

# Report to the Executive Committee

**Date of Meeting: 8 February 2023**

**Subject of Report: Bus Service Improvement Plan – Update**

**Town or Parish: All**

**Officer/Member Presenting: Councillor Steve Hogg, Executive Member for Transport and Highways**

**Key Decision: YES**

**Reason:** Financial value and affects communities across the whole Local Authority area. The BSIP project will result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure or making savings of £500,000 or over and 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

### Approvals

1. Approve a three-year extension of the Public Transport Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to enable public bus contracts to be procured beyond the September 2023 expiry.
2. Approves the initial deployment zones for Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) as shown in **appendix 5**, noting that these may be amended across the life of the contract as the introduction of DRT is a trial.
3. Endorses the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (**see appendix 3**) in February 2023 for BSIP and public transport to be signed by the Directors of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and NSC, incorporating joint governance arrangements for BSIP and Public Transport between the WECA and North Somerset Council Transport Authorities.

### Delegations

4. Approves that the Contract Award for the BSIP Design and Build be delegated to the Director of Place, advised by the Section 151 Officer and Head of Strategic Procurement, due to the decision-making timescale required being within the pre-

election period. This delegation is sought only for any decision required to be made during the pre-election period.

5. Endorses the current iteration of the draft Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS) as consulted during December 22/January 23 and attached in **appendix 2** and delegates to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport in consultation with the Place Panel the authority to approve the final Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme on behalf of North Somerset Council.
6. Notes the current BSIP as updated in December 2022 (**appendix 1 via link**) and delegates to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the authority to approve the December 2022 iteration of the document on behalf of North Somerset Council following engagement with Place Scrutiny on the 20/01/2023. .

## The Executive Note

7. Note that the following amendments to the Council's revenue budget will be approved:
  - Increase to the revenue budget for 2022/23 of £1.2m to be funded by BSIP revenue grant will be approved by the Director of Corporate Services / S151 Officers as per the delegation approved in the June Executive report.
  - Increase to the revenue budget for 2023/24 of £6.7m and 2024/25 of £5m to be funded by BSIP revenue grant will be approved as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan in February 2023.
  - Any future amendments to the profile of the revenue budget will follow the financial regulation thresholds.

## Summary of Report

- 1.1. Delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan in North Somerset will revolutionise public transport, making it a viable alternative to travel by private vehicle for many of our residents. The programme prioritises infrastructure improvements and service investment over the next two years. It includes new bus shelters, bus interchanges for Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead, improved passenger experience, more environmentally friendly vehicles, improved fares and ticketing, better branding and information, shorter journey times, more reliable services and measures to help people access public transport at the beginning and end of their journeys.
- 1.2. The BSIP funding grant has been confirmed by letter from the Department for Transport (DfT) on 24 November 2022. This has confirmed the indicative allocation in full of a) capital funding award of £47,983,000 allocated to North Somerset Council, and b) the indicative revenue funding award of £57,505,498 allocated jointly to the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and North Somerset Council (NSC). The Memorandum of Understanding for public transport between WECA and NSC sets out our approach to joint working and governance of the resources and programme.
- 1.3. This funding package offers a transformational level of funding, eclipsing anything previously seen in public transport in the history of North Somerset Council. The investment enables the council to address the decline of the public transport market due to the COVID pandemic and represents a genuine opportunity to deliver on 2030

net zero carbon reduction targets, by improving the effectiveness of public transport to a level that creates a viable alternative to the use of private vehicles.

- 1.4. The grant will enable the council to rapidly transform the efficiency and effectiveness of bus services across the North Somerset area, by delivering on a range of integrated work in the following areas:
  - Network and services
  - Fares and ticketing
  - Passenger experience
  - Enhanced partnership and integration
  - Infrastructure
  
- 1.5. The North Somerset Council-only capital grant of £48 million will be focussed on delivery of reliably faster buses, which are cheaper to operate, meaning fewer resources (drivers and vehicles) are required to operate the same service. This results in either the possibility of enhancing service frequency or lowering the cost requirements to run a service, resulting in more sustainable and reliable bus services (essential to grow passenger confidence and patronage levels). We will do this through:
  - Investment in around 300 new modern bus shelters and stop improvements plus delivery of three new interchanges in our key towns
  - A series of first and last mile improvements for active travel and micro-mobility, helping people access public transport
  - Bus traffic signal priority and enforcement along all the key bus routes or at delay hotspots plus 18 key bus priority schemes. The first seven of these schemes to be delivered in 2023.
  
