inter-urban routes
- Turn-up-and-go daytime frequencies and evening frequencies of at least 4 buses per hour on core urban routes (including orbital routes)
- Good frequencies on principal inter-urban corridors and in smaller urban areas
- 24/7 services - where appropriate - on core urban and principal inter-urban corridors
- Feeder services to interchange hubs to boost the frequency of connections from places away from main roads, connecting to the core bus routes with integrated ticketing
- Demand-responsive services to low-density areas where appropriate - possibly operated by community transport providers
- Basic minimum standard of accessibility to network from rural areas
- High standard of punctuality
- As far as possible, journey times comparable to or better than car travel
- Sufficient capacity to meet demand
- Provision of service to new developments at early stage, funded by developer contributions
- Regular service reviews but no more than two major change dates per year
- Good links to rail services, with buses connecting with first and last trains where appropriate

- Consistent, clear and distinctive branding for the whole public transport network, incorporating any strong local or route-specific brands
- Unique service numbers within the network (apart from urban services in Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare) with no suffixes

Objective 3 - High quality waiting environment

- Bus stops, bus stations and interchanges to be accessible, safe and inclusive by design with good facilities
- High quality, branded interchanges at key locations, including rail stations
- Branded, distinctive shelters at all stops wherever practical (except alighting points) with high standard of cleanliness and maintenance
- Defined, paved waiting areas at urban stops and hardstandings at rural stops with cycle parking where possible
- Good pedestrian accessibility to adjacent residential areas and passenger destinations
Bus stations protected from closure and redevelopment

Objective 4 - High vehicle standards

- Progression to zero emissions through bids for Government funding when available, and Euro VI emission standard in the meantime
- High levels of cleanliness, comfort and security for passengers
- Full accessibility with ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to the wheelchair space
- Dual-door vehicles on core urban corridors
- High level of mechanical reliability
- Audible and visible “Next stop” information
- WIFI and charging as standard
- All vehicles equipped with tap on /tap off readers

Objective 5 - High level of passenger satisfaction

- Bus Passenger Charter to set out what standards passengers can expect, including punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, accessibility, proportion of services operated and redress
- Public consultation on route and network changes
- One customer service contact point for whole network
- Measurement of passenger satisfaction to include value for money and provision of information
- Targets for punctuality and journey times

Objective 6 - High quality information

- Bus Information Strategy adopted and implemented
- Consistent, distinctive and readily-identifiable branding for the whole public transport network on all media
- Easy access to information via Travelwest website and app, including times, accessibility information, fares and live running
- Roadside timetable posters at all stops except alighting points
- Roadside displays in rural areas to show return bus times and basic fares information
- Timetable leaflets and comprehensive area booklets for whole network
- Printed and interactive maps for whole network and town/city plans for urban areas
- Maps at interchange stops and local centres, showing pedestrian routes and road crossing points to destinations
- Fares information - including multi-operator tickets - on Traveline
- Real-time information system to cover all operators’ services

- Targeted information on route and network changes
- Consistent naming of bus stops and interchanges
- Bus stops in urban areas to carry route number tiles
- Easy access to comprehensive information via website and app, covering all operators, including times, accessibility information, fares and live running;
- Full information on local bus services in railway stations
- Heavy promotion and marketing, including bus links to rail services and scenic routes
- Introductory offers to promote the network to non-users
- Continuous marketing and promotion of network and multi-operator tickets

Objective 7 - Low fares, simple ticketing and easy means of payment

- Low flat fares in Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and other urban areas
- Lower point-to-point graduated fares outside urban areas
- Multi-operator ticketing as the norm - branded as part of the network branding
- Daily and weekly capping using tap on /tap off readers
- All operators equipped to take contactless payment, EMV ticketing and m-ticketing
- Contactless payment to be the norm but cash retained for the time being
- Integration of multi-operator bus ticket and multi-modal ticket into one family of tickets
- Simplified range of tickets but more flexible ticketing for part-time commuters
- Harmonisation of ticket zones, ticket types and conditions
- Reduction in fares for young people and standard discounts for children and students

Investment in public transport, cycling and walking will deliver immediate benefits to residents and visitors by making it easier to travel in and around the region:

- Bus services will be quicker, more reliable, and more frequent;
- Bus fares will be cheaper and ticketing will be simpler;
- Bus operators will no longer have to shoulder the costs of traffic congestion;
- Cycling and walking will be safer, more convenient, and more pleasant.

Our Joint Local Transport Plan 4 set out the wider benefits to the local economy of a good public transport system.

CONSIDER SUMMARY TABLE HERE

To develop our BSIP, we divided the work into seven areas: services, vehicles, infrastructure, information & brand, policy, fares & ticketing, and customer service. Each of those areas is covered in turn below, with detailed policies and proposals. It should be noted that they are complementary and will all work together to enable us to achieve our objectives.

We have identified some “quick wins” which can be delivered by 2025, and these are highlighted.

4A Services

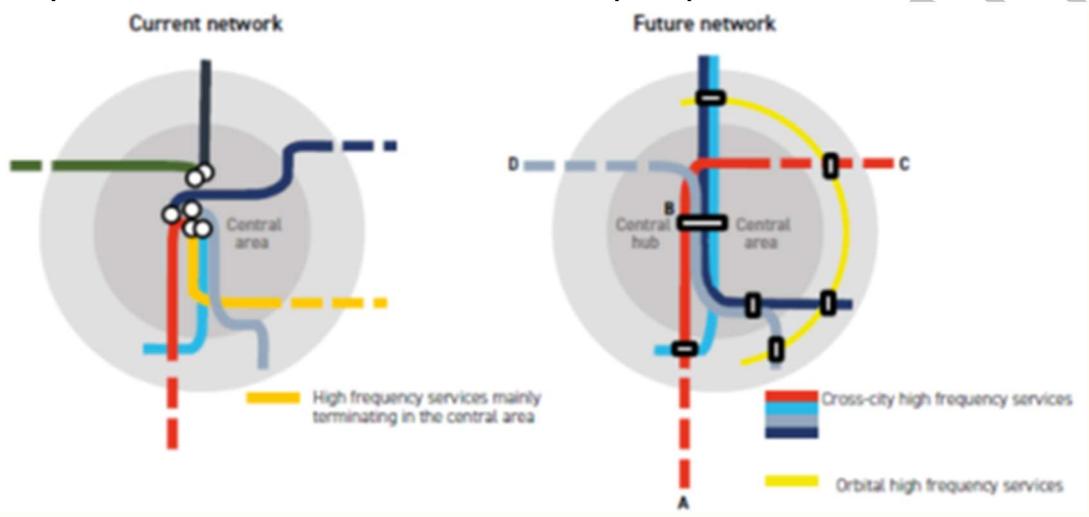
Intensive services and investment on key corridors, with routes that are easier to understand; more demand-responsive services and “socially necessary” transport

Future Bus Route Network

The West of England Bus Strategy looked closely at the effectiveness of the local bus network. It recommended the development of network that featured a fewer number of services overall but at higher frequencies.

In the principal urban areas, cross-centre radial services would connect with orbital service at key interchange points and transport hubs. Outside the principal urban areas, interchange hubs would be located on the inter-urban corridors, and rural bus services or local demand-responsive transport services would feed into those hubs to connect onto the inter-urban routes.

Example of current and future bus route network principles in central areas



Source: West of England Bus Strategy

More recently, the West of England CA and North Somerset Council have worked with local bus operators to review the current network - both commercial and supported - and identify gaps and opportunities.

Network design

Most bus services will fall into one of these broad categories:

- Radial routes in urban areas and conurbations (including Park & Ride)
- Orbital routes in conurbations
- Inter-conurbation and inter-urban routes
- Community bus routes (operated under Section 22 permits)
- Rural routes and demand-responsive transport linking to Transport Hubs and other interchanges

We will ensure that all services link to key locations such as:

- Transport Hubs (including Park & Ride sites)
- Rail stations
- Major hospitals
- Other health facilities
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Supermarkets and local shopping areas
- Leisure facilities
- Bristol Airport

There will be some bus services that fall outside these categories, such as school services (see below), tour bus services and limited-stop services.

Public transport links between origin and destination will be provided by a combination of direct services and other services that connect at Transport Hubs and other interchanges. Our aim is to ensure that the majority of journeys can be undertaken by public transport with no more than one change.

Direct bus travel to key facilities like general hospitals will be possible from more places through the principle of linking urban radial routes to form cross-city routes.

We will establish and adopt a standard of access to the bus network - such as walking distance to the nearest bus stop - and set targets to improve it in our BSIP when we review it in 2022.

Local bus operators are generally supportive of our approach, but they have stressed the need to ensure that the interchange is seamless and passengers are not disadvantaged by changing buses. Also, operators have highlighted the current (September 2021) driver shortages that are facing the bus industry nationally. Clearly, there will be a need for more driver resources to implement higher bus service frequencies arising from the BSIP and the prevailing national situation will have a bearing on delivery.

Minimum frequencies

We propose a minimum of 12 buses per hour (bph) on principal radial corridors and a minimum of 4 bph on inter-urban routes. This would be achieved by adopting a principle of frequency appropriate to the population of each area (based on most recent published census results or estimates), as follows:

- Conurbations - population over 70,000:
 - Radial routes (cross-centre) - minimum provision of 6 bph
 - Orbital routes - minimum provision of 4 bph
 - Inter-conurbation routes - minimum provision of 4 bph
- Large urban areas - population over 20,000 but under 70,000:
 - Radial routes - minimum provision of 4 bph
 - Inter urban routes: Minimum provision of 4 bph
- Small urban areas - population over 10,000 but under 20,000:
Minimum provision of 3 bph
- Large rural areas - population over 3,000 but under 10,000:
Minimum provision of 2 bph
- Medium rural areas - population over 500 but under 3,000:
Minimum provision of 1 bph
- Small rural areas - population under 500:
Provision of demand-responsive transport to Transport Hubs

Minimum provision will apply from 0700 to 1900 on Mondays to Saturdays. 50% of minimum provision will apply from 0600 to 0700 and from 1900 to 2400 on Mondays to Saturdays, and all day on Sundays and most Public Holidays.

Higher frequencies will apply where appropriate, for example to leisure attractions on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Currently, 18% of bus services in the BSIP area meet the proposed frequencies - predominately in the urban areas. Full implementation of the network design principles will increase the number of residents living within 400 metres walking distance of a bus stop from 560,000 to 721,340 (a 29% increase)

Transport to school

As part of the network review, we want to ensure provision of bus services which young people can use to get to schools, colleges and universities. This will build their confidence in using the bus network, to make it more likely that they will use bus services for leisure travel at other times and become habitual bus users. There are challenges, however.

Local education authorities have a duty to provide free home-to-school transport (HTST) for young people who live more than a specified distance from the “nearest suitable school” or who live in a low-income household. This duty is met either by provision of specific transport or by buying places on public bus services for those entitled.

The majority of school bus services for young people not entitled to HTST rely on financial support from LTAs, because the operating costs are not fully covered by the revenue from discounted fares for young people. Furthermore, parental choice of school has broadened the catchment areas of schools, leading to a dispersal of demand for travel.

Wherever possible, we will meet demand for travel to education establishments through the mainstream bus network - as re-designed using the principles outlined above.

North Somerset Council has a policy on provision of school bus services already, but the West of England Combined Authority has inherited different policies and there is a need to adopt a consistent approach.

The West of England Combined Authority will carry out a review of transport to school for young people who do not qualify for free home-to-school transport and complete it by January 2022. The review will make recommendations on a consistent policy for funding school bus services.

Bus Depots

To meet the proposed minimum frequencies, more vehicle resource will be needed and it will need to be garaged somewhere. At present, depot space within the region is at a premium, creating a barrier for new operators to come into the area. When it becomes clear what level of additional provision we will be able to deliver through the BSIP, we will work with local bus operators and planning authorities to review bus depot capacity and look for ways to address the problem.

Opportunities for growth

As part of the work on reviewing the bus route network and re-designing it in accordance with the principles outlined above, we will look at opportunities to serve new and

proposed housing and employment areas - especially those where developer contributions are available to pump-prime bus services.

Some examples are:

- Bath Riverside
- Charlton Hayes (South Gloucestershire)
- Ensleigh (Bath)
- Filwood Park (Bristol)
- Patchway New Neighbourhood (South Gloucestershire)
- Somer Valley Enterprise Zone
- South West Keynsham

The extension to our metrobus BRT network that is already under construction will link Patchway New Neighbourhood with Cribbs Causeway retail and leisure complexes, Bristol Parkway Station, University of the West of England, Bristol city centre and South Bristol.

