

North Somerset Council

Report to the Executive

Date of Meeting: 20 October 2021

Subject of Report: Update on the Development of a Joint Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) with the West of England Combined Authority and Bus Operators

Town or Parish: All

Officer/Member Presenting: Councillor Donald Davies, The Leader of the Council, with Executive Member responsibility for Strategic Transport

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: The Bus Service Improvement Plan is expected to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Local Authority.

Recommendations

- (i) That the Executive note the work that has been done on the development of a Bus Service Improvement Plan;
- (ii) That the Leader of the Council, as the responsible Executive Member for Strategic Transport; Transport Policy, Public Transport, Home to School Transport, Bus and Rail Strategy, be delegated authority to approve the final version of the BSIP for submission to government by 29 October 2021,

1. Summary of Report

- 1.1 In March 2020, the Government announced [£3billion for buses](#), heralded as ‘the most ambitious shake-up of the bus sector in a generation’ (gov.uk). This was supported by the publication of the Government’s [Bus Back Better – a National Bus Strategy for England](#), announced on 15 March 2021. This process is mandatory as a condition of receiving any further subsidy and grants to support bus services, without which we would see the rapid decline of the current commercial network in the Local area, due to the lasting effects of the pandemic that has seen 1/3 regular patronage disappear.
- 1.2 Since then, North Somerset has been preparing a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), as required by the strategy, which is due for submission at the end of October 2021 and has begun to implement an Enhanced Partnership, which is due to commence April 2022. As approved by the Executive in June 2021, these are being done in partnership with the West of England Combined Authority.

1.3 This report summarises progress on the development of the BSIP and the work with the combined authority and seeks approval to submit the document by the deadline of the 31st October 2021.

2. Policy

2.1 The national Government's [*Bus Back Better – a National Bus Strategy for England*](#) is consistent with the following NSC and West of England policies & plans:

- The [*North Somerset Council \(NSC\) Corporate Plan 2020-24*](#)
- The [*West of England Bus Strategy \(2020\)*](#);
- The [*West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 \(JLTP4\) \(2020\)*](#);
- NSC's Emergency Active Travel Fund (Tranche 1) and the Active Travel Fund (Tranche 2 and 3) scheme package;
- The emerging [*NSC Local Plan 2038*](#).

2.2 For more detail on how the national bus strategy and resulting workstreams are consistent with the above NSC and West of England plans and policies, please see Appendix 1 below.

3. Details

Bus Strategies

3.1 *Bus Back Better - a National Bus Strategy for England* (NBS) was published in March 2021 and 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 The West of England Bus Strategy, covering North Somerset, 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 and 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

- 3.4 The NBS requires local transport authorities (LTAs), which North Somerset Council is, 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. Guidance on development of a BSIP was published in May 2021 and guidance on bidding for funding was published in August 2021. The final plan must be submitted to Government and published by North Somerset Council and The WECA before the 31/10/2021.
- 3.5 Baroness Vere wrote to all LTA Leaders on 6 September 2021 highlighting the importance of the BSIP process, and articulating the deadline for publication and submission as the 31/10/2021. The full letter is reproduced in Appendix 2.
- 3.6 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 restore and 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.
- 3.7 The proposed 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.
- 3.8 By early September 2021, bus patronage in the West of England was at roughly 63% of its pre-Covid level. Recovery has been slow, and passenger numbers have been consistently lower than in other city-regions. Recently, a survey of local employers and large retailers across the West of England was completed to try to gauge the longer-term impact of changes in lifestyles on public transport.
- 3.9 At its meeting on 23 June 2021, the Executive approved a recommendation for North Somerset Council (NSC) and the West of England Combined Authority 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.
- 3.10 Engagement has taken place with officers of Somerset County (and Wiltshire and Gloucestershire County Councils in the context of the joint BSIP) on cross-boundary issues and officers continue to liaise closely with them.

- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 The funding arrangements, despite guidance issued in August, remain unclear and therefore it is difficult to estimate how much funding the West of England BSIP might secure and consequently what might be available for either revenue support of bus services or capital investment in infrastructure. This is further complicated by the fact that the process for allocating capital to the Combined Authority is going through a separate process which is running alongside the BSIP called City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).
- 3.13 Uncertainty with regards the BSIP funding also makes it difficult to set out precise deliverables. However, the following is a summary of some of the key aspects in the BSIP and where appropriate how it relates to North Somerset:
- We have developed a proposed network of services with frequency standards matched to the population densities. The ambition is that all communities above 1,000 population will have the opportunity to access 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 several 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 want fares to be simple, cheaper and affordable with multi-operator ticketing as standard and envisage reduced fares being delivered for local travel in Portishead, Nailsea and Clevedon;
 - 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 and therefore propose significant investment in infrastructure over the next 5 years to help speed up services and improve punctuality. We have identified the A370 and A369 corridors as high priorities for investment with further improvements delivered in our other main towns and villages.
 - We want every bus stop to act as a shop window for our bus services, with all 5000+ 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;
 - To match the local, regional and national aspirations of the Climate Emergency We want every bus to meet Euro VI emission standards and be zero emission by 2033, with the first electric buses entering service within 2 to 3 years.
- 3.14 A working draft of the BSIP is included in Appendix 3.

Enhanced Partnership

- 3.15 The delivery model for the West of England BSIP will be an Enhanced Partnership (EP). 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 of EPs are in Appendix 4.
- 3.16 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 conditional on development of a BSIP and EP.
- 3.17 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. and so the issues associated with this are being investigated.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Extensive public consultation was carried out on the West of England Bus Strategy in February / March 2020 and nearly 2,000 responses were received and being used to also support the development of the BSIP. This is summarised in Appendix 5. In view of the short timescale, public consultation is not possible for the BSIP, but the views of passenger groups, MPs and the business sector are being sought and considered in preparation of the BSIP. We invited views from these stakeholders in July/August 2021 and received 55 responses. The results will help inform the priorities for investment.
- 4.2 As part of the statutory process to make an EP, a short 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 this exercise is to give bus operators an opportunity to object formally to any proposed features of the EP.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The estimated cost for developing a joint BSIP and EP is £800k. The Department for Transport has already paid £100k Capability Funding to both the West of England CA and North Somerset Council (NSC) with a further £63k being paid to NSC. The West of England CA has made an application to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for the balance. In the event that bid is unsuccessful additional funding would be sought from the combined authority. The capability funding, as well as existing funding should be sufficient to cover NSC costs for 21/22
- 5.2 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 become clearer as current work progresses. The council is working on the assumption that these costs will be funded by the BSIP funding allocation.

- 5.3 In the context of significant change to the system, the overall aim is to manage public transport costs within existing budgets, recognising that there may need to be changes to individual items from its adoption in April 2022 to its renewal in April 2027. The BSIP includes a hierarchy of delivery methods, where acceptable levels of commerciality cannot be achieved with a cost effective and sustained use of resources, alternatives will be implemented.
- 5.4 Funding to deliver the BSIP will be the subject of bids to the CRSTS and the £3 billion Transformation Funding. 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 Transformation Funding. The BSIP will explicitly highlight the need for the various funding streams between The WECA and NSC to be equal, to avoid any cliff edge funding for the network of services for the duration of the transformation funding and Enhanced Partnership between 2022 and 2027.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

- 6.1 North Somerset Council are both the highway and transport authority and so have the legal powers to amend the highway and transport network, under the Council's powers as Local Highway Authority ([Highways Act 1980](#)).
- 6.2 In the West of England the transport authorities, who have responsibility for planning transport improvements, are: North Somerset Council and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA, who are the regional transport authority covering the administrative areas of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol and South Gloucestershire). The highway authorities, with responsibility for maintenance of and the delivery of improvements to the public highway, are: Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire councils.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being developed between the West of England CA and North Somerset Council to cover the work on the BSIP and EP. The Executive meeting on the 21st June delegated agreement of the MOU to the Executive Member (in consultation with the Director of Place and Assistant Director Legal & Governance).

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 7.1 If approved, progressed, and delivered, the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will overhaul the existing bus network to provide improved bus service and bus infrastructure provision. If the aims of the national bus strategy, through our BSIP, are achieved then there will be a significant increase in the proportion of trips by bus, replacing trips otherwise undertaken by the more polluting (and less space-efficient) single petrol/diesel car trips. Taking a local bus emits a little over half the greenhouse gases of a single occupancy car journey and also help to remove congestion from the roads (*BBC – J. Timperley, 2020 – article [here](#)*). Additionally, all specific infrastructure projects will undertake a more detailed environmental assessment.

7.2 Improvements to our bus network and services will therefore enable a shift to cleaner transport choices such as the bus ((and active travel to get to the bus network wherever possible) and as we electrify) our bus fleets, further emissions savings will be made.

8. Risk Management

8.1 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;
- (iii) North Somerset Council would be required to find substantial revenue funding to continue to support some essential local bus services in the absence of a commercial provision, this would create additional pressures that are not able to be resolved within our current resources, leading to an accelerated and sustained decline in our bus local bus provision.