- 1.6. Our Bus Service Improvement Plan document, which is our local delivery plan, sets out our ambitious targets. This has recently been updated to reflect the grant and Enhanced Partnership. This includes targets to:
  - reduce bus journey times by 10%
  - ensure 95% of services run on time
  - return to pre-pandemic patronage by 2025 and continuing to grow beyond that,
  - increase passenger satisfaction
  - aim for all buses to be zero emission by 2030.
  
- 1.7. The BSIP delivery plans work together to deliver our aims:
  - Make the bus convenient - taking our residents where they want to go at the times, they need to travel by extending the current network, enhancing frequencies, and optimising services.
  - Make our public transport network co-ordinated – by providing a recognisable and consistent brand across the area, easy access to information, integrated ticketing across operators and enabling simple connections across modes and services.
  - Deliver a positive customer experience – by bringing our bus stops up to a high quality and consistent standard, delivering new accessible and environmentally friendly buses, offering a value for money and affordable service for all, including some targeted fares reductions; also ensuring that people are provided with the

right information as and when they need it, all so that buses are an easy-to-use and a natural choice.

1.8. The BSIP grant cannot be drawn down until the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme are legally 'made'. We plan to do this in early February 2023 following a process set out in law. This report provides an update on this EP process, which is progressing through statutory consultations. The EP is in two parts; the Plan (EPP) sets out the objectives and a clear vision of the improvements that we aim to deliver, reflecting the BSIP, and the EP Scheme (EPS) is a delivery plan and contains a legally binding set of commitments by the local transport and highways authorities as well as the bus operators to ensure we jointly achieve the EP Plan objectives.

1.9. The timescales for BSIP are as follows:

Date	Activity
24 November 2022	Bus Service Improvement Plan funding confirmation
29 November – end January	Enhanced Partnership consultations (Bus operator consultation 29 November for 28 days followed by 14 days statutory consultations).
February 2023	Enhanced Partnership adoption and legal making. BSIP grant draw down.
Spring 2023	Capital and Revenue scheme commencement
31 March 2025	All BSIP DFT funded schemes delivered.

1.10. However, despite the significant delays in grant confirmation, the delivery timescales for the project have not been amended by the Department for Transport. This has reduced the project delivery timescales from 3 years (in the bid) to 2 years and 1 month. This reduced timescale for delivery of the BSIP grant outputs alongside the election period is the driver for the delegations listed above, which will enable this priority programme to maintain momentum. The full Terms and Conditions of the Grant Award are also not yet known and will be provided by DfT following the legal 'making' of the EP. Given the uncertainty intrinsic in both the EP process and due to not having sight of the grant conditions, this report seeks a delegation to the Director of Place (advised by the Section 151 Officer and Assistant Director Legal & Governance) to make decisions required to ensure BSIP is able to be progressed in accordance with timescales contained with the EP and BSIP grant conditions.

**1.11.** Officers have been working to mobilise the project programme with our partners across the West of England. This report provides an update on key work areas but also seeks a number of delegated authorities in relation to the spend and procurement processes between April 2023 and September 2023 inclusive, as required to ensure timely delivery BSIP outputs and funding requirements and ensure there is no delay caused by the election period.

**1.12.** This report provides an update on the following aspects of the BSIP programme:

A. BSIP Updates

- i. Funding and delivery arrangements
- ii. The West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan
- iii. The Enhanced Partnership
- iv. MOU and Governance arrangements between WECA and NSC

B. Procurement processes

- i. delegation of the contract award for the Design and Build of 11 BSIP infrastructure schemes to enable us to meet DfT funding deadlines.
  - ii. bus shelters and stop standards and the procurement approach.
  - iii. DPS headroom
- C. Bus services improvement plans including traditional and Demand Responsive Transport services

1.13. The Executive is advised that a separate BSIP report is being brought to the same meeting which covers the ANPR Commissioning and Procurement Plan. This is under separate title in accordance with our council processes for Commissioning Plan documents. It covers the procurement approach for the bus lane enforcement technology to be introduced through the BSIP programme.