We will consider higher service levels to leisure facilities in non-working hours. Leisure travel by bus has recovered strongly from the impact of the pandemic and is likely to form a greater proportion of overall bus travel in future, owing to changes in lifestyles.

Three-quarters of the BSIP area is rural, and residents of those areas have faced a spiral of decline in bus service levels since the 1960s. Very few rural bus services are viable commercial operations, so they are heavily reliant on financial support from the LTA. The dispersed pattern of population means that rural bus routes tend to be long and circuitous - in order to serve as many communities as possible - leading to unattractive journey times and infrequent services.

Cost of operating proposed bus network

As part of our review of the bus network we have worked with consultants to help estimate the operational costs of a fully-implemented network designed on the principles outlined above.

Our estimate is based on the following assumptions:

Net annual cost of operating 1 bus from 0700 to 1900 on Mondays to Saturdays: £150k

Net annual cost of operating 1 bus from 0700 to 2400 on Mondays to Saturdays: £200k

Net annual cost of operating 1 bus on Sunday & Public Holidays: £100k

We estimate that the net annual cost of operating the full network will be: **£xm**

X number of services to be operated on a commercial basis

X number of services to require funding on a short-term basis to make them commercially viable in the long-term: **£xm** per annum

X number of services to be fully supported by the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council: **£xm** per annum

4B Vehicles

Modern buses and decarbonisation

Quick Wins

- All vehicles to have Audio Visual technology to provide Next Stop information by April 2023 (subject to funding)
- Consultation with bus users and stakeholders on future vehicle design through the EP Advisory Board from April 2022 onwards
- All local buses to meet Euro VI emission standard by April 2023
- Installation of up to 20 ultra-fast EV rapid chargers at key interchanges, Park & Ride sites and layover points during 2023-24
- Collaboration with all local operators to develop a plan to reach our 2030 target for a zero-emission fleet, to be completed by April 2023

Introduction

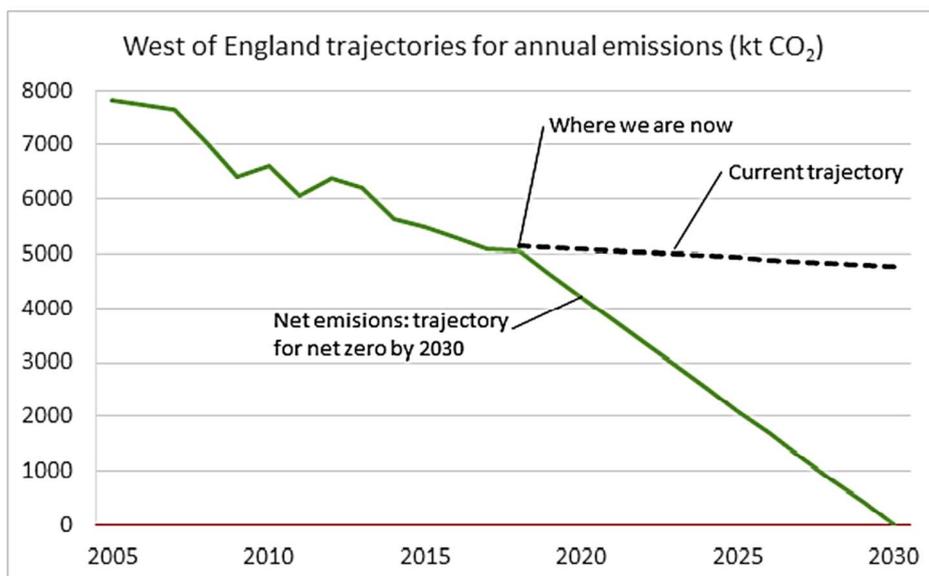
The West of England welcomes the level of ambition for consistently high standards of passenger friendly Ultra Low emission Buses (ULEB) set out in the National Bus Strategy, and our consultation with users and operators reflects the importance of the bus itself with the environmental impact being the 4th highest priority issue.

To meet our BSIP objectives, we propose:

- High levels of cleanliness, comfort and security for passengers;
- Full accessibility with ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to wheelchair space;
- More capacity to carry bikes where demand is identified;
- Audible and visible information in addition to mobile charging;
- Consideration to the type of and design of vehicles for each corridor - to ensure efficient and effective boarding and alighting to reduce dwell and overall journey times
- An Ultra-Low or Zero Emission Bus fleet with a 50% reduction in the level of net WtW emissions by 2030.

This will be a considerable challenge that will take significant investment, co-operation and meticulous planning over the next decade to ensure that the buses remain cost effective and efficient, whilst ensuring people keep their faith in low emission technology and its pivotal role in tackling climate change and improving public health.

The West of England Combined Authority, its constituent councils, and North Somerset Council have all declared a climate emergency and pledged to reduce emissions to net zero carbon by 2030. The consequences are illustrated in this table:



To meet our carbon reduction goal by 2030, emissions must fall by 18% every year.

Transition to a zero-emission fleet

One third of the local bus fleet is due for imminent replacement and this offers the opportunity to introduce the first ULEBs in the next five years, complementing the biomethane and hybrid vehicles already operating.

Two of bus rapid transit services (metrobus) have an entirely biomethane fleet significantly reducing the WtW carbon emissions. The fuel is produced locally at a waste anaerobic digestion plant in Avonmouth.

The two largest local operators - First Bus and Stagecoach - have already made commitments to convert their entire fleets (comprising 546 and 63 vehicles respectively) to zero-emission vehicles by 2035. Our target is to bring that date forward to 2030 and to cover all local operators. Two-thirds of local operators agree that progression to a green fleet is a high priority.

Much of the recent investment in the local bus fleet has been driven by the need to make rapid improvements to air quality - most notably the city centres of Bath and Bristol. A Clean Air Zone (CAZ) came into effect in Bath in March 2021 and one is in development for Bristol - with a target date of Summer 2022. Both CAZs set a minimum requirement of Euro VI emission standard for buses.

We have a good track record of working with bus operators to support trials of emerging technologies (such as hybrids on Bath Park & Ride and geo-fenced EV hybrids in Bristol), but there are no non-hybrid, zero emission at tailpipe vehicles operating in the area at present. The reasons given by operators are:

- (i) the difficult operating terrain
- (ii) the limited range of alternative fuels
- (iii) restrictions on the depot space for the necessary infrastructure.

Recent developments in these areas have opened up the possibility of EV or hydrogen to power the fleet in the future.

By April 2023, we will collaborate with operators to produce a plan that will form part of a future update of the BSIP to set out a road to Ultra Low Emission Buses by 2030. It will set out the WtW carbon impact of the current fleet and project future trends. Targets will be added to our BSIP targets and progress will be reported every 6 months. We will bid for £150k to develop proposals and engage industry expertise as needed.

We will seek commitments from operators in our EP on transition of bus fleets to ULEB to achieve our target of halving WtW carbon emissions by 2030. The estimated cost will be £350 million at current market prices for EV buses and approximate costs for the depot infrastructure. This assumes a full fleet cycle over the next two decades, reflecting a normal bus service life of twenty years.

In collaboration with operators, we propose to pilot EV vehicles on two or more key corridors during 2022-23, using a range of demonstration vehicles.

We propose to establish a local Zebra scheme to offset the cost of buying and deploying up to 100 Ultra Low Emission Buses, compared to the equivalent Euro VI diesel by 2026. This project is scalable and subject to funding. The aim is to deploy 75 double-deck vehicles and 25 single-deck. Both hydrogen and electric would be explored as part of this proposal, and it would form part of the decarbonisation plan we propose to agree with operators. The anticipated costs are up to £160k contribution towards each vehicle and up to £50k towards the infrastructure to support them. The total funding needed is £21 million.

We propose to install up to 20 Ultra-fast 500 amp EV charge points for buses at key interchanges, Park & Ride sites and layover points - subject to site surveys and funding. This will be an ambitious project - but necessary for our area because the local topography will place high demands on full EV buses. The ability to rapid charge during layovers will unlock the potential of the vehicles and reduce the overall fleet size required. The common standard to be installed is a minimum of 150 amp chargers up to dual 500 amp ultra-chargers. These will be targeted to major interchanges and high frequency corridors during 2023-24 to create our first Ultra Low Emission Bus corridors, and the introduction of up to 100 ULEBs by 2026. The funding required to deliver this will be £2 million.

To achieve emissions reductions in the medium term, we want to get all local buses up to Euro VI or equivalent by retrofitting. There may be specific exemptions if appropriate. Our target date is April 2023. The cost of a retrofit is roughly £20,100 per vehicle and some work is in progress already to meet the requirements of the Bristol CAZ. We will carry out a fleet review with all operators to any additional vehicles that require retrofitting.

The total estimated cost is **TBC**

Accessible and high-quality vehicles

Locally, our metrobus network has set a benchmark for vehicle quality that we aim to develop through our BSIP. Currently, metrobus vehicles represent roughly 20% of the local fleet.

The metrobus vehicle specification includes dual doors to improve passenger flow and reduce bus stop dwell times, spacious entrances, low floors, wide corridors, more leg

room, audio and visual information and USB charging ports. We recognise that the operation of dual-door vehicles is only suitable for high-intensity urban routes and may require changes to the layout of some bus stops.

We will agree minimum standards for cleaning of vehicles and include commitments by operators to those standards in our EP, to take effect from April 2022.

We will look for opportunities to trial the carriage of bicycles on suitably-equipped buses in rural areas.

metrobus vehicles – interior view (left) and exterior view using a guideway (right)



Audio / Visual information and WiFi

We see this as a potential quick win. Currently, 30% of the local bus fleet is equipped to give audio-visual (AV) information. We want to equip all operator's vehicles to provide audio-visual Next Stop information. Subject to the award of funding, 90% of buses could be fitted by October 2022 and 100% by October 2023 at an estimated cost of £1,786.044 (including installation and initial programming).

All permanent new or replacement vehicles on operating on local bus services will be fitted with AV equipment prior to entering service. We will seek this commitment from operators in the EP from April 2022.

4C Infrastructure

A significant increase in bus priority; interchanges; service patterns integrated with other modes

Corridor Programme

Working with bus operators, we have identified routes and corridors where journey speeds and punctuality are poor. We have developed a programme to address the problems and give priority to buses and sustainable transport modes in the allocation of road space. The corridors are based on the main bus corridors and Key Route Network. Project delivery has

been split into three phases and work has started using local funding for scheme development.

We have categorised corridors into three types:

City Corridors:

- Bristol City Centre - changes to create priority access for the routes set out below
- A4 Portway - expansion of existing Park & Ride site to incorporate links to the new rail station and change to a Transport Hub
- A370 - improved connections to the existing Long Ashton Park & Ride site and along Cumberland Road
- M32 - new Transport Hub and changes to the corridor
- A4 Bristol to Bath - segregated route between our two main cities with a new Transport Hub at Hicks Gate
- Bath City Centre - changes to create better access for all routes, especially the A4.

There are opportunities for quick delivery through large infrastructure changes on key corridors connecting to a ring of Transport Hubs on the urban fringe. This will include changes to central Bath and Bristol and full separation or prioritisation for buses.

Town Corridors:

- A38 - connections from Thornbury to the Bristol North Fringe, Cribbs Causeway and M32
- A432 - connections from Yate to the M32
- A37 / A367 - improving access from the Somer Valley area into Bath and Bristol
- A37 / A4018 ensuring good connections between central Bristol and key residential, employment and retail developments in the south and north of the city
- A370 - direct connections from Weston-super-Mare to Long Ashton P&R site
- A38 - connections from Weston-super-Mare via Bristol Airport to a new Transport Hub in south west Bristol.
- A369 - connecting Portishead into Bristol
- A4174 - building on our metrobus scheme to provide improved orbital connections
- A420 - creating links to the east of Bristol
- A431 - connecting east Bristol to central Bath
- A4 - London Road (Bath) will provide improved connections between east of Bath and Wiltshire
- A36 - improved connections from west of Bath via the city centre into Wiltshire
- A432 to build on the work from Yate to complete the connection from the A4174 into central Bristol
- A38 - completing connections from central Bristol to the south and north
- Clevedon urban area - with a focus on bus stops and the waiting environment
- Nailsea and Backwell urban area - with a focus on connections to and between the two towns to the rail station
- Weston-super-Mare urban area - expansion of the newly completed Town Centre Public Transport Interchange
- Yatton High Street - to provide improved bus time journeys through the centre to provide a better connection between the A370 and Clevedon.

The overall aim is to provide as much full segregation / prioritisation on inter-urban corridors as possible, recognising that this is not always possible or required in smaller towns.