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

- (i) Potential loss of discretionary funding from Government to support commercial bus operators and our bus service contractors during recovery from the pandemic;
 - *Publish Bus Service Improvement Plan and continue development of an Enhanced Partnership*
- (ii) Insufficient revenue budget in longer-term to maintain enhanced bus network after the initial Transformation Funding ends in 2027;
 - *Maintain regular dialogue with bus operators through the EP. Use our evaluation tool to help prioritise bus revenue support if necessary.*
 - *Promote the network to build patronage and reduce the need for public subsidy*
 - *The BSIP and EP contain mechanisms to formally postpone, vary or cancel elements of the Partnership.*
- (iii) 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.*
 - *Invoke Adjustment mechanisms to re-align resources.*
- (iv) 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 and seek funding from other sources.*

9. Equality Implications

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? **No**

9.1 One of the key drivers of the national bus strategy 'Bus Back Better' is to improve accessibility for all. This includes the need to improve the access to bus information for residents with sight or hearing impairments, physical accessibility improvements in getting to bus stops, the waiting and boarding facilities at stops and interchanges and also the vehicles themselves, such as consistent local branding of stops and services, up to date accessible timetable and route information at bus stops, same

evening and weekend frequencies as day time, universal ticketing and easy smart payment options, and more marketing campaigns to promote existing and new routes. Furthermore, one of the actions for national government as part of the strategy is to review eligibility for free bus travel for disabled people to ensure that the strategy helps to improve the equality of opportunity and help disabled people participate fully in public life.

- 9.2 The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), once prepared, will include a number of key objectives, including but not limited to:
- high quality bus service;
 - high quality waiting environment;
 - high vehicle standards.
- 9.3 More specific attributes are contained under each objective, including:
- Bus stops, bus stations and interchanges to be accessible, safe and inclusive by design with good facilities;
 - Good pedestrian accessibility to adjacent residential areas and passenger destinations.
 - Full accessibility with ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to the wheelchair space and audio/ visual next bus stop announcements
 - Setting a basic minimum standard of accessibility to network from rural areas;
 - Easy access to information via Travelwest website and app, including times, accessibility information, fares and live running.
- 9.4 These are just some of the objectives and attributes set to be included within our BSIP that show the level of commitment to improving equality and accessibility to a vastly improved bus network, all through the direction of the national bus strategy.

10. Corporate Implications

- 10.1 The development of a BSIP and delivery of an EP from April 22 is a significant reshape of how public transport is planned and delivered in England, with Government clear that there will be 'no return' to a situation where services are planned on a purely commercial basis with little or no engagement with, or support from, LTAs.
- 10.2 More focused to [NSC Corporate policies](#), the national bus strategy (via our more specific BSIP for North Somerset and the West of England) will set out a new vision and action plan to achieve a cohesive network of attractive, high quality bus services to kickstart a new era for bus travel as an option for all. This helps hit all three Corporate Plan priorities of being:
- Open (with the open sharing of bus data helping to improve bus services further including accessibility and journey planning);
 - Fair (by significantly improving equality and accessibility to and on the bus network);
 - Green (with the more people using the bus instead of private car, this has a huge potential to save significant carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions).
- 10.3 More specifically, the [NSC Corporate Plan 2020-24](#) sets out to achieve 'A transport network that promotes active, accessible and low carbon travel' and by 2023, to see 'More people using the bus network, and improvements in reliability and passenger

satisfaction'. Through delivering showcase bus corridors, as well as other measures that will be detailed in the BSIP, the Corporate Plan aims to see:

- An increase in bus patronage;
- The delivery of at least one new showcase corridor by 2023, and;
- Measures to enable the unhampered movement of buses.

10.4 Preparing and then delivering a joint Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) with WECA and bus operators and preparing a joint Enhanced Partnership (EP) would be consistent with and add further weight to our Corporate Plan aims for bus service improvements shown above.

11. Options Considered

11.1 NSC attempt to undertake an Enhanced Partnership (EP) and BSIP alone and not with WECA. This is not consistent with the guidance, which states that:

'...particularly where local economies and travel patterns overlap significantly...we expect LTAs to collaborate to resolve any cross-boundary issues. Where all, or the vast majority of, services in one area run across the border into another area (for example a small unitary authority with services running into a shire authority), we would expect a single BSIP to be produced. We also expect to see shared arrangements across any areas wishing to become new or expanded MCAs in the future.'

11.2 It is also logical to undertake a joint EP and BSIP as our public transport works very much as a regional, West of England wide network with most of our routes, certainly the key corridor routes, radiating cross-border from Bristol. The BSIP will also form as a bidding document that will be used to lever in additional funding and investment to improving our bus network, and an NSC-only BSIP will not carry the same weight or attractiveness as a joint plan with our West of England neighbours.

Authors:

Colin Medus (Head of Public Transport Transformation – Place Directorate)

Appendices

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| Appendix 1 | Policy alignment between Bus Back Better and NSC and West of England plans and policies |
| Appendix 2 | Letter from Baroness de Vere |
| Appendix 3 | West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan (final working draft) |
| Appendix 4 | Features of Enhanced Partnerships |
| Appendix 5 | West of England Bus Strategy and JLTP4 consultation summary |

Background Papers:

- [Executive Report of 23rd June 2021](#)
- [The national bus strategy: Bus Back Better \(March 2021\)](#)
- [National Bus Strategy: Bus Service Improvement Plans \(May 2021\)](#)
[Guidance to all local authorities and bus operators \(Department for Transport, May 2021\)](#)
- [The West of England Bus Strategy \(June 2020\)](#)
- [The West of England Joint Local Transport Plan \(JLTP4\) \(March 2020\)](#)
- [Bus Services Act 2017 – New powers and opportunities](#)

- [Guidance on Enhanced Partnerships](#)
- [Guidance on Franchising Schemes](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1: Policy alignment between Bus Back Better and NSC and West of England plans and policies

The [West of England Bus Strategy](#), consulted upon extensively in January 2020 and adopted in June 2020, considers options to improve the bus network and set out how further growth in bus usage can be encouraged. The strategy includes proposals to create better, faster, more reliable and more accessible services across Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Through this strategy, North Somerset Council (NSC) and WECA aimed to see bus passenger numbers double by 2036 (from a 2011 baseline), although this needs to be reviewed in light of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The [West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 \(JLTP4\)](#), consulted upon extensively in January 2019 and adopted in March 2020, sets out the region's priorities for improving bus travel to be a serious alternative to the private car. Policy W1, aims to:

'Provide more public transport options and improve service quality.'

This is supported by three main interventions to support the delivery of the policy:

- Provide high quality and reliable mass and rapid transit;
- Support and enhance existing public transport services, and;
- Improve the availability and accessibility of accurate travel information and ticketing.

The bus service improvement policies and interventions contained within both the West of England Bus Strategy and the JLTP4 are consistent with the direction of the national Government's [Bus Back Better – a National Bus Strategy for England](#). The vision and aims of this positive new strategy are set out in the Summary section above.

The [North Somerset Council \(NSC\) Corporate Plan 2020-24](#) sets out to achieve 'A transport network that promotes active, accessible and low carbon travel' and by 2023, to see 'More people using the bus network, and improvements in reliability and passenger satisfaction'. Through delivering showcase bus corridors, as well as other measures that will be detailed in the joint BSIP, the Corporate Plan aims to see:

- An increase in bus patronage;
- The delivery of at least one new showcase corridor by 2023, and;
- Measures to enable the unhampered movement of buses.

Preparing and then delivering a joint Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) with WECA and preparing an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with WECA and bus operators would be consistent with and add further weight to our Corporate Plan aims for bus service improvements shown above.

The BSIP guidance emphasises that this is not just a bus strategy for buses, but part of an integrated approach to improving the overall transport network via increasing opportunities to use lower-carbon and more space-efficient forms of transport as a realistic alternative to the private car. Further to this, the BSIP guidance is also clear that 'Government will also take into account an LTA's performance with respect to the policies set out in the Strategy when considering funding allocations for wider, non-bus local transport schemes.' It is therefore even more important that we are well coordinated in our approaches to first and last mile trips to and from the bus network. This includes having up to date, best practice policies adopted accompanied by already-identified interventions to improve active travel, the rail network and other transport options. This will ensure that we are planning for and

provide a coordinated, interchange nodes approach to our bus service improvement planning.

Our success with the Emergency Active Travel Fund (Tranche 1) and the Active Travel Fund (Tranche 2) in 2020 should stand us in good stead in terms of our reputation with the Department for Transport. On this workstream, NSC was one of two authorities in England to receive more funding than bid for due to the strength and ambition in both bids and we are underway with consultation before delivery later in 2021-22.