## 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 West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan
  - 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);
  - The emerging NSC Local Plan 2038.

In particular, the proposals in this report directly support the council's corporate priorities, with particular emphasis on transport decarbonisation and contribute to the council's aim to deliver net zero emissions.

## Details

### A. BSIP Updates

- 3.1. This section of the report provides an overview and updates on the BSIP programme including:
- i. Funding
  - ii. Delivery arrangements for revenue and capital projects
  - iii. The West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan
  - iv. The Enhanced Partnership
  - v. MOU and Governance arrangements between WECA and NSC

#### i. Funding arrangements

3.2. Following the indicative allocation letter of 4 April 2022, DfT wrote confirming our grant funding allocation on 24 November 2022 of up to £105,488,498 (of which £47,983,000 is capital and solely for North Somerset Council, and £57,505,498 is revenue for both authorities) to support delivery of our BSIP. The funding is allocated across three financial years 2022/23 to 2024/25 as below, with the profile for each funding year is set out in the following table:

Financial Year	Revenue	Capital	Total
2022/23	£5,553,871.00	£6,660,000.00	£12,213,871.00

2023/24	£29,750,134.00	£20,513,000.00	£50,263,134.00
2024/25	£22,201,493.00	£20,810,000.00	£43,011,493.00
Total	£57,505,498.00	£47,983,000.00	£105,488,498.00

**3.3.** This funding award can only be drawn down following legal ‘making’ of an Enhanced Partnership between the Councils and bus operators and the Department for Transport (DfT) will only issue the grant conditions once the EP content agreed with the DfT Relationship Manager has been ‘made’. Once that milestone has been reached, DfT will issue a formal grant letter, including full details of monitoring and reporting requirements and governance processes, and release the funding. Release of the funding is also conditional on continued compliance with conditions issued by DfT on 4 April 2022 (which includes the submitted Annex 4 which sets out the strategic NSC and WECA delivery programme) as well as a satisfactory Enhanced Partnership, with sufficient clarity on how we and our bus operators will deliver the outcomes set out in the BSIP.

## ii. Delivery Updates

### Revenue Programme Update

- 3.4. **Market Conditions:** The market as of January 2023 has recovered to 80% of pre-pandemic patronage, with 75% of the old network mileage and commercial reductions in service provision. Concessionary fares recovery remains stuck at around 60% of the pre-pandemic utilisation. The commercial bus network remains in a fragile state post pandemic, although the main investment corridors A370, A369, A38 show positive recovery trends, coupled with an improving driver recruitment and retention situation in North Somerset, there is scope to restore and improve the frequency of service from the spring of 2023 as per the BSIP. NSC Supported Services have also been reduced over the past 18 months due by the recent failure of contractors. The reliability of our continuing services has been diminished due the effects of a driver shortage, service users confidence has also dropped as a result.
- 3.5. **Bus Services:** Over the coming months we will invest BSIP funds to bolster services. From April 2023, The X1 and X4 will receive a frequency enhancements. The X5 and X8 can be transformed with new routes and be complimented by DRT services. Most services will also run from 07:00 till 23:00 where there is a demand. Given the infrastructure investment program will take 26 months to complete, financial support will be required in some instances to recompense the delay during construction on routes, there will be a need to provide short term subsidy to increase the frequencies on some routes initially, with investment aiming to deliver commercially viable services long-term through growing the public transport market and creating more reliable services.
- 3.6. **Fares:** The West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and NSC previously agreed an ambitious fares package, which was implemented ‘at risk’ in September 2022 prior to the BSIP grant being agreed. This largely reflects a national cost of living fares package which introduces maximum fares of £2 in central conurbations and reduced cost fares for longer distance fares. A £1 child ticket (up to age 16) has also been implemented, along with £7 daily cap on daily multi-operator tickets. There are options to further enhance the fares package in Spring 2023 to provide time limited

promotions, such as discounted travel for Job seekers, NHS / Blue light workers, Care workers etc. This is subject to review of effectiveness of the current fares package.