Rural & Suburban Corridors:

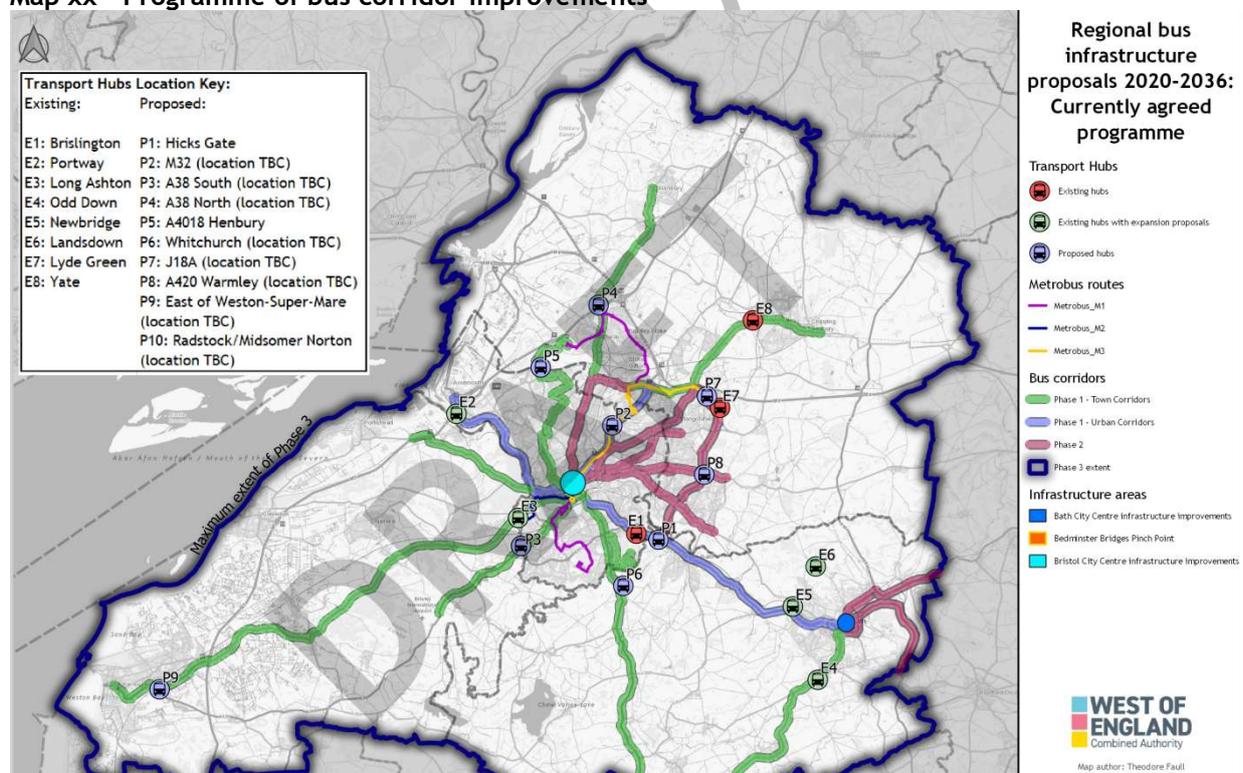
We will focus on connections into the key routes and ensure that all users benefit from access to the same level of service as those on the main corridors.

Across all the corridors, investment will be targeted to improve integration and connectivity between different modes, making interchange between radial and orbital corridors a realistic option. Our metrobus corridors will form the backbone of the overall network.

Measures on each corridor will be tailored to address the specific problems and normal engagement will take place with the community. The specific types of schemes being developed include:

- Delivery of bus infrastructure (including in rural and suburban areas), including bus gates, continuous bus lanes, real time information, improved bus stops, integrated ticketing and prioritised junctions;
- Improved walking and cycling, including segregation and quiet streets with junction changes to provide safer cycling;
- Transport Hubs to provide better interchange between bus services and different modes, including consideration of Park & Ride services;
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (or Liveable Neighbourhoods) to mitigate the impact of changes to the main corridors and provide safer walking and cycling routes to the main corridor.

Map xx - Programme of bus corridor improvements



Bus stop standards and Transport Hubs

We are currently reviewing our bus stop standards to ensure that we have a consistent standard of infrastructure across the region. This will include a standard approach to service information, accessibility and comfort. These stops will form a core part of the delivery of Transport Hubs.

We will consider the impact on biodiversity of any new infrastructure that we install. There are already good examples around the region where we have delivered such improvements as part of infrastructure schemes, including delivering enhanced biodiversity alongside sustainable urban drainage systems.

Transport Hubs

The bus network principles outlined in Section 4A rely on seamless, effective interchange facilities at Transport Hubs. The key locations will be at existing and proposed Park & Ride sites, although we will also deliver Transport Hubs on different scales at key interchange locations.

Our Transport Hubs will provide opportunities for first and last mile transport connections through micro-mobility options as well as other facilities to encourage mode shift away from the private car and ensure that interchange is pleasant and attractive - allowing for cafés, waiting areas etc where space permits. More reliable, frequent services mean that interchanging also becomes a realistic option for rural and feeder services.

We are working with the Future Transport Zone project to set up a scaleable model of how they can be delivered at key interchange locations to improve interchange between bus services, and also between different modes. The scale of the hubs will range from Park & Ride sites on the edge of urban areas to key junctions and other locations in urban areas.

Roadworks co-ordination

We propose to work with the highway authorities in our area to review the co-ordination of road works and provision of advance information on diversions to local bus operators, to get an agreed process and presentation of information in a common format.

We are working closely with the Unitary Authorities to provide a better aligned approach to the co-ordination of roadworks. This is required for the following reasons:

- Better and more timely advance information to ensure that bus operators can plan for diversions and disruption
- Working with contractors, highway authorities and bus operators to seek priority for buses through roadworks wherever possible
- Co-ordination of on-site works as part of infrastructure scheme development to minimise the impact on buses and other road users

Targets

Our SMART objectives prioritise sustainable transport, broad accessibility, and improved air quality. The objectives are a recognition that the region's success depends on ensuring everyone has equal access to safe, zero-carbon, high-quality transport. By 2030 we aim to:

- Deliver 100 additional miles of dedicated bus priority along our transport corridors.

- Make walking and cycling more attractive forms of travel, which includes building 100 miles of new segregated infrastructure linking to our priority corridors.
- Open four new Transport Hubs and upgrade three existing locations to make it easier to interchange between car, public transport, walking and cycling.

These measures will act to:

- Reduce car use by 25% with a 15% net reduction in private car journeys at peak times.
- Secure our region's future with a 30% gross reduction in transport carbon emissions by 2027, measured by the 2021 baseline, leading to a carbon net zero by 2030.
- Clean our air through an effective monitoring regime to measure the impact of existing Clean Air Zones and applying the necessary measures to ensure we make a difference.
- Achieve legal air quality across the region by 2025, measured by the requirements in EU Directive 2008/50/EC.

4D Information & brand

A single system that works together, with clear passenger information

To support our aim of presenting the bus network as one, simple and easy to use system, we will aim to improve the quality, accessibility and availability of information for bus passengers. We will also embark on a new approach to promoting bus travel as a mode of choice through a long-term marketing campaign, alongside the implementation of new measures to engage with passengers and give them a bigger say in how our network operates.

We believe that providing bus passenger information in a way that suits the customer needs will not only help passengers who currently use the bus, but will also help to attract new passengers, which in turn will increase the viability of services and help to grow the network.

Frequent service changes during the pandemic has highlighted the difficulties that an unstable network creates, including an inability to keep information up-to-date, confusion amongst passengers and a lack of confidence in services.

QUICK WINS:

Could be delivered in 2022-23:

- New Bus Information Strategy published
- New digital-connectivity display provided at every bus stop
- New brand identity for the local bus network, with materials pushed out to passengers, on-bus liveries, online and at local bus stops
- Launch of a new marketing campaign to get people back on to the bus
- New Travel Guides for the whole region, including town maps for key areas
- Bus Passenger Charter prepared and published

Bus Information Strategy

Early in 2022, a new Bus Information Strategy for the West of England will be adopted and published. Aligned with our BSIP, this will be a joint strategy between North Somerset Council and the West of England Combined Authority and will set out in detail our approach to delivering bus passenger information.

Change dates

Prior to the pandemic, we had a voluntary agreement with bus operators to limit service changes to fixed dates every year. We propose to enshrine that agreement in our EP and focus on two dates per year - in April and in late August/early September - for major changes. Other changes will be minimal - to align bus services with schools, universities and rail timetable changes, as necessary.

Roadside information

The information we currently provide at local bus stops largely comprises a mix of timetable displays, summary route information, contact details and real-time information through our regional RTI system.

Information is not currently provided at all stops and the feedback from passengers in our recent public consultation is that information is important, particularly real-time information. We will therefore seek to ensure that every single bus stop within the region has an information point so that passengers can access up-to-date information about their services.

We will commit to reviewing all our information provision at local bus stops, providing additional display cases wherever possible. We will introduce a new 'smart' information plate at every one of our local bus stops, providing a standard set of digital information links, using QR codes and website short-links, to timetables and journey planning and other useful information for passengers. This will provide passengers with greater connectivity to digital information. This will also be particularly useful in rural areas, where we will be able to use the smaller displays to create bespoke information for rural services.

- 500 new display cases at bus stops across the region
- 4,000+ new smart information plates (one for every local bus stop)

As well as additional display cases, for some bus shelters we will introduce new information and branding material through graphics printed onto adhesive vinyl. This can be a low-cost way to achieve high impact for branding and promotion at bus shelters.

Bus stop flags are another area where we will make improvements. We will look to roll out a newly designed bus stop flag at all bus stops to help deliver our new brand for the network. This will be a key tool that we will use to present the bus network as one single system. This process will also allow us to complete a refresh of the flags across the network, updating and then maintaining correct service numbers on all our flags.

Enhanced information on our displays

We have developed a standard layout for our roadside timetable displays to provide a common approach across the region. Our current displays include:

- Stop name, branding and contact information
- Traveline details, including SMS text service for next departures
- Departure times from the stop with route diagrams
- Links to Travelwest online services, including QR codes linking to RTI departures

Many of our stops have more than one display case, which enables us to show more information, such as network maps, interchange information and walking maps. As part

of our BSIP ambitions we will expand the number of additional displays and we will develop new enhancements to our displays and offer more information to passengers as standard, including:

- Route maps for the services using the stop
- Network and interchange map displays
- Walking maps to show nearby destinations and attractions
- Ticket and fares information
- Bespoke information to complement the surrounding local transport network
- Marketing material to promote bus travel

Bespoke information would also be provided at key locations, in conjunction with our Future Transport Zone projects, providing information to compliment the local transport network. Information provision will be key at our Mobility Hubs and we will include multi-modal information, connected to our real-time system where possible, and with detailed mapping to show landmarks, tourist destinations and other wayfinding from local bus stops.

Digital timetable displays

We will trial the use of 'e-paper' displays in two of our interchange locations. These digital displays offer the potential to show passengers timetable information, route maps, ticket and fares information as well as a real-time information feed, all on one display panel, and kept up-to-date remotely and in real-time. The trials will test the technology and gain feedback from passengers ahead of potential further roll out.

Upgraded displays for rural areas

Passengers in rural areas have a greater need for information covering their whole journey. This is particularly true for passengers that rely on infrequent services. We will therefore improve the design and layout for roadside timetable displays in rural areas, providing more helpful information for passengers that are using infrequent, rural services. One area of feedback from passengers in this regard is the need for return journey information and we will look to include this within the redesign for rural displays.

Bus stop maintenance

Bus stop infrastructure has to be well-maintained to offer a welcoming environment and to enable us to show high-quality information.

We will review the current arrangements with our highway authorities and consider how best to achieve a common high standard across the BSIP area, with quicker response times as part of our Bus Passenger Charter.

Real time information (RTI)

Our recent public consultation exercise for the Bus Strategy highlighted that passengers are very keen to see more real-time information at bus stops and across the bus network. RTI is now a common sight within the bus network in the West of England and we have ambitions to do more with our network of RTI displays, providing live predictions for all of our bus services and connecting more with passengers through more live network updates.

We will roll out new full-colour digital displays for all central and interchange locations, cascading our older LED displays to other bus corridors. We will also roll out new

digital interchange displays, creating digital ‘information hubs’ at key locations, working in partnership with local areas. These hub displays can also be used for additional local information such as mapping and other local travel information.