In policy terms, our newly adopted NSC Active Travel Strategy (ATS) is clear on the importance of linking active travel infrastructure and awareness improvements to public transport corridors and interchanges as the first and last mile of all public transport journeys. This Active Travel Strategy demonstrates to national government that we are ready with our local policies in place to accompany this major increase of investment in our bus network with serious and ambitious active travel improvements alongside. This is consistent with the guidance we have had so far on preparing a BSIP; interlinking public transport and active travel for more space-efficient, cost-efficient, active and lower carbon journeys. A link to our Emerging ATS is available in the Background documents section below.

North Somerset Council are also underway with developing the new Local Plan, which will set out the policies and sites for residential and employment development, including required transport improvements to facilitate these, up to 2038. At the 28 April 2021 NSC Executive Committee Meeting, Members unanimously endorsed the preferred spatial strategy for our Local Plan, following full public and stakeholder consultation on both the Challenges and Choices facing North Somerset as part of [developing the plan](#).

The Local Plan will be a full plan with detailed policies on the approach to various forms of development and will set out the overall spatial strategy; where NSC recommends growth should be encouraged to meet the need for the houses, infrastructure, jobs and services North Somerset will need. This will be consulted upon later in 2021 but will work in tandem with the BSIP as both are developed throughout Summer and Autumn 2021. This collaboration across the two plans has already begun.



Baroness Vere of Norbiton
Minister for Roads, Buses and Places

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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

Appendix 3: Working Draft of BSIP

ITEM 5

JOINT PLANNING, HOUSING & TRANSPORT BOARD

22 SEPTEMBER 2021

Addition to Bus Service Improvement Plan report circulated previously

**APPENDIX 4 TO JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT
BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP)
15 OCTOBER 2021**

WORKING DRAFT OF FINAL BSIP

Please note that this document is still to be fully edited and designed professionally

West of England

Bus Service

Improvement Plan

October 2021

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

DAN NORRIS
Mayor of the West of England

Signature

CLLR DON DAVIES
Leader, North Somerset Council

Executive summary

Our aim for the West of England is to 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 2023 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 to 2027 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 Transport Board (comprising the Mayor of the West of England and the Executive Members for Transport 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.

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.

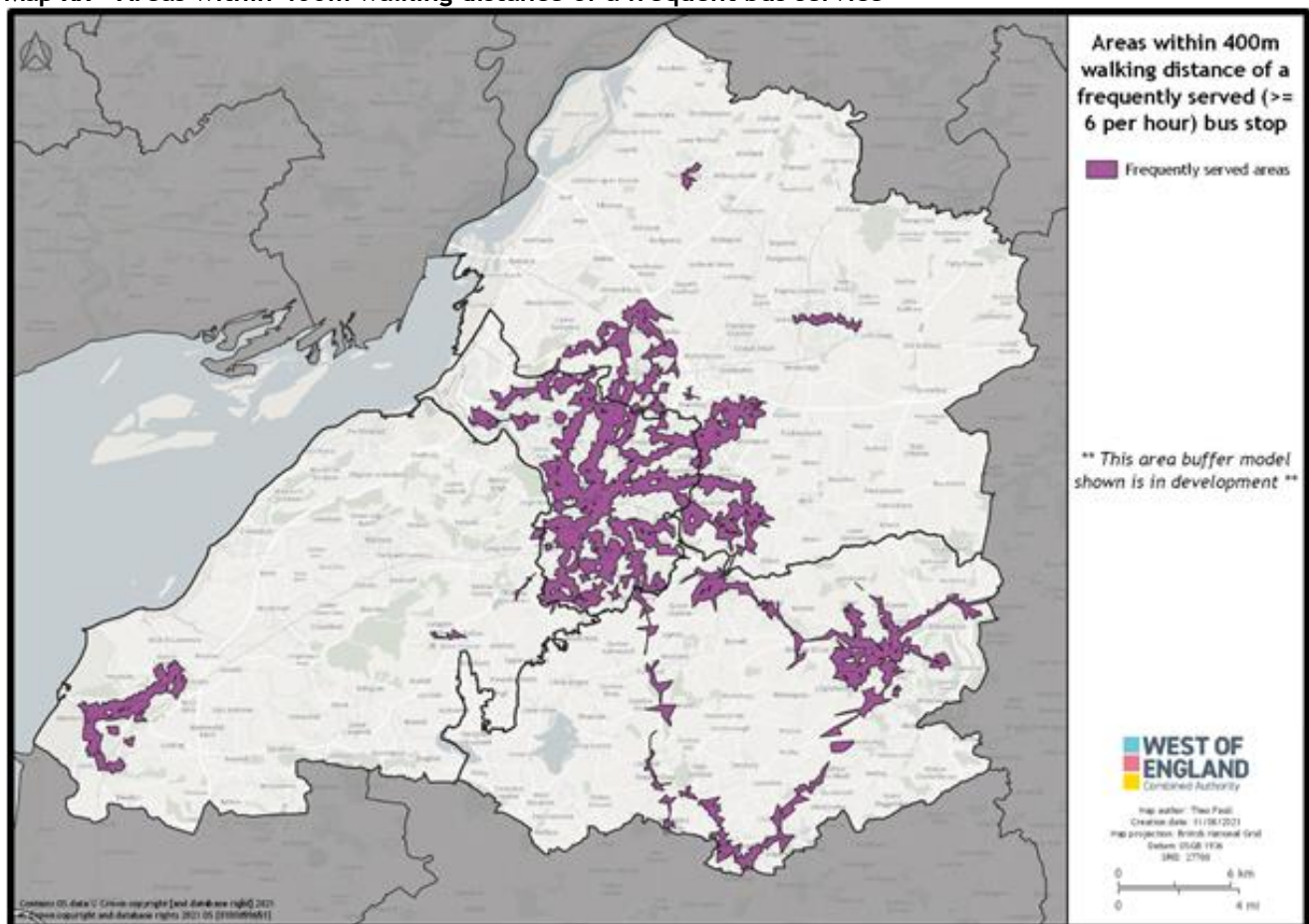
Prior to the onset of coronavirus, xx% of bus journeys were made by holders of concessionary passes for persons who are older or who have a disability.

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 parts of the region suffer from the problems common to other similar 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 few cross-centre services - 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.

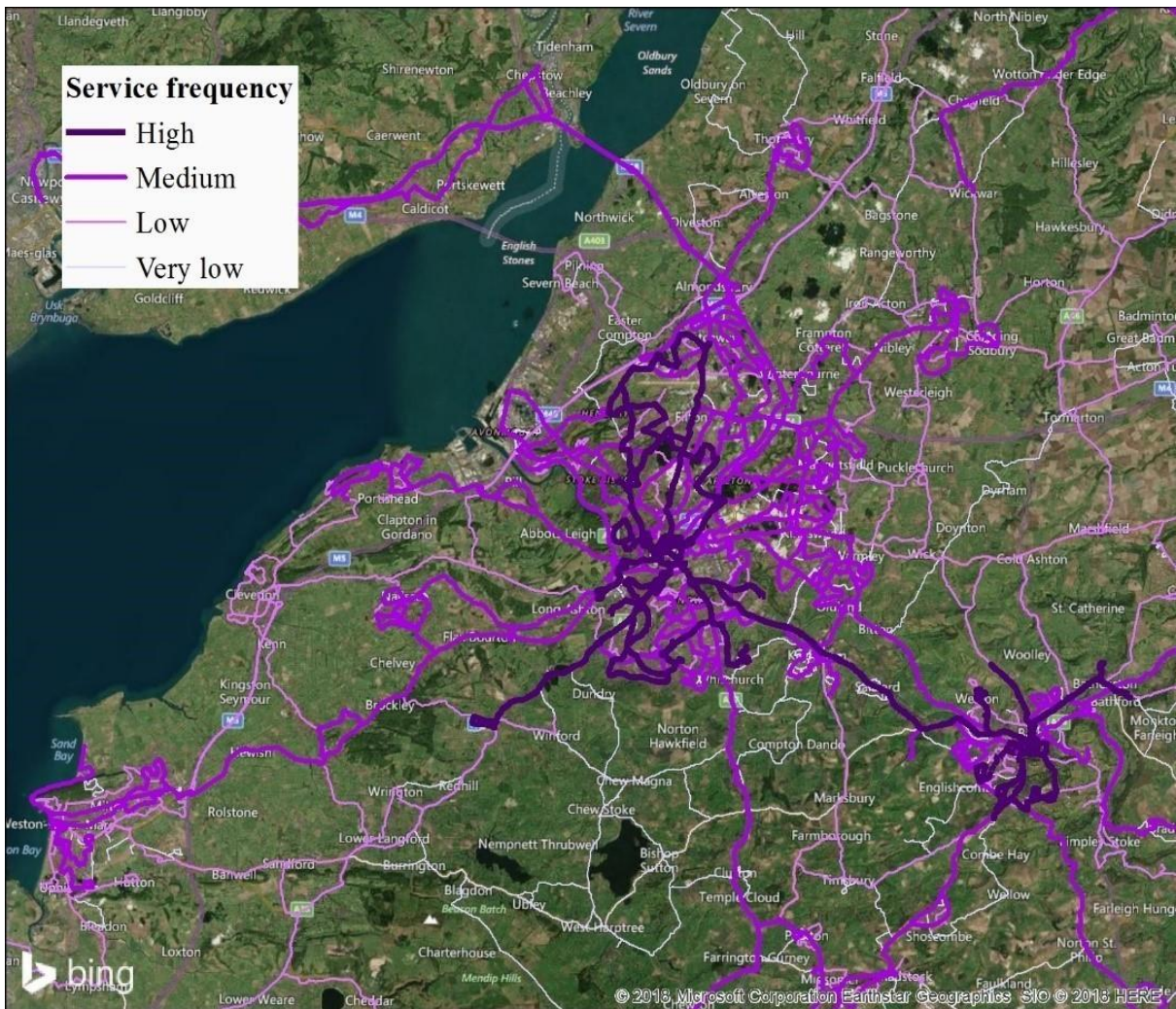
Also, there are few inter-urban limited-stop services to provide fast services giving comparable journey times to cars.