- 3.7. Branding: WECA and NSC are working to refresh the current Travel West brand that has been in use for over a decade, the aim is to provide a unified and refreshed brand that makes public transport more recognisable akin to the TFL model in London, and less brand specific, this will be used on promotion, network information and vehicles.
- 3.8. Demand Responsive Transport: This is a new form of flexibly registered bus services serving bus stops where demand arises, this typically uses smaller more agile vehicles that can access previously inaccessible parts of the network, or where demand has been too low to sustain a full-sized commercial service on a fixed line route. The CA and NSC have tendered new DRT zones (**see appendix 5**) to be mobilised from April 2023, the services will accept concessionary fares and align with the current fares package.

### **Infrastructure Package Scheme Progress**

- 3.9. The Governments National Bus Strategy (March 2021) expects local authorities and local bus operators to work together to drive up quality and efficiency of buses and create a virtuous circle: increasing usage, but also reducing operating costs so better services can be sustained without permanently higher subsidy. In congested places, the key intervention will be significantly more ambitious bus priority schemes, making services faster, more reliable, more attractive to passengers and cheaper to run. The West of England BSIP's ambition mirrors this to improve the quality and provision of bus services to a level that creates an attractive alternative to the use of private vehicles. This will deliver on the Council's commitment to decarbonise transport. Transport is the largest CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions sector in North Somerset therefore this delivers on a key priority for the council as part of its commitment to tackle the climate emergency.
- 3.10. Extensive public consultation was carried out on the West of England Bus Strategy in February/March 2020 with c.2000 responses received. The full consultation report is published here: <https://travelwest.info/app/uploads/2020/02/Bus-Strategy-Consultation-Report.pdf> . These surveys showed that the highest priorities for the West of England area are 'a well-designed network that is simple, coherent, and efficient across the region' and 'more reliable and faster buses through priority infrastructure and wider policy' with both receiving around 70% endorsement as the highest priorities locally.
- 3.11.** The programme of bus priority measures and schemes has been agreed and forms part of the BSIP strategy, the BSIP bid to Government and the EP. This update focuses on the redesign of over 18 junctions and routes which are known to cause delays to services. As part of these schemes, we will be making changes to road layouts and traffic regulations to enable enforcement of bus priority. As well as these 18 key schemes we will make other changes in order to create faster and more reliable bus services, alongside a programme of shelter and stop, interchange and first and last mile improvements.
- 3.12.** The first package of seven schemes is programmed for construction starting in 2023:
  - A38 at Barrow Gurney
  - A370 Long Ashton bypass
  - A370 at Brockley Combe

- A370 at Wood Hill
- A370 at Congresbury Smallway junction
- A369 at Beggar Bush Lane
- A369 Martcombe Road

3.13. The engagement period these package 1 BSIP schemes (above) was completed in Autumn 2022, closing on Friday 21 October 2022. Officers and their design consultants have considered all responses received and responded to the comments made. An engagement report (**appendix 4**) explains the process that was followed, and a table sets out the responses received and the project team response to each of those comments. This is also published on the BSIP webpage. In summary: the Council received 16 responses, mainly from Parish Councils and overall there is a great deal of support in general for the bus priority scheme proposals, however some minor or detailed concerns have been raised at specific locations which we have addressed. We have advised stakeholders by email that the engagement report is now available to read online.

3.14. Further engagement will be undertaken as appropriate for the remaining programme of schemes for BSIP during 2023/24 and 2024/25. We will be engaging with key stakeholders over the course of the programme, sharing designs and providing updates regarding scheme delivery.