- 250 new full-colour in-shelter RTI units
- 30 new full-colour interchange displays, replacing our 12-line LED boards

Solar power connections can be used in certain locations, replacing the need for intrusive or expensive electricity supply connections. By adopting this we can bring RTI to more locations, particularly in rural areas.

- 30 new solar-powered digital displays for key locations in rural areas

We will also develop digital poster displays for both indoor locations such as bus stations and interchanges, and outdoor locations including bus stops. These poster displays can be highly effective, providing a mix of RTI, route maps, live network information and a range of useful content for passengers.

- 50 digital poster displays

We will also look to upgrade our bus stations to enhance the RTI and digital information displays, to create a modern system within our key bus stations. Upgrade packages will be developed for our two key bus stations within the region, with new RTI screens, digital posters and interchange displays, including audio announcement capabilities.

- Digital upgrade package for Bristol Bus Station
- Digital upgrade package for Bath Bus Station

Enhanced RTI functionality

To complement the roll out of new RTI displays and infrastructure across the network, we will develop several areas of our RTI system to improve the system and functionality, enabling us to bring more information to passengers.

Regular meetings will take place between the bus operators and the local authorities to identify areas for improvement. Through the proposed EP Advisory Forum, passengers and other stakeholders will also be able to put forward suggestions for how the system can be developed.

We will support all operators to get on to the system and make it a key requirement of local bus registrations within our area, ensuring that all services are shown on our RTI displays.

Enhancements to our RTI system will include:

- Live departure board URL links, including for cluster stops, for key locations to show RTI and public transport information on screens (delivered through our outreach project)
- Bespoke URL links created for individual passengers to access on mobile phones and in key business locations
- New RTI configurations to show targeted information based on the corridor, for example calibrating the mix of high and low frequency services on displays
- Bus and Rail departure times shown from appropriate stops, with rail departure times appropriately adjusted to allow for the walking distance to the rail station
- Upgrade to our colour display formats to show ‘vias’ and dynamic destinations
- Bus ‘busy’ status information added to the displays where available
- Live visual tracking of buses for the Travelwest website using our real time data
- Continued support for BODS delivery

- Electronic Bus Service Registrations rolled out as standard, improving the data processes and paving the way for further enhanced RTI functionality
- Retrofit to the REACT boards with dual REACT/Bluetooth boards, ensuring that people that currently use our visually impaired service can also use Bluetooth connectivity

Overall, our aim is that our network of RTI screens will be used far more as a tool to communicate 'live' with passengers at bus stops, informing them of any issues with local bus services and helping them in real time with their journey. We will review how the messaging function for the RTI screens is managed, to enable a 24/7 approach to be taken for posting messages to the screens.

Disruption Messaging Tool

The Department for Transport is developing a Disruption Messaging Tool to enable LTAs and bus operators to enter bus travel disruption information in one place, to provide consistent messages to customers via many channels - including social media, RTI displays, and journey planners. Ultimately, the aim is to deliver to customers better information from a single source. This will save time, encourage customer confidence, and provide full information of alternative types of transport in journey planning.

The tool was commissioned initially by Transport for the North as part of their Integrated and Smart Travel programme in 2019, after identifying a gap in consistent disruptions information provision. The DfT proposes to offer this tool for free to LTAs under the Bus Open Data Service.

Marketing and promotion

In addition to promotion and marketing within the traditional realms of the local bus network, we have ambitions to develop a new 'outreach' programme, promoting bus travel as a safe and sustainable mode of choice to key destinations throughout the region.

Our programme would involve direct engagement with local businesses and key attractions to develop bespoke ways of encouraging bus travel. This will encompass new notice boards, the distribution of information and promotions material, as well as discounted ticket offers and a range of marketing activity.

Marketing events, including face to face sessions and meet-the-team style Q&As can be very effective in developing new passengers, providing a better understanding of bus travel and helping both existing and new customers get the best from the network.

Our outreach programme will work across all sectors. In the first two years we would target the development of new links with:

- Supermarkets and shopping centres
- Leisure centres
- Key tourist attractions
- Universities and colleges
- Primary and secondary schools (alongside our current Active Travel work)
- Hospitals, doctor's surgeries and health centres
- Large employers
- New housing developments

A significant part of the early engagement would be with ‘destination’ organisations. However, we will also focus on developing the ‘origin’ of journeys and will develop ways of direct marketing for this as part of our new approach to marketing. This will include targeting key demographics where this would have greater impact.

As part of our ambition to grow bus patronage back to pre-pandemic levels and then beyond, we will develop a comprehensive and continuing marketing campaign, reaching out to new passengers as well as those that are yet to return to using the bus.

Our approach to marketing would include:

- A comprehensive and continuing marketing campaign to encourage bus travel
- Delivered in partnership, across all available platforms
- Fare promotions, including free introductory promotions
- Engagement with local businesses to create low cost ticket deals for employees
- Promotional information around the health benefits of ‘active travel’
- Information sharing around our covid-safe measures

Comprehensive Travel Guides

Within the West of England area there have been several travel maps and guides produced throughout the years, completed by the respective local authorities. We propose to deliver and maintain a new single, comprehensive Public Transport Guide, covering the whole of the West of England.

The new guide will be available in a series of paper fold-out guides, but it will also form the backbone for a new interactive digital guide online to support journey planning. The interactive guide will allow people to plan their journey in full, with interactive elements including the ability for passengers to interrogate their local bus stop ‘virtually’ to gather and view live and up-to-date information.

The guide would be continuously updated, with the main updates coinciding with the two major networks changes each year.

The guide would be available online and the printed version would be distributed widely and would form a key part of our outreach and marketing programmes.

Alongside our comprehensive Public Transport Guide, we would also produce local area guides to promote key parts of the network. Recent examples of such guides include the Chew Valley Area Guide, which brought together information for all the rural services within the Chew Valley area into one place.

We will work with parish and town councils to make use of their established channels for information distribution wherever possible.

We will develop a range of local area guides and bespoke leaflets, both paper-based and digital, where this would present additional benefits to encouraging patronage.

Travelwest

Travelwest provides the region with a single source of transport information for a variety of travel modes. A key feature is the multi-modal journey planner, which sits alongside up-to-date information on walking, cycling, bus, ferry, taxis and other city transport services. The website also provides links to our RTI services and has live messaging for the network.

We will look to develop the website further with an enhancement package that will include:

- Fares information for our buses
- Multi-modal cost comparisons
- Direct marketing and information for passengers, including tailored push notifications
- Enhanced service information including statistics on journey times, space availability on the bus, live location data and other real-time information
- Ticket sales with an enhancement package for our Travelwest Travelcard, which carries some multi-operator tickets
- Online chat function as part of enhanced customer service offer

App Development

A high proportion of our bus passengers currently use a mobile phone app to access service information and to buy tickets. Many operators have developed an app, with the highest use in our region being the First Bus App, featuring mTickets.

As a first phase, we will support improvement and development of current apps that serve our passengers, bringing forward technology improvements and functionality that will help to grow our passenger market by making bus travel easier. We will support the enhancement of existing apps, where they have been developed for the whole network, including information for all services, and where they offer a point of sale for our regional multi-operator Rider tickets, the multi-modal Plus Bus and Freedom Travel Pass tickets.

As a second phase, we will support the development of a new Travelwest app, that will bring new functionality for the wider transport network beyond just the bus network. This will be a key tool in bringing our bus network improvements, delivered through our BSIP and Enhanced Partnership aspirations, together with our Future Transport Zone and other regional transport improvements.

Social media and communication activity

Alongside our traditional media and the information services that we will provide online and at local bus stop, we recognise the growing demand for passengers to engage with us through our social media channels.

We will enhance our social media activity, expanding on the activity currently undertaken through our Travelwest brand, and with additional marketing and information content on our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube channels. We will also develop a newsletter style approach to regular communication with passengers, building upon the current newsletter communications that we have established and made available via email subscription.

We have developed the 'Travelwest Challenge' and this is one of our key areas of successful engagement with businesses, communities and the public, raising the profile of sustainable travel. We will grow this further and use our combined marketing activity to reach new audiences with the challenge.

YouTube videos will allow us to create some simple "how to" videos. We will create these and develop some content that can be used as part of our marketing campaigns to debunk

some of the negative myths around public transport, as well as helping to ease people back onto the bus network.

Brand identity

We have ambitions to develop a new and comprehensive brand for the local bus network in the West of England, a key part of our plans to present our bus network as one single system.

Our new brand will look to build upon and complement our existing successful brands, such as our flagship metrobus livery and our branded Park & Ride services. New designs will be created, with the aim of developing a connection between people and their bus service, giving passengers and local communities a greater sense of ownership.

Our new brand would cover everything, supporting our ambition to present the local network to passengers as one single system. The new brand would therefore extend to:

- Vehicles with a clear identity, and with a common reference to the BSIP enhancements
- Bus passenger information and publicity
- Real-time information and passenger notices
- Infrastructure, including our local bus stops
- Our tickets

Local Bus Service Registrations

We propose, subject to further investigation, to adopt the function for the registration of local bus services, which is currently carried out by the Traffic Commissioner. This proposal would be developed and implemented as part of our EP.

As part of our management of the local bus service registrations, we would look to introduce Electronic Bus Service Registrations (EBSR) as the standard. Bringing forward EBSR for all our local bus services would improve the data handling processes surrounding registrations, speeding up the process but also improving the quality of data within our information services.

BUDGET

Capital:

- New timetable cases and panels - £750,000 (two-year programme)
- New RTI infrastructure - £4,000,000 (six-year programme)
- Travelwest App development - £500,000 (two-year programme)
- **TOTAL - £5,250,000**

Revenue:

- Enhanced bus stop maintenance - £500,000 per annum (four-year programme - £2,000,000 total)
- RTI system upgrades - £200,000 (two-year programme)
- Information and Promotion - £200,000 per annum (four-year programme - £800,000 total) to include 1FTE staff resource.
- Vehicle brand development - £1,000,000 (two-year programme)
- Development of new regional Travel Guides - £100,000
- Development of new Town Maps - £200,000

- Development of a single customer contact point - £150,000 per annum (four-year programme - £600,000)
 - Adoption of the Traffic Commissioner function for local bus service registrations - £100,000 per annum (initial four-year programme - £400,000) to include 1FTE and assumptions on fees income
 - Preparation and delivery of the Bus Passenger Charter - £25,000 per annum (initial four-year programme - £100,000)
- TOTAL - £5,400,000**

4E Long-term aspirations and policy

A long-term transformation of networks

Quick Wins

- BSIP bid consistent with National Bus Strategy and complementary local policy documents
- Sets targets for passenger growth, punctuality, journey time and passenger satisfaction as set out in the BSIP guidance
- Challenging targets for passenger growth
- Ambitious targets for punctuality, journey time on core corridors and passenger satisfaction
- Commitments to review complementary policies to lock in the benefits and deliver passenger growth and operator investment.

West of England Bus Strategy

The West of England Bus Strategy was adopted in June 2020. [ADD LINK](#) It covers the whole BSIP area and sets out an ambitious intention to restructure the local bus network around a system of hubs and interchanges. This principle would be accompanied by a simplified network structure to improve passenger perception of bus services as a network and open up new journey opportunities, boosting passenger numbers, whilst the overall operating cost of the network would remain broadly the same.

The Bus Strategy includes a target to double bus passenger numbers by 2036. A more reliable service would enable more through journeys across the city centre to be made, opening up more journey opportunities. A hierarchy of interchanges was identified which would be remodelled and branded accordingly. In more rural areas, promotion of Transport Hubs would enable a more efficient network to be provided and provide access to new destinations.

This principle has guided the service specification in our BSIP alongside the infrastructure packages to be funded by the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, West of England Investment Fund and Bus Transformation Fund.

Active & sustainable transport policy

Our Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP4) was adopted in March 2020. [ADD LINK](#) It sets out an ambitious package of interventions - including a major scheme programme with a focus on

the promotion of public transport, walking and cycling including bus route infrastructure, park & ride and extensions to the metrobus network.

JLTP4 highlights the importance of reducing carbon emissions from transport and explores the options available to manage travel demand to help achieve those reductions. It will be updated from 2022 to encompass the actions needed to meet our climate emergency declarations to deliver a carbon-neutral transport network by 2030.

Bus corridor investment has strong links to our Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP). By treating investment in core corridors as packages, additional benefits and opportunities for active travel modes will be incorporated as a matter of course. This point is explained in more detail in the section on Infrastructure.

We will ensure that future revisions to JLTP4 and LCWIP are fully aligned with the BSIP.