Not all commercial bus services operate all day, seven days a week. Much of the financial support provided by the LTAs is directed at evening and Sunday 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.

We 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. This has fed into our proposals for an expansion of early morning, evening and night bus services.

Map xx - Bus service frequency by corridor 2019



Source: Technical Note 1, West of England Bus Strategy

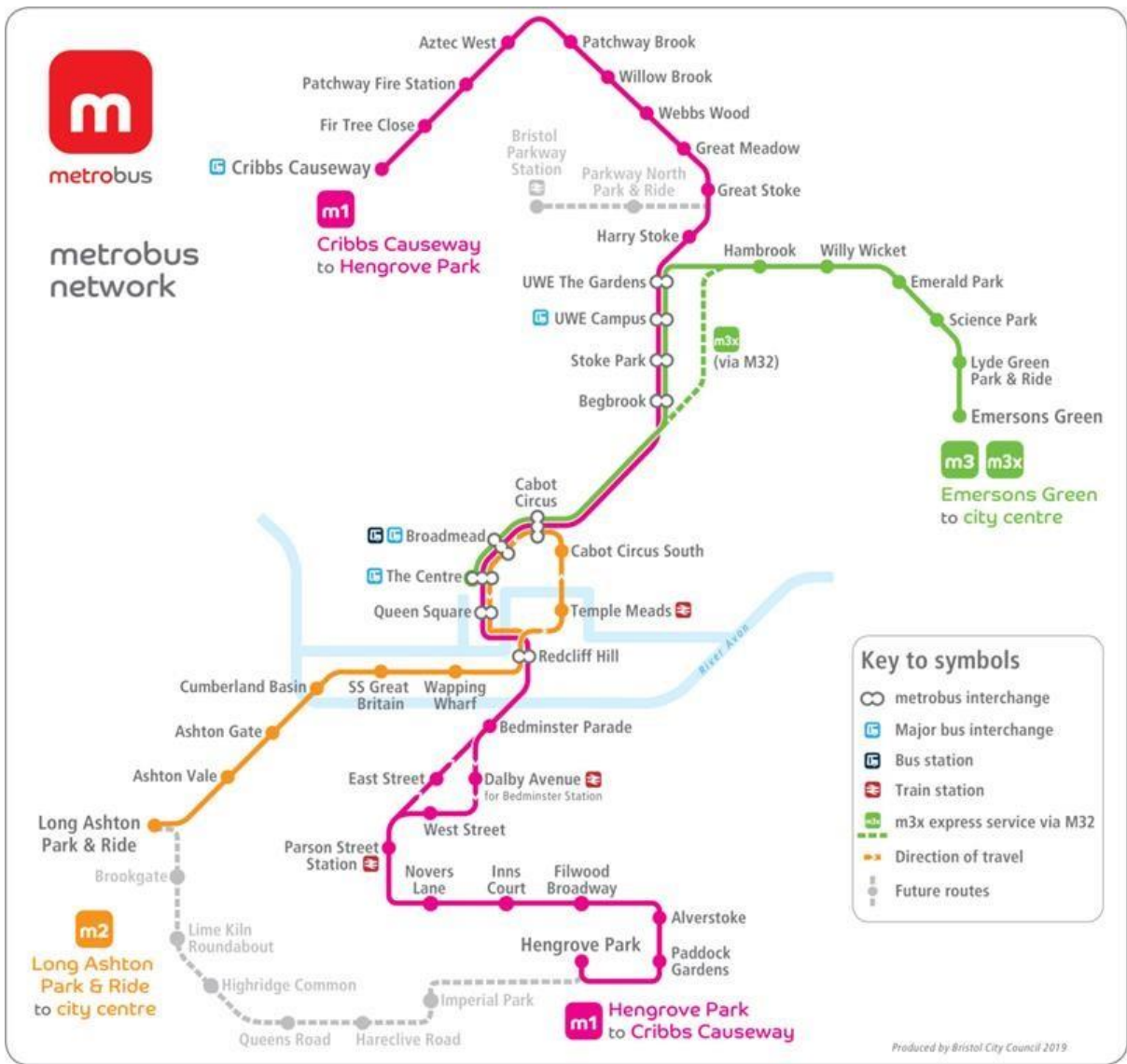
Punctuality

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 authorities having up to 90% of services on time.

metrobus

metrobus is a high-quality Bus Rapid Transit network of four limited-stop routes focused 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 biomethane buses.

metrobus network 2019



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 twenty years - in contrast to the trend across most of England. With the imposition of lockdown in March 2020, passenger numbers fell dramatically, rising and falling over the following eighteen months to reflect changes in the rules and the re-opening of the economy.

In September 2021, by which time virtually all sectors of the economy were functioning again, bus patronage had recovered to just 63% of its pre-Covid level.

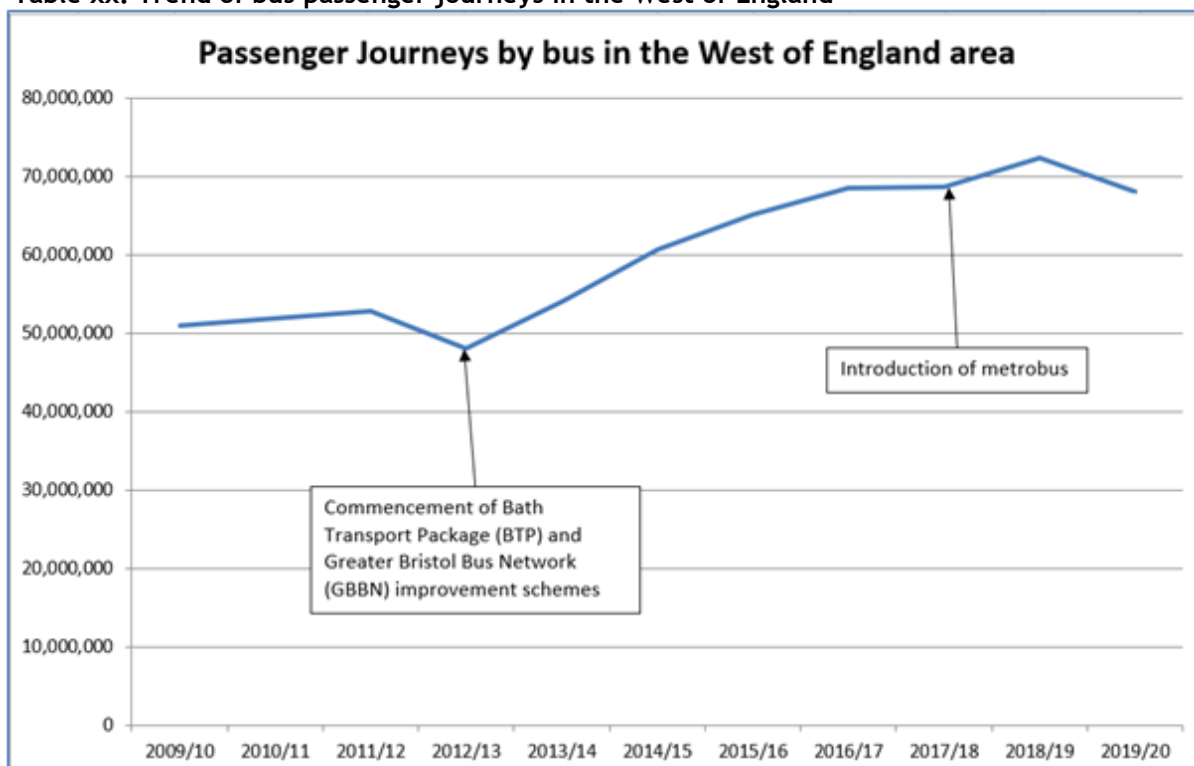
Prior to the onset of coronavirus in March 2020, there had been a consistent trend of growth in bus passenger journeys over the past 20 years, with one blip in 2012-13 which was attributed to a change in the way bus operators reported the figures.