Design and Build Bus priority schemes:	Transport Hubs & Interchanges:	Other infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queensway Worle / A370 B3440</li> <li>• A370 Backwell Signals</li> <li>• Worle High Street Bus Gate</li> <li>• Uphill Roundabout</li> <li>• A369 Portbury Hundred</li> <li>• A369 Rownham Hill</li> <li>• B3133 Southern Way/Central Way RAB</li> <li>• Ettlingen Way RAB/M5 J20</li> <li>• Tickenham Rd/North Way/All Saints Ln</li> <li>• A38 Churchill Signals</li> <li>• A38 Lime Kiln RAB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weston Central</li> <li>• Worle</li> <li>• Clevedon Triangle</li> <li>• Nailsea Link Road</li> <li>• Portishead High Street</li> <li>• Other locations to be determined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 300 shelters and stops improvements</li> <li>• First and last mile improvements for active travel and micro-mobility</li> </ul>

3.15. Further information about the procurement processes for the 11 bus priority schemes being delivered via a Design & Build contract is in section 3.62 of this report.

3.16. In order to progress the programme of shelter and stop improvements several workstreams are in train as set out in paragraph 3.67 below under 'Procurement'.

### iii. BSIP Update

3.17. A joint BSIP has been approved between North Somerset Council and WECA. Our BSIP shows how we will meet the requirements of the National Bus Strategy and how buses contribute to our regional ambitions to develop a well-connected sustainable transport network that works for residents, delivering clean and inclusive growth and



helping the transition to a net zero carbon economy by 2030 - in line with our Climate Emergency declarations. Passenger groups, MPs and the business sector were also invited to give their views on the local bus network in July and August 2021 as part of the development of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

- 3.18. Bus Back Better, the national strategy, requires all BSIPs be reviewed and updated annually. In line with this requirement, our BSIP was updated and approved by the Executive Member in December 2023 and published to our website here <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-12/West-of-England-Bus-Service-Improvement-Plan%20-%201st%20Annual%20Review%20-%20Final%20-%2020221221.pdf>. This update was a technical process to align the BSIP to the grant award given that the BSIP bid was not awarded in full, despite being the second largest BSIP award nationally, and did not fundamentally change any principles from the previous document.
- 3.19. The West of England BSIP will be reviewed jointly by officers of the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council in December every year, updated, and reported to DfT and the West of England Planning, Housing & Transport Board (comprising the Mayor of the West of England and relevant Members of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council).
- 3.20. This report recommends that Executive Committee notes the current BSIP as updated in December 2022 and delegates to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the authority to approve future annual BSIP updates on behalf of North Somerset Council.

#### **iv. Enhanced Partnership**

- 3.21. The BSIP will be delivered through a delivery mechanism called an Enhanced Partnership (EP). Our BSIP states that “Delivering the initiatives outlined in our BSIP is best achieved by collaboration between local transport authorities and operators. That is why the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council are working in partnership with local bus operators and highway authorities to develop an Enhanced Partnership (EP)”. In the West of England this builds on our strong track record of success in working with bus operators to deliver public transport initiatives – such as the Greater Bristol Bus Network, BathRider and AvonRider ticket schemes,

Bath Transport Package, Weston-super-Mare public transport interchange and metrobus.

- 3.22. The EP is both a delivery plan and a governance mechanism which will help the relevant authorities and partners work together to deliver the outcomes of the BSIP. The EP contains analysis and objectives for the following:
- Analysis of local bus services
  - Passenger experience
  - Bus journey speeds
  - Interventions
  - Review mechanisms
  - Geography of the scheme (the West of England area)
  - Competition test
- 3.23. The EP Plan (EPP) sets out the objectives and a clear vision of the improvements that the EP is aiming to deliver. The EP Scheme (EPS) is a delivery plan. This is a legally binding set of commitments by LTAs, LHAs and Bus Operators to achieve the EP Plan objectives. The EP document and its associated Enhanced Partnership Schemes have been updated to reflect the scope of the DFT funding. Funded commitments are included in the EP Scheme wherever possible, for example reflecting the scope of the BSIP and CRSTS funding awards to the Councils to which bus operators have made a general commitment to making proportionate improvements. The EP commits both parties to a range of policy and operational actions. For NSC this includes through strategic planning, parking management and pricing, enforcement and road-space reallocation.
- 3.24. The Transport Act (2000) lays out a statutory process for making the EP Plan and Scheme, with steps for both Councils and operators. An EP is created through a series of detailed negotiations in accordance with section 138F of the Transport Act 2000. Bus operators and Local Highway Authorities (LHAs) were engaged in the preparation of the plan. The revised EP has passed a mandatory consultation with the affected bus operators and statutory bodies in January 2023. The EP will be made in Early February releasing the BSIP funding.
- 3.25. Bus Operators are expected to benefit from unprecedented investment in local bus infrastructure and services. The EP Deal totals £512.5M incorporating £407m of CRSTS (WECA capital), £48m (BSIP NSC capital) £57.5m (BSIP shared WECA/NSC revenue). In return operators are expected to share the investment risk by committing to their own investment (over and above the status quo) in fares, services and vehicles.
- 3.26. The EP Plan and Scheme will replace all existing voluntary partnership agreements, traffic regulation conditions and voluntary codes of conduct between the LTAs, LHAs and Bus Operators. The Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme for metrobus will be revoked. In future Bespoke Variation Arrangements will be made as capital schemes