Parking policy

Our Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP4) includes the following statement:

To influence the demand of drivers on the transport network who have alternative ways to travel, there is a need to consider the implementation of demand management measures, which will be determined by the appropriate authority. Measures to influence demand could include:

- Management of parking provision, such as increasing or introducing charging, and waiting restrictions;
- Workplace Parking Levy with the revenue reinvested in public transport, cycling and walking.

Parking controls can encourage trips within urban areas to transfer to active modes or public transport. By reducing commuter parking in town and city centres, local economies can be improved by increasing the turnover of the limited number of spaces that are available. The measures described above would help the West of England to become carbon neutral by 2030, lead to an improvement in air quality and open a source of revenue funding to support bus services.

The potential for emerging technology in improving car park and kerb management will be considered through, for example, the reservation of on-street parking spaces (including EV charging points). Parking policies will continue to accommodate those who are unable to use alternatives modes of travel to access urban areas.

Through the development of local parking strategies, we will continue to manage parking to control future traffic demand, through policies for on-street parking, off-street parking and residential parking schemes where appropriate. The design and location of new developments and at workplaces, as well as the numbers of spaces, will help to manage demand and reduce the dependency on the private car. All day parking will be controlled in a way to discourage users who could transfer to lower carbon travel choices.

Bath & North East Somerset Council has already undertaken review of parking.

North Somerset Council has completed an interim parking review, which will lead to the introduction of residents' parking and charging in Leigh Woods in autumn 2021 and the

first residents' parking scheme in Weston-super-Mare in 2022. It is committed to carry out a further review and develop a ten-year parking strategy, which will roll out residents parking further and consider additional charging locations.

Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council will review their parking policies by October 2022 - across a range of different land uses including employment, housing and leisure - aiming to reflect the schedule of delivery set out in the BSIP and complementary initiatives.

Planning policy

A Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) is currently being prepared by the West of England Combined Authority to consider how to accommodate forecast housing and employment numbers up to 2040. Sustainable transport principles will feature prominently to help guide where development should best be accommodated, against the backdrop of housing need, green belt and other statutory requirements.

North Somerset Council is progressing a replacement Local Plan which will adopt similar principles.

Implementation of the BSIP will play a prominent role in helping to mitigate the transport impact of suggested development areas, by enabling bus access to potential development locations, as well "pump-priming" penetration of new housing and employment sites by bus services at an early stage.

Future Transport Zone

As one of three Future Transport Zones (FTZs) in the UK, the West of England Combined Authority is delivering a £28m package of transport improvements that will put the region at the cutting edge of the world transport revolution, help to cut traffic congestion and improve our air quality.

The FTZ programme includes the following projects:

- (i) Mobility Hubs - focal points for interchange between bus services, community transport, DRT services, with facilities for bicycle hire and electric vehicle charging points.
- (ii) Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS)
- (iii) Dynamic Demand-Responsive Transport
- (iv) Transport Data Hub

All the FTZ projects are relevant to implementation of the BSIP and we will align the implementation programmes to ensure that we take a co-ordinated approach to delivery.

Traffic Management Duty

Our highway authorities have a duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to maintain traffic movement on the road network. However, the way this duty is discharged will be reviewed to further prioritise public transport movements on the network, including through the review of parking provision and signal phasing on key corridors.

The highway authorities already make enforce stationary traffic offences. Core bus corridors will be further prioritised for enforcement of parking violations, focussed on bus lanes, bus gates, bus stop and interchanges through cameras where appropriate.

The authorities will also commit to reviewing parking restrictions along bus routes and at/near bus stops to support punctuality targets.

Government has announced that highway authorities will be able to apply for powers later in 2021 to enforce moving traffic offences. We will encourage ours to do so.

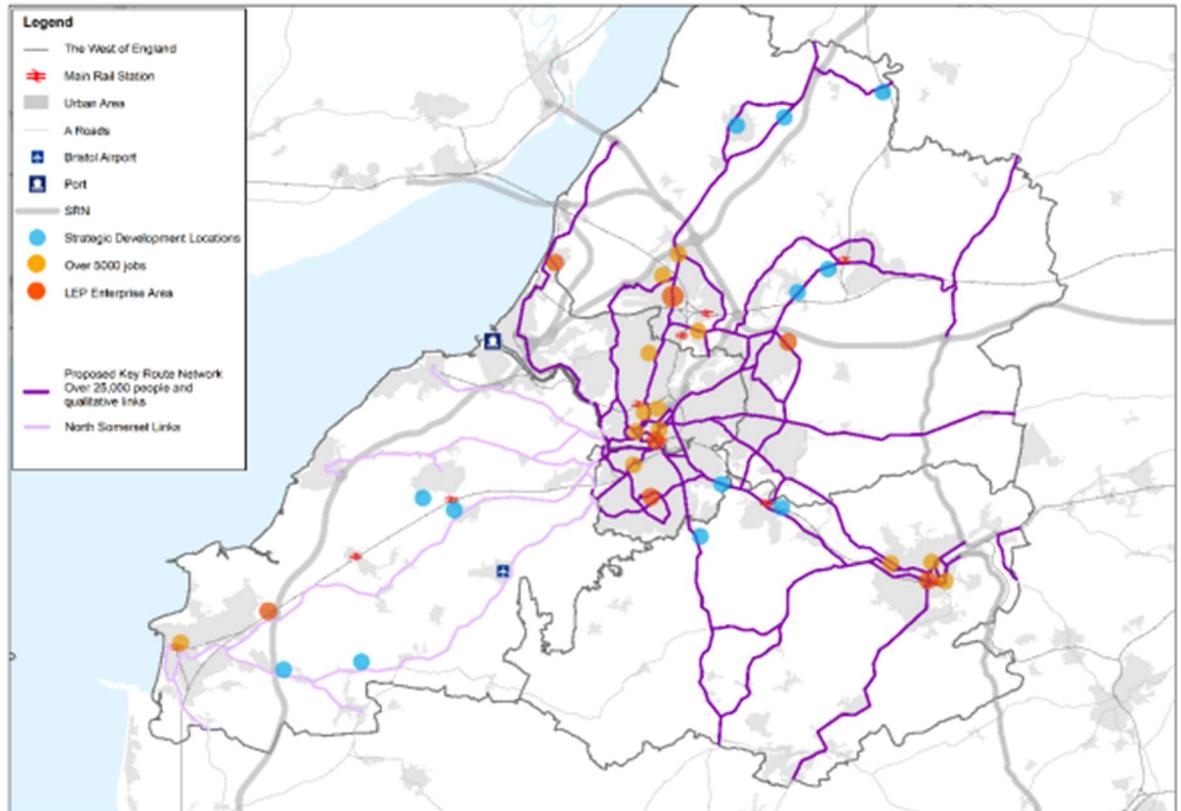
Key Route Network

The West of England Combined Authority Committee confirmed our Key Route Network (KRN) in 2018. With the exception of the M32 Motorway, the KRN covers the major bus corridors with high frequencies, and there are clear opportunities to improve the reliability and performance of the bus network through re-prioritising investment across the KRN.

The purpose of specifying a KRN is to:

- Identify a network of routes that is prioritised for investment and maintenance;
- Bring consistency to policies supporting the management of the network and contributing to safety and air quality;
- Align policies and spending priorities between the SRN, MRN and KRN;
- Support economic growth and planned development; and
- Support travel by all modes of transport, whilst encouraging modal shift, to improve management of congestion and demand across the network and protection of the natural and built environment.

The KRN is illustrated below. We will be clarify and agree consistent performance standards and responsibilities on the network between the West of England Combined Authority and its constituent councils. Also, we will work with North Somerset Council to further its aim of adopting a similar approach to managing its main corridors.



Government launched a public consultation on further devolution of highway powers over the Key Route Networks to mayoral combined authorities in July 2021. There is a clear opportunity to achieve significant improvements for the bus network on strategic routes if additional powers can be transferred to a central body. In principle, the West of England Combined Authority will aim to take on additional highway authority powers and use them to substantially improve bus journey times and punctuality.

4F Fares & ticketing

Lower and simpler fares; seamless, integrated local ticketing between operators and across all types of transport

Overview

To deliver the ticketing aspirations in the National Bus Strategy the West of England has set the objective of achieving lower fares, simple ticketing and easy means of payment. To achieve that objective, we have identified - in partnership with operators - the following fares and ticketing reforms:

- The need for more flexible tickets to reflect changing travel patterns e.g. the introduction of a ticket where customers can travel for any 3 days in a given week, and eventually where customers will have the flexibility to customise their own frequency and duration

- The need to introduction of lower single fares, to attract new users and more occasional bus use, and return fares that will lower daily costs for the majority of daily journeys
- The need for lower local fares in towns to drive modal shift from car to bus for short local journeys;
- Subject to funding, a network-wide rollout of tap-off readers to give customers across the network access to convenient, capped digital tickets
- The need for a reduction in fares for young people - including standard discounts for children and students
- The need to refresh multi-operator ticketing in the area so that it becomes the norm - including introduction of digital multi-operator tickets on smartphones
- The need to move to consumption-based pricing through digital channels, enabling a model where the more you travel, the more you save

Current projects to develop ticketing and payment in the area are:

- Early business case development on a project to support to all bus operators to deliver Tap on / Tap off (TO/TO) and capping with a bank card. This early stage work will enable installation of TO/TO readers to start immediately after confirmation of funding - with rollout across the whole BSIP area to be completed in 2022-23.
- Ongoing development of a trial Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) platform and app, funded through our Future Mobility Zone project. New and enhanced multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing solutions delivered through the BSIP will be made available on the Maas platform and app
- Working with rail operators through the Western Gateway STB and with Great Western Railway (GWR) to develop ticketing and payments initiatives including contactless payment, mobile ticketing, & PAYG capping with smart card - aligning with the current GWR PAYG initiative

Barriers and Opportunities:

The main ticketing and payment barriers in the area are:

- Lack of common technology/ payment and ticketing offer on all buses
- A limited multi operator ticket scheme - with an incomplete range; priced at a premium; not available in the best value formats (such as digital tickets on smartphone)
- Lack of integration with other modes in the area
- No perceived price advantage/ clear benefits compared to other modes such as use of a car
- High ticket prices for some journeys (such as local short trips on some services)

The large growth in the availability of smart phones and development of contactless payments has transformed the wider retail sector and are driving changes in fare payments. Whilst this has already begun to move the sector away from on-bus cash payments there is no consistent cashless payment or mobile ticket offer across bus operators resulting in the continued need for cash and different apps for different bus operators. The increased usage of tickets on smartphone and contactless pay-as-you-go is a core element in removing barriers, enabling more flexible better value tickets, and

creating a simple traveling experience which is value for money. Ticket purchase on bus will remain an important option, enabling access to travel for all customers.

The main areas of opportunity in the BSIP area are in being able to create a single offer to customers across the area with contactless Pay as you go and digital (smartphone) ticketing. Through this there is greater flexibility for operators to create flexible ticketing and pricing that meets the needs of local people - this is particularly the case in areas where shorter bus journeys are made. In addition, there are opportunities to create a more comprehensive and attractive offer for young travellers in the area.

Areas of opportunity in both multi operator ticketing and youth fares can be seen when looking at the current offer in WECA/ North Somerset and other areas:

- Multi operator ticketing: less than 1% of journeys made using multi operator tickets compared to over 10% in other areas and premiums of up to 20% for day tickets compared to 5 to 6% in the West Midlands
- Low fares/youth: an inconsistent offer with the main operator offering 50% discount for children (under 16) and 30% for students and under 21s - however the local multi operator scheme only offers a 30% discount for students and under 21s. This compares to youth fares in Merseyside of 50% off for under 19s - which has driven significant patronage growth

Opportunities:

The main areas of opportunity in the area are:

- Standardise on bus technology to cover contactless Pay-As-You-Go and digital (smartphone) ticketing across the whole network
- Simplification of zones and ticket ranges
- Cheaper fares - through a fare reduction package including more flat fares; low fare zones, and extension of youth discounts; standardisation of discounts across operators and multi operator scheme
- Bus operators in the West of England offer up to 50% discount on fares for young people and some offer group tickets to encourage family travel. We recognise that, to attract car users, family travel by bus needs to be affordable, so we will work with bus operators to explore ways of achieving that.
- To build on existing Future Transport Zones Mobility as-A-Service trials to deliver an ongoing platform for ticketing across all modes
- Improved multi operator ticket range - wider range of tickets with better pricing (in line with National Bus Strategy aspiration for little or no premium).
- Standardisation of on bus technology enabling the same customer offer - which would include individual operator contactless PAYG (followed my multi operator through the DfTs national approach referenced in the NBS) and multi operator/multi modal tickets on mobile phones
- Creation of a single point of access/account through building on the WECA Future Transport Zones Mobility as a Service trial

Summary of responses from bus operators on fares and ticketing

In the development of this chapter local bus operators were consulted on the approach to delivering our ticketing objectives. Specifically, they were asked about the requirements

of the National Bus Strategy and BSIP guidance; and how best to deliver this as well as achieving the attributes set out by WECA/North Somerset. There were large variations in responses received - with some more detailed responses and those that were more general and broader.