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.

The coronavirus pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on the local bus network. 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 levels were back to their former levels.

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.

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 |
| Fare 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

More text to be added here

Information

We currently have over 5,000 local bus stops within the West of England, and we would estimate that around 4,000 of these have some form of information provided. Our BSIP ambitions include the roll out of further displays at local bus stops, including digital and real-time displays.

Across the region, around 55% of local bus stops currently have a printed timetable display provided. Timetable displays are mainly used to give passengers the

RTI

At the beginning of 2021, the West of England region had over a thousand RTI displays at local bus stops and interchanges. Approximately 900 of the RTI displays at bus stops are equipped with an audio messaging function, which is particularly helpful for our visually impaired passengers. The current system uses key fobs to activate the audio announcements and relies on passengers being provided with a key fob in order to use the audio system

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

Traveline

Traveline South West is the dedicated bus information site that covers our region. Key components of the Traveline website 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

Traveline also provide a SMS text message service to customers and this is promoted on our timetable displays at bus stops. Customers are able to use this service to access upcoming departure information from their bus stop, receiving the information via SMS text message.

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

Travelwest

Travelwest was launched in 2012 to create a Travelwest central information resource for multiple travel modes for the West of England region. The website brings together information on all modes, as well as providing an information resource for our wider transport network and the work that we do.

Key components of the Travelwest website include:

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

Operators' websites

ADD TEXT

Operators' apps

Many local bus operators have developed their own app, 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, or 'iPoints', have been installed at various locations across the region to bring a range of information and services to passengers. iPoints are a key feature of bus stops on 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 can be used to provide useful information to passengers on the route, including letting

passengers know where they are on the journey by informing them of up-coming stops. Many buses are also now equipped with audio notifications, providing information to passengers such as next-stop announcements, as well as providing passenger safety information. In addition to digital screens, the vast majority of buses have static poster panels which can be used for information such as maps, service and fares information as well as any other messages for passengers.

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

As an information provider we have multiple ways for the public to contact us. We have public postal and email addresses, social media accounts and telephone numbers. Ways to contact us 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 £11.5 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 | £9,979,304 | inc | £810,340 | £10,789,644 |
| North Somerset Council | £682,000 | inc | - | £682,000 |
| TOTAL | £10,661,304 | inc | £810,340 | £11,471,644 |

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 brought 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.

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) Journey time
- (ii) Punctuality
- (iii) Passenger journeys
- (iv) Customer satisfaction

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 extension of bus priority measures 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 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.

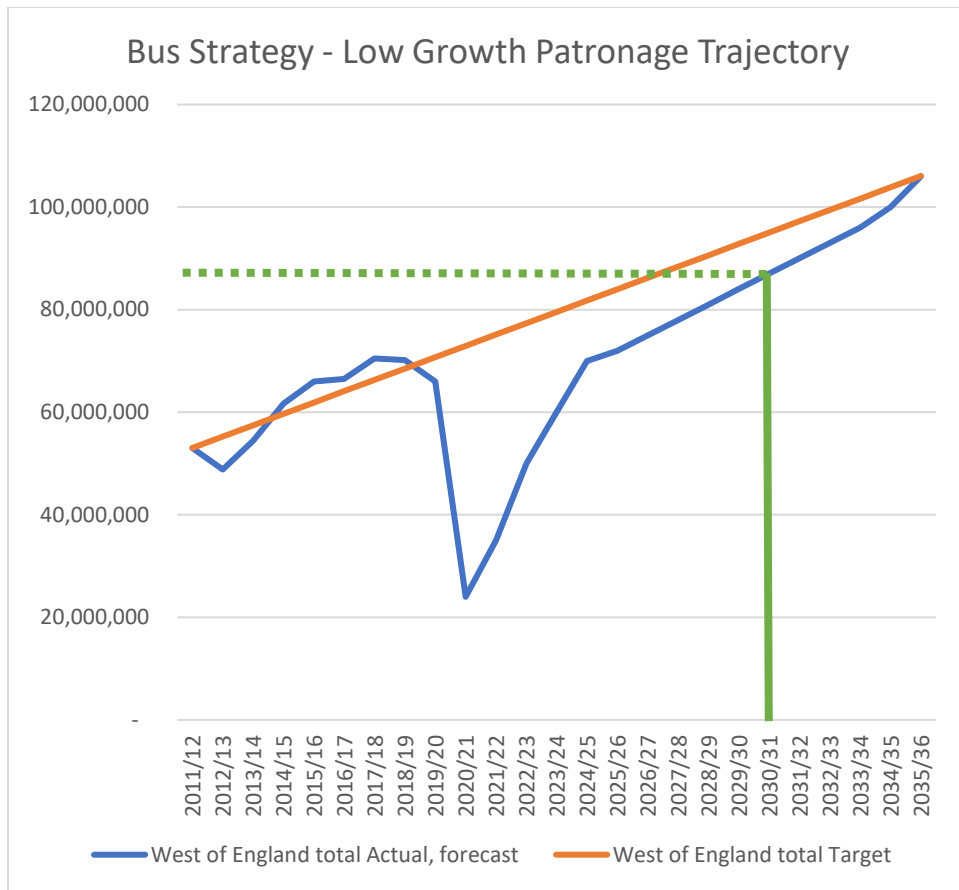
The West of England Bus Strategy includes a target to double bus passenger numbers by 2036 from a 2011 baseline. This target was based on trip forecasts arising from the West of England Joint Transport Study (October 2017), and prior to the onset of coronavirus we were on track to meet that target, amounting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