progress through the design and consultation stages, and operators make improvement to services to reflect savings in their operating costs.

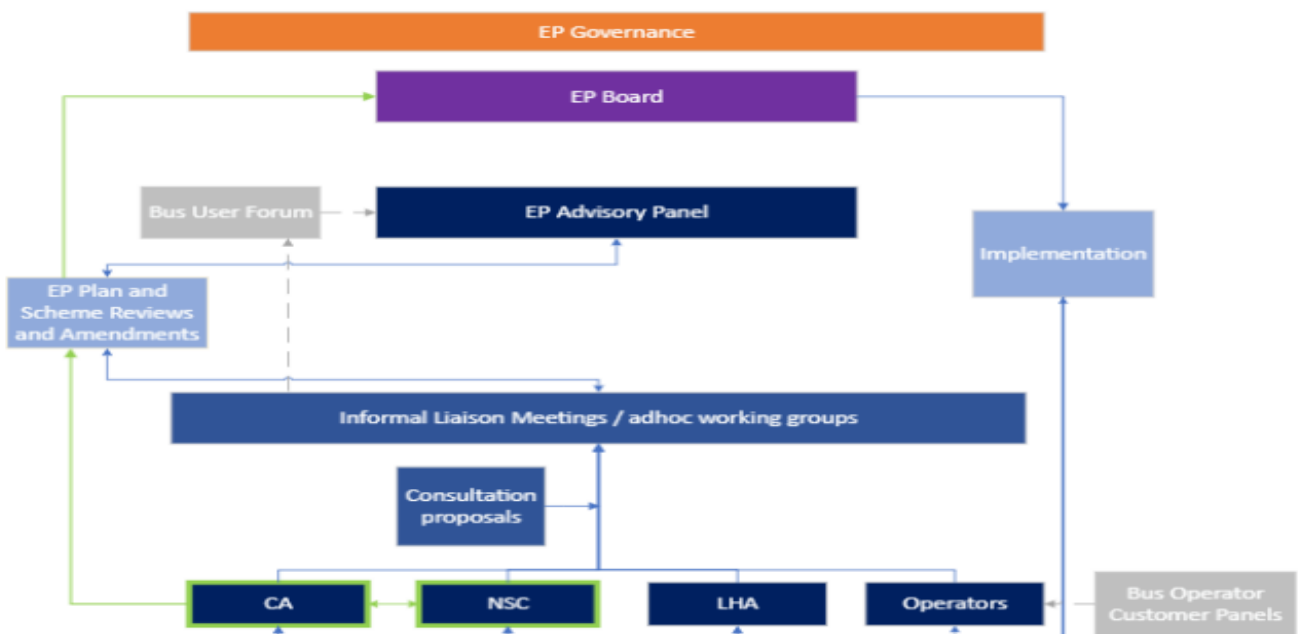
### 3.27. Review.