Operator fare reduction & ticket simplification package:

Operators did not object to a fare reduction/standardisation package, based on the BSIP requirements, with smaller operators supportive of a simplified ticketing system and pricing structure delivered through a move to multi-operator as the norm. Operators with the largest fleet in the area have already stated an intention to introduce lower fares and local low fares - using both digital ticketing and proposed 'Tap on Tap off' systems with capping to simplify the customer offer and ensure value for money. In general operators were concerned that the network should continue to deliver sustainable returns - and that any low fares or youth discount proposals would need to be viable with financial support provided if necessary.

Pay as you go (PAYG) with contactless bank card:

The largest operator in the area was supportive of delivering this functionality and identified significant benefits in terms of achieving flexible and cheaper tickets - smaller operators were also supportive of delivering a more standardised and universal offer to customers. The largest operator also identified the technical challenges in delivering PAYG discount/youth travellers. All operators were concerned with technological and financial barriers to delivering this - with the greatest benefit coming from the functionality being across all operators and a standard offer to support both single operator and multi operator capping.

Multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing

Local bus operators have agreed to work with us to make multi-operator ticketing the norm. An important step in doing this will be for all operators to have the same on-bus ticketing functionality, including contactless bank and barcode readers, as well as a revised reimbursement process. We have agreed the following timeline with operators:

- by 16 October 2021 - Formation of a working group (with operators and LTA reps) and agreement on scope of activities and person to lead each item
- by 17 January 2022 - Draft proposals produced and circulated
- by 28 February 2022 - Proposals agreed and signed off
- by 29 April 2022 - Revised ticket scheme agreement signed off and rollout plan agreed
- by 31 December 2022 - Work complete and changes to scheme implemented

Work has already progressed with on multi modal integration with trials of GWR digital plus bus acceptance on Firstbus vehicles currently underway. Following the completion of the trial we will work with GWR and other operators to extend this trial to all participating bus operators.

ADD TEXT ON FREEDOM TRAVELPASS - FOLLOW UP WITH DfT NOW THAT FRANCHISE ENDED

Section 3 - Headline targets

Quick Wins:

- Operator led fare reforms including - flexible tickets to reflect changing travel patterns; lower single fares; introduction of return fares to lower daily costs; and introduction of lower local fares (Portishead identified as likely initial focus) - throughout 2022
- Network wide rollout of tap on tap off readers delivering Individual operator contactless bank PAYG with capping - by March 2023 (subject to funding)
- Review and refresh of existing scheme and new/expanded range of multi-operator tickets & Tickets on smartphone and smartcard by March 2023 (subject to funding)
- Reduction in fares for young people - including standard discounts for children, young people and students - by March 2023 (subject to funding)

High level targets:

2022 - 2025:

- Adult Pay As You Go Contactless Bank fair price capping on all buses
- New/expanded range of multi operator tickets
- Multi operator tickets on mobile/smartphone
- Single ticketing mobile platform for tickets
- Operator fare reduction package (flat fares; low fare zones; youth discounts)
- Multi-modal/ through ticket Pay As You Go on mobile/smartphone
- Multi Operator Pay As You Go Contactless Bank capping (target dependant system being available)

2025- 2030:

- Discount fares Pay As You Go Contactless Bank capping
- Multi-modal contactless Pay As You Go

Section 4 - Delivery

Proposals for Improvement:

The proposals for improvement have been developed with the core aim of working with operators to make services cheaper; easier to use; and better integrated with other modes and each other.

Below are our key proposals to deliver against the identified attributes and opportunities; meet our core aims; deliver on the reforms/changes identified and achieve the targets outlined above

Operator fare reduction & ticket simplification package:

- More flat fares/ lowers point to point fares and standardise ticket ranges/zones
Work with operators to reform existing fares - this will include a range of approaches including introduction of standardisation or ticket ranges and zones; new flat fares where appropriate; local low fare zones; and lower point to point fares (looking to use contactless tap on tap off technology, similar to that seen in London, to enable flexible ticket pricing that matches customer journeys and value for money fares) in 2022/23
Expected costs - Operator funded
- Youth fare discounts/ reductions
Work with operators to extend and standardise discounts for children and students across all operators, similar to the youth fares offer in Merseyside, and to explore reductions in fares to encourage travel by families and young people - 2022/23
Expected costs - Joint operator and West of England initiative. WECA/North Somerset support/contribution = £Up to 10m revenue (2022 - 2025)

Pay as you go (PAYG) with contactless bank card:

- PAYG - individual operator adult tickets
Support to all operators to upgrade existing equipment (to include new tap out readers and full ticket machine replacement where required to support both single operator capping and future multi operator delivery) to accept 'Tap on Tap Off' with a bank card and introduce capping for adult tickets in 2022/23
Expected costs - £1.3m capital
- PAYG - multi operator and youth/discounted
- Implement multi operator contactless bank PAYG using the DfT's preferred option as per NBS and BSIP guidance - timescales dependent on confirmation of approach. Put in place systems to enable PAYG discounted fares including children; young people; and students - between 2023 and 2027
Expected costs - costs £1.7m capital

Multi operator as the norm & multi modal integration:

- New/Expanded range of multi-operator tickets & Tickets on smartphone and smartcard
Work with operators through the existing 'Rider' ticket scheme to refresh the ticket range to cover all ticket types and discounts and to deliver multi-operator tickets on smartphone and smartcard, and ensure all operators have the ability to fulfil tickets on smartphone and scan tickets on bus - 2022/23
Expected costs - £200k Capital
- Multi-modal Pay As You Go and mobile/smartphone
Work with rail and bus operators to deliver multi-modal tickets (currently Plusbus & Freedom Travelpass) on rail and bus smartphone enabling better integration with rail and access to through journey ticketing. - 2024
Expected costs - £300k Capital
Support to integrate bus and rail platforms to deliver multi-modal contactless capping - by 2030

Expected costs - 300k Capital

Single mobile platform

- A single app and platform for mobile/smartphone tickets in the area. Collaborate with operators to deliver a single contactless smartphone/ mobile ticketing app for the area. With agreement and participation of operators - build on the systems delivered through the West of England Future Transport Zones Programme Mobility As A Service project - 2023/24

4G Customer service

Giving bus passengers more of a voice and a say

Bus Passenger Charter

A new Bus Passenger Charter will set out commitments by the local authorities and local bus operators, and the obligations of bus users. We plan to launch this by October 2022.

The Charter will make it clear to bus passengers what they can expect, how they can get in touch with us and how they can play a more active role in the development of bus services - through our new approach to regular public consultation.

The Charter will include the following commitments:

by the transport and highway authorities:

- A welcoming bus stop environment, clean, tidy and well-maintained
- Infrastructure accessible for all, including step-free access onto the bus
- High quality, accessible information at all bus stops, online and on-bus
- Advance notice to passengers of our Diamond Travelcard service for elderly and disabled passengers
- Keeping our buses moving through continued bus-lane and parking offence enforcement
- Regular consultation with passengers
- A new approach to customer service, with one single point of contact
- A prompt response to passenger contact, including complaints

by the bus operators:

- Reliable, clean, accessible, and well-maintained vehicles on all routes
- Courteous, well-trained and helpful drivers
- A safe environment, with CCTV on all buses
- Care for customers with special needs
- Clear fares information on-board, with the best fare offered to passengers
- 95% of journeys operated and on time
- Easy payment options including cash, contactless card payment (with tap-on / tap-off capping), Travelwest smart card, mobile ticketing
- One simple range of fares and tickets for the network
- Visual and audio announcements on all services

The Charter will set out the mechanism for redress on those occasions when these commitments are not met. It will be published on our Travelwest website and, where possible, on bus operators' websites too. It will also be available in leaflet format, and we will publicise it at key points on our transport network.

Customer service

We will develop a new single customer contact point, providing passengers with one telephone number and online enquiry contact form for anything associated with their bus journey. This will make it easier for customers to get information or assistance. We plan to launch this by April 2023.

Bus Advisory Forum

Our enhanced partnership with bus operators will include a new Bus Advisory Forum through which bus user groups and other stakeholders can contribute to the development of the bus network. As part of our engagement with stakeholders on the Bus Service Improvement Plan, we invited expressions of interest for membership of the Bus Advisory Forum. We plan to establish it as part of the process of developing the enhanced partnership and launch it with the enhanced partnership in April 2022.

Consultation

We will ensure that bus users and local councillors are consulted at an early stage in the process of planning changes to the bus network and that they have an opportunity to provide feedback to proposals. We plan to establish a process to do this by February 2022.

Section 5 - Reporting

This joint Bus Service Improvement Plan will be published on the websites of the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council through the following links:

[LINK TO WEST OF ENGLAND CA WEBSITE](#)

[LINK TO NSC WEBSITE](#)

The document will be updated in October 2022 and annually thereafter. Progress towards targets will be reported every six months, starting in April 2022.

Section 6 - Overview table

Name of authority or authorities:	West of England Combined Authority & North Somerset Council
Franchising or Enhanced Partnership (or both):	Enhanced Partnership
Date of publication:	29 October 2021
Date of next annual update:	28 October 2022
URL of published report:	TBC

	Actual 2018-19	Actual 2019-20	Target for 2024-25	Description of how each will be measured (max 50 words)
Journey time				
Reliability				
Passenger numbers				
Average passenger satisfaction				

Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to:	Yes / No	Explanation (max 50 words)
Make improvements to bus services and planning		
<i>More frequent and reliable services</i>		
Review service frequency		
Increase bus priority measures		
Increase demand responsive services		
Consideration of bus rapid transit networks		
<i>Improvements to planning / integration with other modes</i>		
Integrate services with other transport modes		
Simplify services		
Review socially necessary services		
Invest in Superbus networks		
<i>Improvements to fares and ticketing</i>		
Lower fares		
Simplify fares		
Integrate ticketing between operators and transport		
Make improvements to bus passenger experience		
<i>Higher spec buses</i>		
Invest in improved bus specifications		
Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services		

Protect personal safety of bus passengers		
Improve buses for tourists		
Invest in decarbonisation		
<i>Improvements to passenger engagement</i>		
Passenger charter		
Strengthen network identity		
Improve bus information		
Other		
Other		

WORKING DOCUMENT

Appendices

- 1 - Map of geographical area covered by BSIP
- 2 - Table of supported routes and mileage (as at 29 August 2021)
- 3 - Summary of responses to stakeholder engagement (July/August 2021)

WORKING DOCUMENT

APPENDIX 1 (MAP) TO BE INSERTED

WORKING DOCUMENT

Appendix 2

List of bus services provided with financial support by the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council (September 2021)

Service	Route	Operating Days & Times	Operator	Annual Mileage
2	Bath City Centre - Mulberry Park	Mon-Sat Evening *	First Bus	TO BE ADDED
6A	Bath City Centre - Larkhall - Bath City Centre	Mon-Sat Evening *	First Bus	
8	Bath City Centre - Kingsway	Mon-Sat Evening *	First Bus	
10	Rock Street North and Hortham Village to Southmead Hospital	All Journeys	Stagecoach West	
10/11	Southmead Hospital - Avonmouth	All Journeys	Stagecoach West	
11	Bath City Centre - Bathampton	All Journeys	First Bus	
12	Severn Beach - Bristol Parkway	Mon - Sat Daytime	Stagecoach West	
12	Severn Beach - Cribbs Causeway	Sundays & Public Holiday Daytime	First Bus	
12	Bath City Centre - Haycombe Cemetery	Mon - Sat Daytime	First Bus	
13	Bristol City Centre - Southmead Hospital	Mon - Sat Daytime	Stagecoach West	
13	Southmead Hospital - Shirehampton	Mon - Sat Daytime	Stagecoach West	
17	Southmead Hospital - Kingswood - Keynsham	All Journeys *	First Bus	
19	Bath - Cribbs Causeway via Bitton	Sundays & Public Holiday Daytime	First Bus	
20	University of Bath - Twerton via City Centre	Mon - Sat Daytime	First Bus	
22	University of Bath - Twerton via Odd own	Mon - Sat in University Holidays *	First Bus	
35	Marshfield - Bristol City Centre	Mon - Sat Daytime	First Bus	
41	Malmesbury - Yate	Mon - Sat Daytime #	Coachstyle	
42	Odd Down Park & Ride - Royal United Hospital	Mon-Fri evenings *	First Bus	
51	Weston Super Mare - Wrington	Mon - Fri daytime	Stagecoach West	