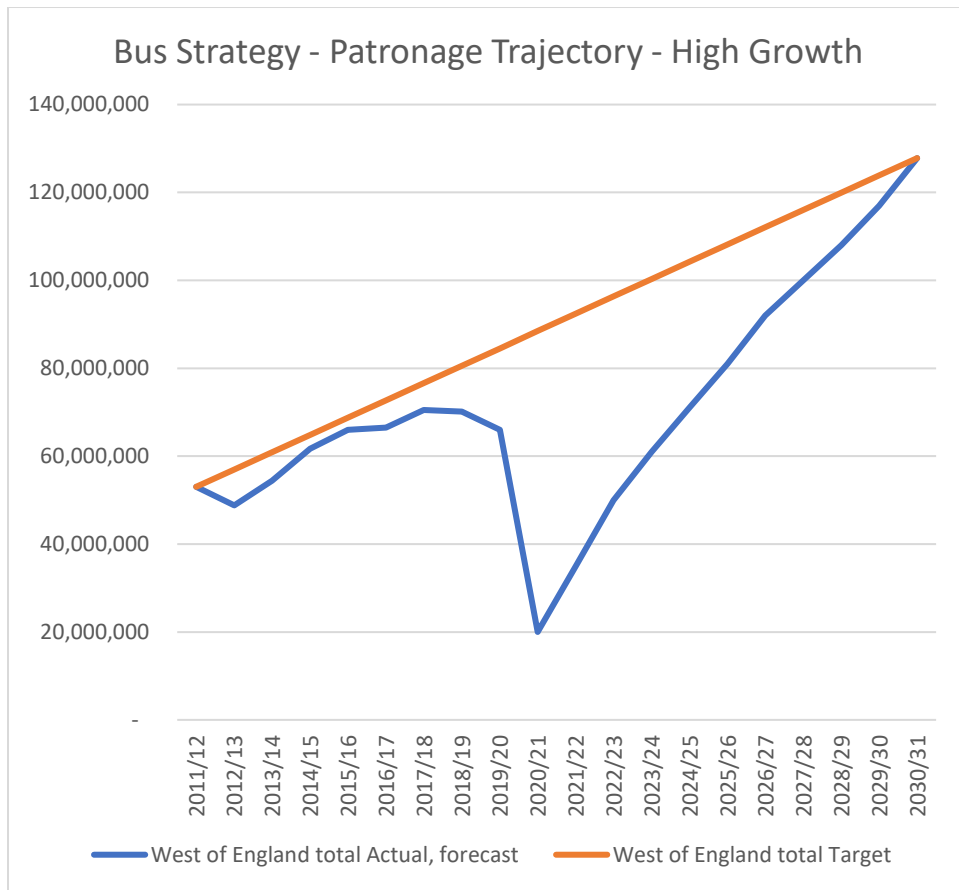
Low Growth Scenario

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

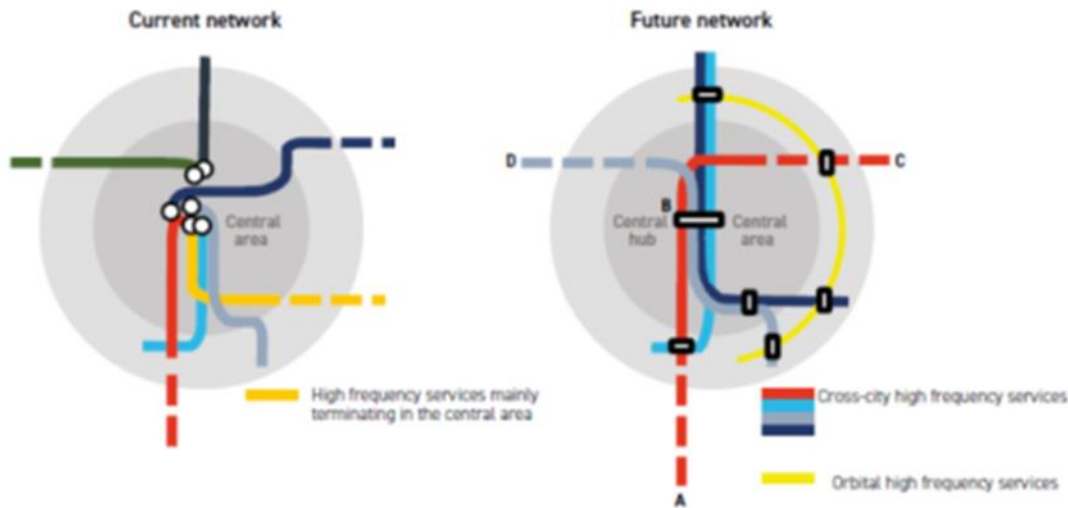
Intensive services and investment on key corridors, with routes that are easier to understand; more demand-responsive services and “socially necessary” transport

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

Services will fall into one of these categories:

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

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

- Transport Hubs for interchange opportunities
- Rail stations
- Major hospitals
- Other health facilities
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Supermarkets and local shopping areas
- Leisure facilities
- Bristol Airport

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.

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 that we provide bus services which young people can use to get to schools, colleges and universities. This will build confidence in using the bus network to make it more likely that they will use bus services in holidays and at the weekends. The location of some schools - in relation to where their pupils live - can create difficulties in providing buses at affordable fares.

We will carry out a review of transport to school for young people who do not qualify for free home-to-school transport by January 2022 and make recommendations on policy.

Bus Depots

For us to meet the above minimum frequencies we are aware that more vehicle resource will be required. At present depot space is at a premium in the region with limited ability for new operators to come into the area. Due to this we will be carrying out a review of bus depots in the region with local bus operators and looking for ways that we can overcome this.

Opportunities

Development of metrobus rapid transit. We are keen to build on the success of metrobus in the region and recognise the Government's aspiration for increasing bus rapid transit in the National Bus Strategy.

The next phase of metrobus corridors have been selected to enable almost complete segregation from general traffic and ensure that services are quick, frequent and reliable and a step change from existing provision. This also includes enhancements to the existing metrobus routes. These corridors will form the backbone of the overall network and make interchange in the city centre a more realistic option, delivering a key component of the West of England Bus Strategy. In turn this will make more efficient use of available kerb space and reduce delays and journey times, whilst also providing a more integrated solution for onward travel across all bus services in the region.

The approach also enables enhanced interchange opportunities at key multi-modal transport hubs. The key hubs will be centred around existing and proposed P&R sites, although we will also deliver hubs on different scales at key interchange locations. These 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. The additional passenger capacity created by the metrobus standard corridor routes provides the opportunity to secure other benefits through an Enhanced Partnership, in line with the Bus Service Improvement Plan. This should see an improved bus offer, not only on these routes, but also on the wider network of connecting services, including multi-operator, contactless ticketing, more comprehensive bus service information and capped, better-value fares.

As previously highlighted three quarters of the West of England- area are regarded as rural and the high levels of congestion within Bristol provide opportunities to develop alternatives for those residents who are driving into the urban areas of Bath and Bristol for employment, education, health or leisure purposes.

The Chew Valley in the South West of the West of England area is particularly poorly served by public transport. The results of a recent survey by the Chew Valley Area Forum Climate & Nature Emergency Working Group on public transport provision in the Chew Valley concluded that people would be more willing to travel by bus if there was an app based planning booking and tracking service and a cross valley shuttle service connecting the villages with the A37 & A38.

In Filwood Park, Hengrove Way (A41740) there are three large housing developments planned which will supply a mix of council, shared ownership and private accommodation. Currently this route is only served by the Airport Flyer which provides an hourly bus service between Bath and Bristol Airport. There is potential to grow a bus service that links the communities of Bedminster, Knowle West, Filwood, Hengrove and Knowle with employment and retail opportunities.

Charlton Hayes and Patchway New neighbourhood developments are new build homes built by various developers. There's a recent new bypass, Hayes Way, linking the A38 with the Mall at Cribbs Causeway. There are many major local employers in the area, including Rolls Royce, Royal Mail, Airbus, BAE and the MoD at Abbeywood. Aztec West Business Park, home to over 100 companies, is also nearby. A number of services currently serve Charlton Hayes includes metrobus. A new Cribbs Patchway metrobus extension will provide a direct route between Parkway Railway Station and Cribbs Causeway via the Patchway New neighbourhood.

Congestion on main Eastern corridor into the city making progress slow on a bus
Lack of routes from East to South - though without going into city centre, there are geographical constraints (Avon valley etc)

Operator Engagement

We have held several meetings with local bus operators to discuss the above proposals and get feedback from the local operators.

Minimum Frequency

Generally supportive of the minimum frequency approach, discussions around pump priming being needed on services where frequencies will be increased. We need to ensure that there will be enough driver resource to cover the enhanced frequency, at present all operators in the region are experiencing staffing shortages.

Network Design

Generally supportive of our approach of radial services with orbital/demand responsive services linking in. Feedback from operators is that we need to ensure that the interchange between services is seamless and passengers are not disadvantaged by changing buses.

Cost of operating proposed bus network

As part of our review of the bus network we have worked with Arup to help us cost the operation of this network. We have looked at this using the above principles and believe that the network will cost the below figures to operate.

Cost of operating full network across the region: £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

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

Cost of operating 1 bus 7-7 Mon-Sat £150k

Cost of operating 1 bus 7-midnight Mon-Sat £200k

Cost of operating 1 bus Sundays £100k

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.

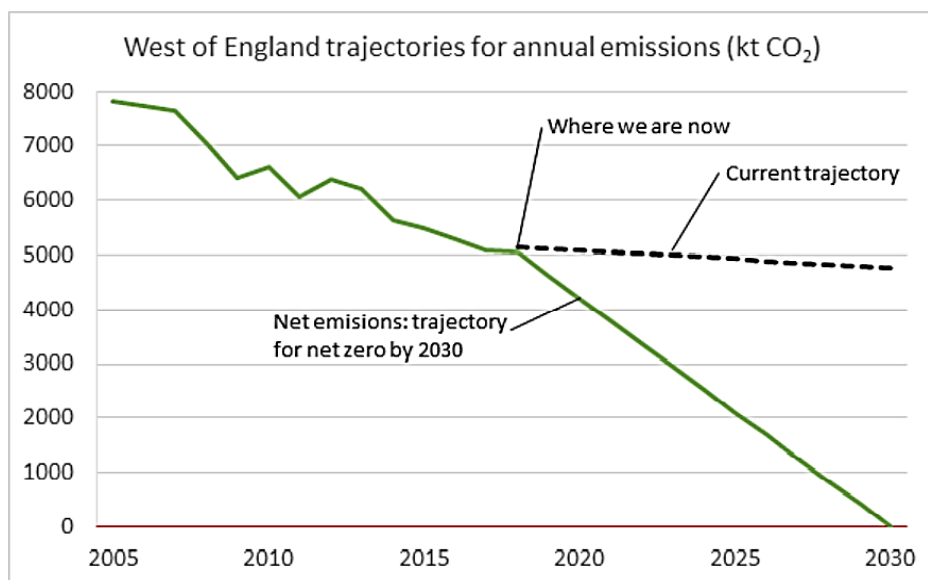
To meet our BSIP objectives, we propose:

- 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:

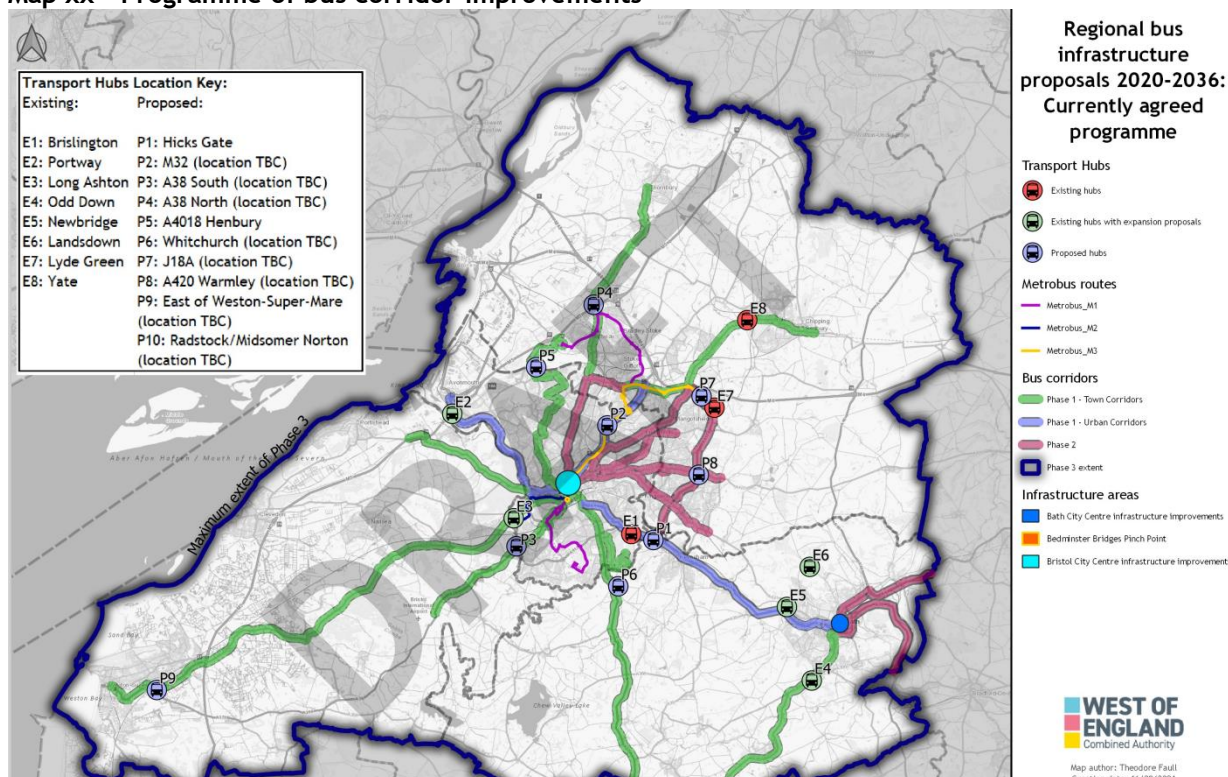
We will focus on connections into the key routes and ensure that all users benefit from access to the same level of service as those on the main corridors.

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 deliver standardised infrastructure across the region to improve the customer experience. This will include a standard approach to service information, as well as improving accessibility and comfort when waiting at the stops. These stops will form a core part of the delivery of Transport Hubs. We are working closely with the Future Transport Zones project team to set up a scalable model of how they can be delivered at key interchange locations and providing the opportunity to, not only interchange better between bus services, but also between different modes. The scale of the hubs will range

from traditional edge of urban area Park & Ride sites to urban areas where onward journey options can be improved.

Bio-diversity will play a key role in all of the infrastructure that we deliver. We will ensure that we mitigate the impacts of any new infrastructure through green infrastructure. There are already good examples around the region where we have delivered these improvements alongside infrastructure changes, including delivering enhanced bio-diversity alongside sustainable urban drainage systems.

Roadworks co-ordination

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:

- Ensure better up front information to ensure that bus operators can adapt to live roadworks
- Co-ordinate on site works through scheme development to minimise the impact on all road users
- Work with contractors, highway authorities and bus operators to provide priority for bus operators through roadworks as changes to the network occur

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.
- Provide simple, integrated ticketing and real time travel information, as people move between different forms of transport under a common brand.
- 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 Hub sites 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 will 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 the creation of a new centralised team, with quicker response times for the maintenance of bus stop infrastructure. This will enable us to create common standard across the West of England.

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.

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 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

The JLTP4 notes that:

“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

above parking controls will allow progress towards the West of England becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and also improving air quality. 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 alternative 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, including 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.”

MORE TEXT TO BE ADDED

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

The current offer

In the West of England area, the principal bus operator is First Bus with a 90% share of passenger journeys. This position has enabled First Bus to invest in digital (smartphone) ticketing and

contactless payment, with some capping in flat fare zones. Over 50% of ticket sales by First Bus are now through digital smartphone channels.

The remaining 10% of the local bus market in the area comprises several smaller operators with fleet sizes ranging from 2 to 45 vehicles. Due to their size it is often not commercially viable for these operators to invest in the latest ticketing and payment technology, and this has created a barrier to introducing multi-operator tickets on smartphones.

The West of England Bus Strategy (adopted in June 2020) recognised that a key challenge to the attractiveness of bus travel is the current complex ticket offers which cannot be used on all buses. As a result, we have initiated work with bus operators to see how we can make improvements together.

Data on average fares per kilometre travelled could not be provided by operators because the alighting point is not captured by the existing ticketing arrangements. Through the rollout of Tap on Tap off readers in 2022-23, enabling PAYG with capping for adults using contactless bank cards in 2022-23 - as proposed in this BSIP, data for journeys made using PAYG will start to be available in 2023.

The Rider multi operator ticket scheme:

- This scheme is managed by the West of England Bus Operators' Association and offers day and week tickets for adults and children broadly matching individual operator zones.
- The rider tickets are less than 1% of total ticket sales in the area - this is as a result of ticket price premiums, a lack of promotion, the limited ticket range, and the network coverage of the principal operator.
- Adult tickets are available as paper tickets and on smartcards Child tickets are on paper only. None of the tickets are currently available as a Pay-As-You-Go offer or on mobile/ smartphone

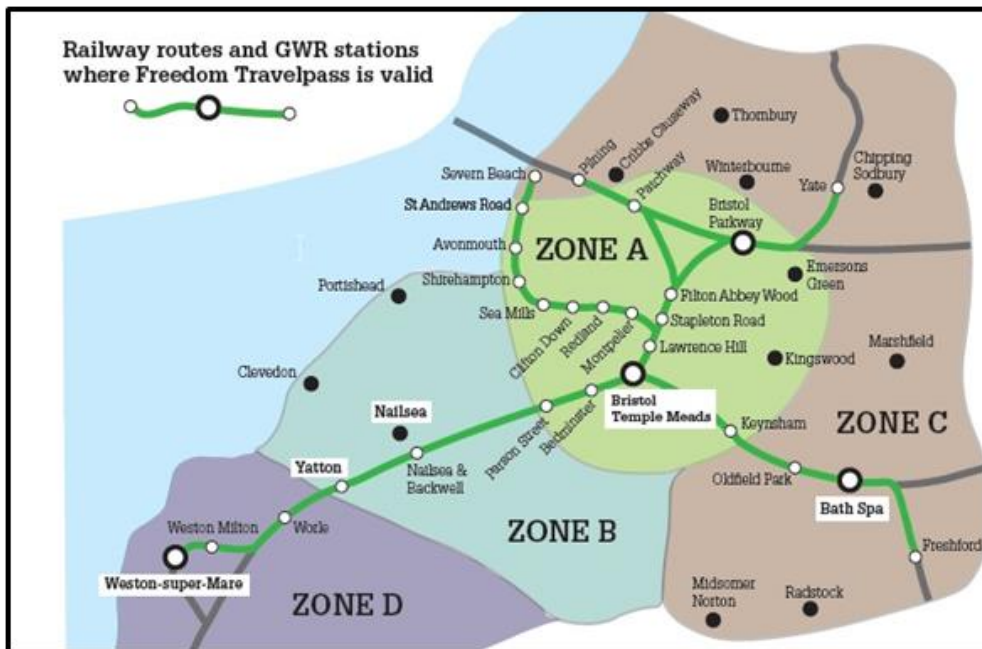
metrobus

- metrobus is a commercially operated bus rapid transit system made up of 3 routes with a further route to be launched in 2023. Partnership arrangements are through a quality partnership scheme (to be superseded by our EP) which sets standards for ticketing and maximum fares.
- No driver interaction with off bus ticketing through at stop vending machines (iPoints) with all tickets (multi operator and individual operator) on smartcard and paper with operators own tickets on mobile/ smartphone
- Inter-availability of single operator period passes is required where there is more than one operator running on a route
- PlusBus is an add-on to single and return train tickets as well as season tickets, which offer unlimited bus and tram travel around the regions. There are Bristol, Bath and Weston-Super-Mare tickets.



Bristol map from PlusBus website

- The Freedom Travelpass provides unlimited travel on all train and most bus services in four zones covering the BSIP area, but is not well-publicised.



Freedom Travelpass zones from Travelwest website

Recent initiatives

Over recent years, we have worked with operators on various ticketing initiatives:

- Support for promoting the Rider scheme
- Support to put adult Rider tickets on Smart card

- Installation of 89 on street ticket vending machines (iPoints), to enable 100% no driver interaction on the metrobus BRT network, including contactless payment, barcode tickets, and multi day/journey tickets sold on smartcard
- Support for smaller bus operators to upgrade to contactless payment and barcode reading through a ticket machine rental scheme

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

Section 2 - Local Operators

In the development of this chapter local bus operators were consulted on the approach to delivering on the WECA/North Somerset 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 though 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 as the norm & multi modal integration:

Operators were generally supportive of developing the multi operator offer - with support from some larger operators to explore the potential to develop the existing scheme to a state where agreed tickets are only purchased in multi operator form with single operator tickets removed.