52	Bristol City Centre - Hengrove	Mon - Fri daytime	Bristol Community Transport	
53	Clevedon Circular	Mon - Sat daytime	Bristol Community Transport	
54	Clevedon - Bristol Airport	Mon - Sat daytime	Bristol Community Transport	
55	Bristol Airport - South Bristol	Mon - Sat daytime	Bristol Community Transport	
57	Portishead - Westlands Lane	Mon - Sat daytime	Stagecoach West	
58	Portishead - Redcliffe Bay	Mon - Sat daytime	Stagecoach West	
59	Portishead - Nailsea	Mon - Sat daytime	Stagecoach West	
79	Marshfield - Bath Centre	Mon-Fri Peak	Faresaver	
82	Paulton - Radstock	All Journeys	First Bus	
84	Yate - Wotton-under-Edge - Yate	All Journeys	Stagecoach West	
85	Yate - Wotton-under-Edge - Yate	All Journeys	Stagecoach West	
86	Yate - Kingswood	All Journeys	Stagecoach West	
94	Trowbridge - Bath	Mon-Sat #	Libra Travel	
172	Bath - Paulton	Daily evenings *	First Bus	
179	Midsomer Norton -Bath	All Journeys	CT Coaches	
185	Hallatrow - Trowbridge	Thursday	CT Coaches	
202	Chipping Sodbury - Winterbourne	All Journeys	Eurotaxi	
228	Colerne - Ralph Allen School	School days *	Faresaver	
505	Long Ashton P&R site - Southmead Hospital	All Journeys	Bristol Community Transport	
506	Bristol City Centre - Southmead Hospital	All Journeys	Bristol Community Transport	
511	Bedminster - Hengrove	All Journeys	Bristol Community Transport	
512	Totterdown - Bristol City Centre	All Journeys	Bristol Community Transport	
513	Knowle - Brislington	All Journeys	Stagecoach	

			West	
514	Knowle - Brislington	All Journeys	Stagecoach West	
515	Stockwood - Hartcliffe	All Journeys	Bristol Community Transport	
620	Old Sodbury - Bath	Mon - Sat daytime	Stagecoach West	
622	Chipping Sodbury - Cribbs Causeway	Monday - Saturday	Stagecoach West	
622	Thornbury - Cribbs Causeway	Sunday & Public Holidays Daytime	First Bus	
623	Severn Beach - Bristol	All Journeys	Eurotaxi	
626	Wotton-under-Edge - Bristol	Mon- Fri Peak	Eurotaxi	
634	Tormarton - Kingswood	Mon, Wed & Fri	Eurotaxi	
636	Hengrove - Keynsham	Mon, Wed & Fri	CT Coaches	
640	Bishop Sutton - Keynsham	Friday	CT Coaches	
663	Somerdale - Chandag Road	Mon - Sat daytime	Stagecoach West	
664	Keynsham (Somerdale) - Saltford	Mon - Sat daytime	Stagecoach West	
665	Somerdale - Longmeadow Road	Mon - Sat daytime	Stagecoach West	
668	Peasedown St John - Bristol	Monday	CT Coaches	
672	Blagdon - Bristol	Mon - Sat Daytime	Eurotaxi	
680	North Yate - Filton College	College days	Stagecoach West	
683	Keynsham - Wells	Tuesday	CT Coaches	
684	Wick-Keynsham	Tue & Thu	Eurotaxi	
700	Bath City Centre - Sion Hill	Mon - Sat daytime	CT Coaches	
716	Bath City Centre - Newbridge	Mon - Sat daytime	CT Coaches	
734	Bath City Centre - Bathwick	Mon - Sat daytime	CT Coaches	
752	Hinton Blewett - Bath	Wednesday	B&NES Council	
754	Hinton Blewett - Radstock	Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri	B&NES Council	
757	Combe Hay - Midsomer Norton	Wednesday	CT Coaches	
768	Midsomer Norton - Bath	Mon - Fri daytime	CT Coaches	
779	Bath City Centre - Swainswick	Mon - Sat daytime	CT Coaches	
948	Pucklechurch - Sir Bernard Lovell Academy	School days	Stagecoach West	

963	Patchway - Winterbourne Academy	School days	Stagecoach West	
967	South Yate - Chipping Sodbury School	School days	Stagecoach West	
Bris	Brislington P&R site - Bristol City Centre	All Journeys	First Bus	
Port	Portway P&R site - Bristol City Centre	All Journeys	First Bus	
D1	Trowbridge - Bath	Mon-Sat evening #	First Bus	
T2	Thornbury - Bristol City Centre	Mon-Sat daytime	First Bus	
T2	Thornbury - Bristol City Centre	Mon -Sat evening	First Bus	
Y4	Yate - Bristol City Centre	Mon-Sat evenings *	First Bus	
Y5	Yate - Bristol City Centre	Daily *	First Bus	
Y6	Yate - Southmead Hospital	Daily *	First Bus	

Notes: * - Add-on to commercial service

- Cross-boundary service contracted to neighbouring LTA

Appendix 3 - Summary of responses from stakeholders

Respondents

55 stakeholders responded to our invitation to give their views on the merits and demerits of bus services locally and the performance of the LTAs and local bus operators. These were made up of:

- 30 Parish Councils, Councillors and political party groups
- 10 Transport Users Groups
- 7 Community Transport Operators
- 5 Others (Hospital, university and shopping mall) and
- 3 Members of Parliament

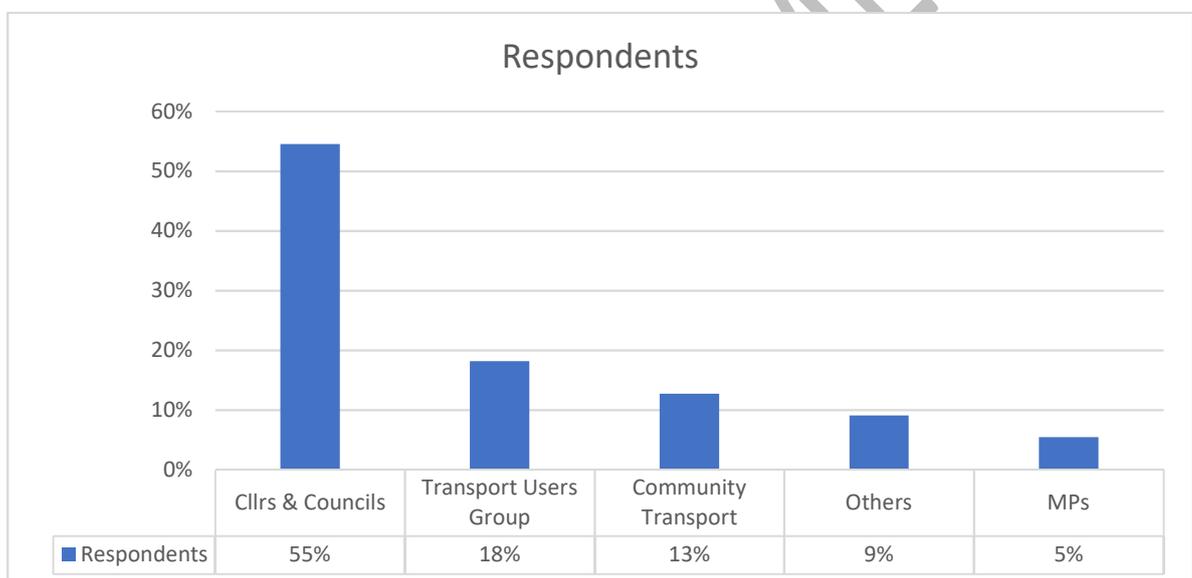


Fig. 1. Proportion of respondents

Positive aspects of current provision

Bus services

Respondents acknowledged the existence of positive provisions in their respective areas and commented on examples where such services are reliable, punctual, accessible, and frequent with friendly and professional drivers. 89% of respondents expressed overwhelming support for BSIP objectives. A consensus in both rural and urban regions suggesting that where services exist, which in itself is a positive aspect, they were sufficient except for issues highlighted in section 3.1 below. Those in rural regions also accept that the services provided, whilst not adequate, were often reliable and accessible to a section of the population. 51% of respondent felt that the buses were clean with 49% satisfied with the level of information provided.

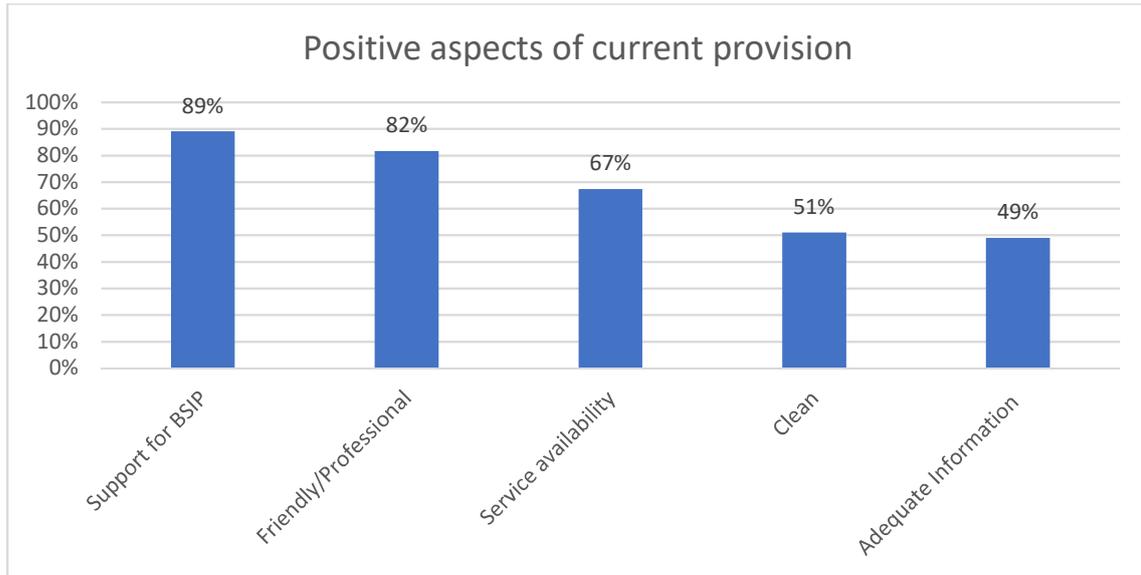


Fig. 2. Top five of what works well in current provision

Role of community transport

The Community Transport stakeholders were clear on what works well in their sector. Their flexibility and the resulting positive impact on the NHS, local knowledge and strong community links, specialist nature of service, improved accessibility to an identified demographic, steady increase in patronage all of which, they felt, was contributing to health and wellbeing in a safe and secure environment. They could continue this trend, with support and funding, to filling the gaps in areas not currently served by traditional services.

The community transport sector expressed willingness to help with the BSIP objectives highlighting specific areas, as indicated in Fig 3 below:

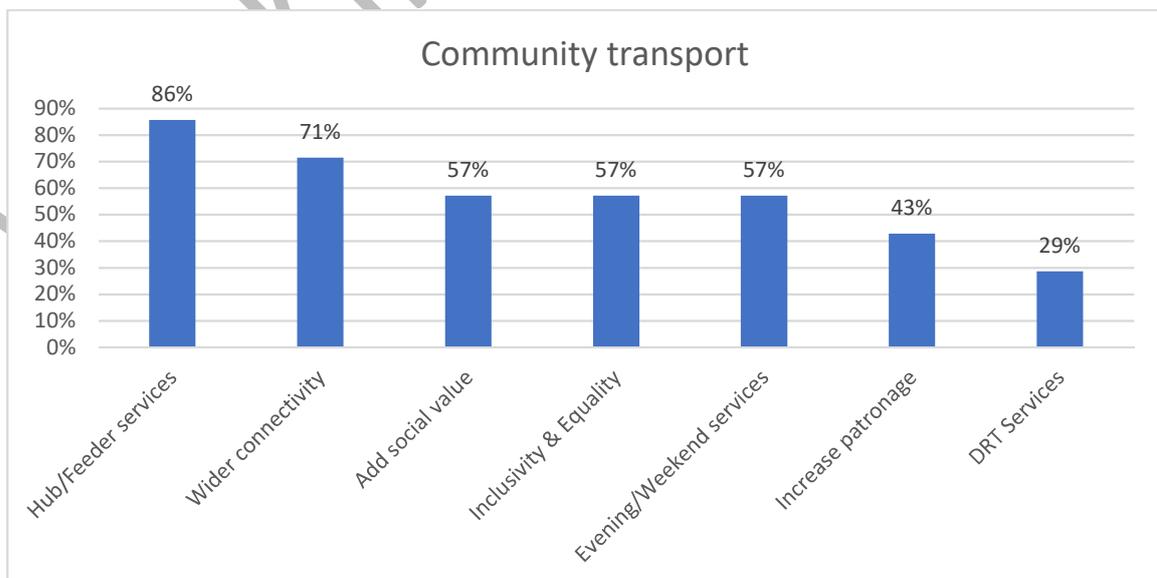


Fig. 3. Areas in which community transport can help in support BSIP objectives

To help with the BSIP objectives, 86% of respondents were of the view that community transport could act as a feeder service to Transport Hubs, but there were complications around their current Section 19 licence restrictions. With financial support, 71% would retrain their staff with a possible change to section 22 permit that would allow them to operate a community bus service. 57% also felt that, with appropriate funding, they would provide evening and weekend services.