Operators from the local 'Rider' multi operator scheme identified the need for all operators to have the same on bus technology functionality, including contactless bank and barcode readers, and the introduction of an updated reimbursement process. In order to deliver 'multi operator as the norm' operators have given their support to following timeline for refreshing the existing scheme:

- 16/10/2021 = Formation of a working group (with operators and authority reps) and agreement on scope of activities and person to lead each item
- 17/01/2022 = Draft proposals produced and circulated
- 28/02/2022 = Proposals agreed/signed off
- 29/04/2022 = Refreshed scheme agreement signed off and rollout plan agreed
- End of 2022 = Actions to implement changes and go live/launch refreshed scheme

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.

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 DfTs 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 <i>(max 50 words)</i> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Journey time | | | | |
| Reliability | | | | |
| Passenger numbers | | | | |
| Average passenger satisfaction | | | | |

| | | |
|---|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Delivery - Does your BSIP detail policies to: | Yes / No | Explanation <i>(max 50 words)</i> |
| 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 | | |

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)

Appendix 2

List of supported services

| Service | Route | Operating Days/Times | Operator |
|---------|---|---|--------------|
| 2 | Bath City Centre -Mulberry Park | Mon-Sat Evening | First |
| 6A | Bath City Centre - Larkhall - Bath City Centre | Mon-Sat Evening | First |
| 8 | Bath City Centre - Kingsway | Mon-Sat Evening | First |
| 10 | Rock Street North and Hortham Village to Southmead Hospital | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 10/11 | Southmead Hospital - Avonmouth | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 11 | Bath City Centre - Bathampton | All Journeys | First |
| 12 | Severn Beach - Bristol Parkway | Monday - Saturday | Stagecoach |
| 12 | Severn Beach - Cribbs Causeway | Sundays / Public Holidays | First |
| 12 | Bath City Centre - Haycombe Cemetery | All Journeys | First |
| 13 | Bristol City Centre - Southmead Hospital | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 13 | Southmead Hospital - Shirehampton | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 17 | Southmead Hospital - Kingswood - Keynsham | All Journeys | First |
| 19 | Bath - Cribbs Causeway via Bitton | Sun Daytime | First |
| 20 | Bath - Twerton | Mon-Sat Daytime | First |
| 22 | Twerton - Bath Uni | Monday to Friday University Holidays Only | First |
| 35 | Marshfield - Bristol | All Journeys | First |
| 41 | Malmesbury - Yate | Mon-Sat Off Peak | Coachstyle |
| 42 | Odd Down Park & Ride - Royal United Hospital | Mon-Fri evenings | First |
| 52 | Bristol City Centre - Hengrove | Mon -Fri | HCT Group |
| 79 | Marshfield - Bath Centre | Mon-Fri Peak | Faresaver |
| 82 | Paulton - Radstock | All Journeys | First |
| 84 | Yate - Wotton-under-Edge - Yate | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 85 | Yate - Wotton-under-Edge - Yate | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 86 | Yate - Kingswood | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 94 | Trowbridge - Bath | Mon-Sat | Libra Travel |
| 172 | Bath - Paulton | Mon-Sun Evening | First |

| | | | |
|------|---|---------------------------|------------|
| 179 | Midsomer Norton - Bath | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 185 | Hallatrow - Trowbridge | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 202 | Chipping Sodbury - Winterbourne | All Journeys | Eurotaxi |
| 228 | Colerne - Ralph Allen School | School Days | Faresaver |
| 505 | Long Ashton Park & Ride Site - Southmead Hospital | All Journeys | HCT Group |
| 506 | Bristol City Centre - Southmead Hospital | All Journeys | HCT Group |
| 511 | Bedminster - Hengrove | All Journeys | HCT Group |
| 512 | Totterdown - Bristol City Centre | All Journeys | HCT Group |
| 513 | Knowle - Brislington | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 514 | Knowle - Brislington | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 515 | Stockwood - Hartcliffe | All Journeys | HCT Group |
| 620 | Old Sodbury - Bath | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 622 | Chipping Sodbury - Cribbs Causeway | Monday - Saturday | Stagecoach |
| 622 | Thornbury - Cribbs Causeway | Sundays / Public Holidays | First |
| 623 | Severn Beach - Bristol Centre | All Journeys | Eurotaxi |
| 626 | Wotton-under-Edge - Bristol Centre | All Journeys | Eurotaxi |
| 634 | Tormarton - Kingswood | All Journeys | Eurotaxi |
| 636 | Hengrove - Keynsham | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 640 | Bishop Sutton - Keynsham | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 663 | Somerdale - Chandag Road | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 664 | Keynsham (Somerdale) - Saltford | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 665 | Somerdale - Longmeadow Road | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 668 | Peasedown St John - Bristol | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 672 | Bristol - Blagdon | All Journeys | Eurotaxi |
| 680 | North Yate - Filton College | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 683 | Keynsham - Wells | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 684 | Wick-Keynsham | All Journeys | Eurotaxi |
| 700 | Bath City Centre - Sion Hill | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 716 | Bath City Centre - Newbridge | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 734 | Bath City Centre - Bathwick | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 752 | Hinton Blewett - Bath | All Journeys | BANES |
| 754 | Hinton Blewett - Radstock | All Journeys | BANES |
| 757 | Combe Hay - Midsomer Norton | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 768 | Midsomer Norton - Bath | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 779 | Bath City Centre - Gloucester Road | All Journeys | CT Coaches |
| 948 | Pucklechurch - Sir Bernard Lovell Academy | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 963 | Patchway - Winterbourne Academy | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| 967 | South Yate - Chipping Sodbury School | All Journeys | Stagecoach |
| Bris | Brislington P&R | All Journeys | First |
| Port | Portway P&R | All Journeys | First |

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------|--|-------|
| D1 | Trowbridge - Bath | Mon-Sat Evening | First |
| T2 | Thornbury - Bristol Centre | Mon-Sat Daytime | First |
| T2 | Thornbury - Bristol Centre | Mon -Sat Late Eve | First |
| Y4 | Yate - Bristol Centre | Mon-Sat Evenings | First |
| Y5 | Yate - Bristol Centre | Mon-Sat Eves and Sun | First |
| Y6 | Yate - Southmead Hospital | Mon-Sun Daytime every other journey and evenings | First |

List of supported services in North Somerset

| | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 51 | Weston Super Mare - Wrington | Mon - Fri daytime | Stagecoach West |
| 53 | Clevedon Circular | Mon - Sat daytime | HTC Group |
| 54 | Clevedon - Bristol Airport | Mon - Sat daytime | HTC Group |
| 55 | Bristol Airport - South Bristol | Mon - Sat daytime | HTC Group |
| 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 |

Appendix 4 - 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. 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.

Appendix 5: West of England Bus Strategy and JLTP4 consultation summary

Further to the above, in the last three years we have undertaken a good level of consultation on public transport in the West of England. The [West of England Bus Strategy](#) was consulted upon extensively in January 2020 (with nearly 2,000 responses) and adopted in June 2020. It considers options to improve the bus network and set out how further growth in bus usage can be encouraged. Summarised in the [Bus Strategy Consultation Report](#), the consultation was seen as a success with support for the strategy. Responses showed that:

- 85% of people either strongly agreed, agreed or somewhat agreed with the objectives:
 - developing a comprehensive and joined-up bus network;
 - maximising bus service reliability and reducing journey times;
 - providing simplified ticketing;
 - addressing congestion;
 - developing accessible passenger waiting facilities, and;
 - continuing to improve passenger satisfaction.
- A significant majority (84.3%) agreed to the reallocation of road space to prioritise buses, with over half of all people “strongly agreeing”;
- Over two-thirds of responses agreed with the proposed target: doubling passenger numbers by 2036;
- Nearly four out of five (79.8%) people either strongly agreed or agreed that rural communities would be better served by connections to transfer hubs with over four out of five (82%) people agreeing that other transport solutions should be explored to serve rural areas instead of conventional buses;
- The highest ranked priorities for supported bus services were access to employment, hospitals and education facilities;
- The highest ranked bus strategy themes were a well-designed bus network, reliable and faster bus services and modern, clean accessible buses.

The West of England JLTP4 (Joint Local Transport Plan 4) also undertook a full public consultation in February and March 2019 for six weeks and generated over 4,000 responses. The responses resulted in making over 3,500 edits and improvements to JLTP4 as a result of the consultation, which overall showed (as seen in the [Consultation Report](#)):

- a strong enthusiasm for the aims & objectives of the plan (65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed);
- support for rail, bus improvements (58 responses) and active travel (39 responses);

As a result of the consultation, key changes to the plan from the 3,500+ edits included strengthening the West of England authorities’ [Climate Emergency declarations](#), stronger text on demand management and the reallocation of street space, the removal of references to the withdrawn Joint Spatial Plan and adding the Environmental, Equalities & Health impacts of JLTP4.