71% felt confident that their services are currently helping with connectivity especially in inaccessible regions/locations. 57% were of the view that their service, if sustained, can add social value in eradicating social isolation in addition to taking users directly to hospital and GP appointments. 57% of the respondent in this category felt that the demographic they served, in part because of their protected characteristics, are often excluded from services and decision making and their involvement is resulting in some levels of fair and inclusive access.

49% of Community Transport respondent report a raise in patronage and felt that this could be transferred over to traditional transport if they were to act as a hub/feeder service, provided some access issues in traditional buses and bus stops were resolved. 14% expressed the desire to provide DRT services.

Negative aspects of current provision

Respondents highlighted some negative aspects of current provision. The following themes emerged:

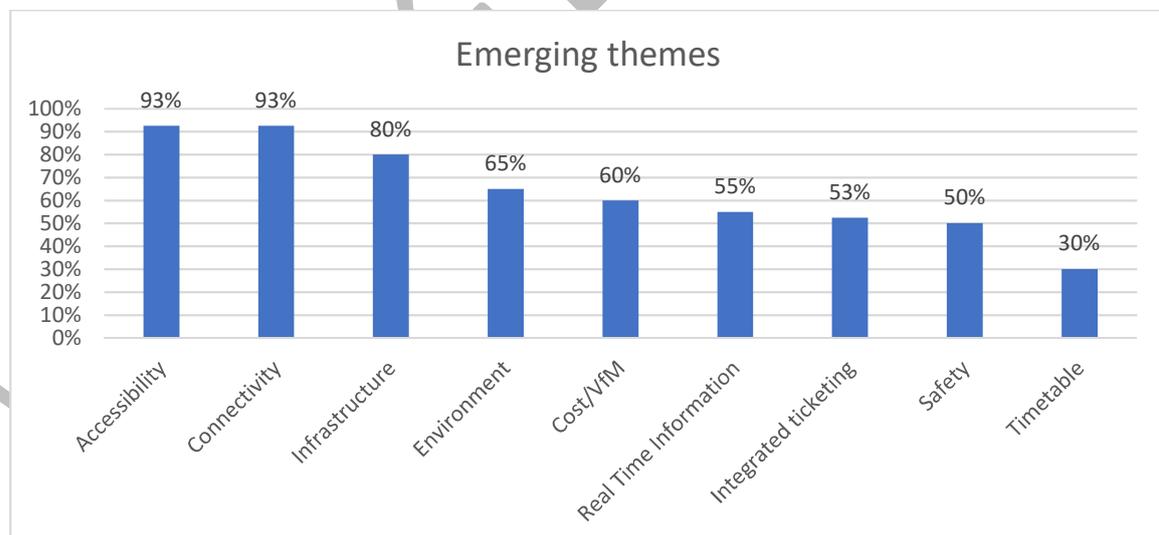


Fig. 4. Emerging theme from the consultation

a. Accessibility

Accessibility here includes intervals between bus stops, inadequate services in some area where a section of the community is excluded from accessing services. Specific rural destinations were highlighted where there are limited services with no evening and weekend facilities.

b. Connectivity

This would include destinations where there are no direct services, no interchange, connecting and or linked-up services. Some rail stations were identified as having no connecting or direct services. Irregularity, infrequent and inadequate services affect connectivity ([see breakdown in Fig.5. below](#))

c. Fares and ticketing

60% of respondents identified affordability as an access issue. Cost had meant that the transport services were less attractive than cars. Respondents want to see an integrated ticketing system across all transport services. They felt that this will have the potential to reduce costs, encourage use and increase patronage.

d. Infrastructure

Respondents identified various issues which includes the provision of more priority bus lanes, additional bus stops within short walking distance, construction of Transport Hubs, the installation and implementation of parking restrictions, higher parking charges, provision of more bike racks at stops, carriage of bikes on buses, better shelters, wheelchair user friendly bus stops, and installations of road restrictions in some areas to buses and residents only. The lack of wheelchair access at some bus stops gave rise to safety concerns.

e. Information

Some respondents were of the view that RTI should be provided at every bus stop. Where this is already the case, issues were raised that the information provided is often inaccurate and unreliable. Issues were also raised about the frequency of timetable changes. Respondents felt that timetables should be made accessible on apps as well as hard copies at bus stops so that those without smart phones - principally older persons - are not disadvantaged.

f. Environment

Respondents want to see sustainable cleaner and greener fleets. Making services more reliable, regular, and frequent will take cars off the road. Lower fares would also have the same effect as it would make services attractive.

g. Safety

Irregular, infrequent, and unreliable services present safety issues especially for school children and vulnerable persons having to wait longer than necessary and not knowing if services will turn up.

h. Other issues

There appears to be a lack of confidence in public transport. Some respondents felt that the LTAs and bus operators do not engage sufficiently with service users to understand their specific needs.

Performance - bus operators

There was a consensus that sections of services in some areas are reliable, regular, frequent, and punctual but many instances of buses not showing up on time or not stopping at designated bus stops were reported. Bus cleanliness was also highlighted as an issue. Instances of RTI mysteriously disappeared from screen and no services turning up at scheduled times were also reported. Lack of evenings and weekend services, high fares, unreliable and inadequate services were highlighted too.

Respondents also expressed environmental concerns and wished to see an upgrade to more environmentally friendly fleet.

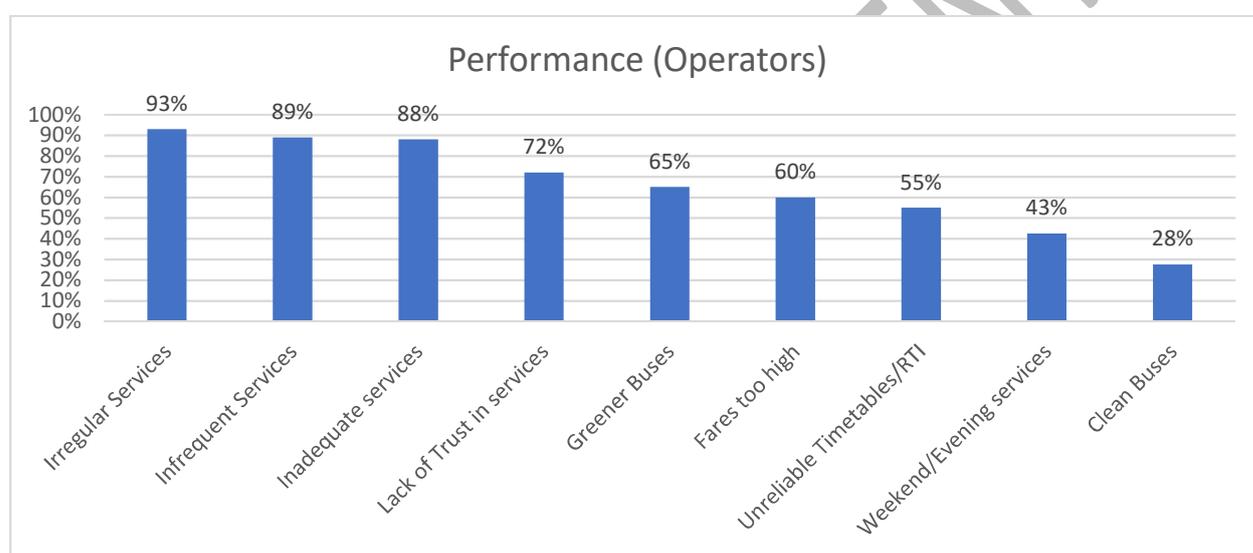


Fig. 5. Issues identified as priorities for Operators

Performance - LTAs

All respondents urged LTAs to provide funding for more environmentally sustainable buses but not pass that cost on to passengers. Also, respondents called for more investment in infrastructure, such as more bus stops, Transport Hubs, secure bike racks, new and upgraded Park & Ride services, and the provision of shuttle services to linked rural areas to the bus network.

Respondent also want LTAs to introduce parking restrictions in some areas and the installation of more bus lanes. 53% wants LTAs promote services, 65% want to see LTAs facilitate more public engagement to understand passenger needs. 83% felt that LTAs should monitor performance of bus services.

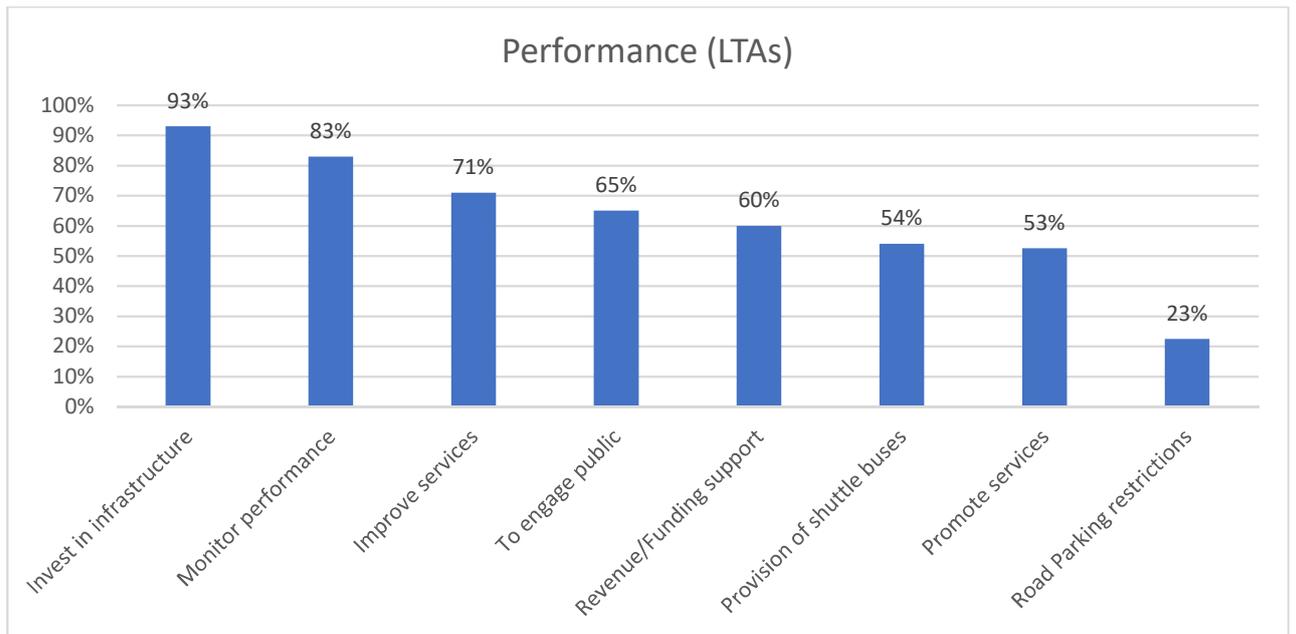


Fig. 6. Priorities for LTAS

Priorities for improvement

Overall priorities for improvement	
Improve service reliability	91%
Fares reduction	85%
More/quality bus shelters	78%
Climate considerations	78%
Increase frequency of services	76%
More public engagement	73%
Direct services to hospitals and health facilities	69%
More RTI displays	64%
Promote services	62%
Safety for school children	55%
Timetable posters at bus stops	55%
More evening and weekend services	36%
More funding for community transport	18%
Improve accessibility for disabled people	15%
Provision of new & improved P&R services	11%
Remove time restrictions on concessionary passes	10%

Table 1. Priorities captured from stakeholder consultation