- The EP Plan will have no end date but will be reviewed jointly by the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council every year in conjunction with the annual reviews of the BSIP.
- The EP Plan will be reviewed every year after it has been made, where possible, in conjunction with the annual review of the BSIP.
- The EP Scheme will be reviewed twice a year by the EP Advisory Panel - once after completion of the annual review of the BSIP and once after reporting of progress towards the BSIP targets.
- The outcome of reviews and any recommendations arising therefrom will be reported to the EP Board, where decisions can be taken to amend the scheme according to Bespoke Variation Arrangements. Reviews will consider how well the EP Plan and EP Scheme are working, progress towards targets and general factors affecting the local bus market.
- In addition to formal reviews, the EP Advisory Panel will give bus users and stakeholders an avenue to bring issues to the attention of the LTAs, LHAs and Bus Operators.

3.28. Directors in WECA and the Executive Member for Highways and Transport have delegated approvals in place to approve the final Enhanced Partnership Plan.

3.29. Once the EP Plan and Scheme are made, the Governance process laid out in the EPS comes into effect.

- Amendments to the EP Plan or Scheme will be considered by the EP Advisory Panel
- Decisions to amend the EP Scheme will be taken by the EP Board
- If the EP Board decides the EP Plan should be amended, the statutory process is triggered (Section 138O, Transport Act 2000).



3.30. This report seeks endorsement of the current iteration of the draft Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) and Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS) as consulted during December 22/January 23 and attached in appendix 3 and delegates to the

Executive Member for Highways and Transport in consultation the authority to approve the final Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme on behalf of North Somerset Council.

## **v. Governance and Memorandum of Understanding**

- 3.31. This report seeks endorsement of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for BSIP and public transport to be signed by Directors of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and NSC in February 2023. The MOU incorporates joint Governance arrangements for BSIP and Public Transport between the WECA and NSC to facilitate transparent and accountable reporting and decision making (attached in Appendix 6).
- 3.32. A previous BSIP Memorandum of Understanding was signed in December 2021, and we have now updated this following the receipt of grant award. This committed both authorities to cooperative working arrangements. Key updates include:
- BSIP grant award details
  - Indicative split of funding by population (22.5% North Somerset Council share)
- 3.33. Within North Somerset Council, a BSIP Project Board will steer and oversee the delivery of the programme in line with the Council's approved BSIP delivery team structure and delivery framework.

## **B. Procurement Processes**

- 3.34. This section covers the Procurement processes underway to progress the project
- vi. delegation of the contract award for the Design and Build of 11 BSIP infrastructure schemes to enable us to meet DfT funding deadlines.
  - vii. bus shelters and stop standards progress update.
  - viii. DPS headroom

### **vi. Contract award for the Design and Build of 11 BSIP infrastructure schemes to enable us to meet DfT funding deadlines.**

- 3.35. To enable the DfT's delivery timescales to be met we are seeking delegated authority for the approval of award of contract for the Design and Build Contract to the Director of Place, advised by the Section 151 Officer and Head of Strategic Procurement.
- 3.36. The Design and Build Contract Commissioning Plan was approved on 12 July 2022 and the Procurement Plan on 7 December 2022. This approved the route to market and set out the way in which the approved commission will be delivered. The design and build contract relates to 11 schemes to be delivered by a Design and Build Contractor under a single NEC4 Engineering Construction Contract to deliver the package of 11 design and build projects. The contract will deliver preliminary and detailed design stages and construction of each scheme. The design and build contract duration is for 22 months from June 2023 to April 2025 with the estimated total contract value for the design and build contract totalling c.£25 million.

Table 1: Timeline for Design and Build Contract

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Executive Member Approval of DfT Grant	November 2022
Supplier Engagement (D&B)	October & December 2022
Procure Design and Build Contractor	January 2023 to March 2023

Evaluation	March / April 2023
Internal Governance (falls in Pre-Election Period)	April 2023
Award of Design and Build Contract	May / June 2023
Contract Delivery	June 2023 to April 2025

- 3.37. Contract Standing Orders requires the value of the Design and Build Contract Award to be approved by the Executive. However, the internal governance and award stages (see above timeline) for this contract will coincide with the May 2023 council elections. No Executive meetings will take place in the Pre-Election Period (21 March to 4 May 2023).
- 3.38. This uncertainty around when the Contract Award will be approved therefore requires an alternative approach to reduce the risk of a delay impacting on both the BSIP programme and project funding. As such, this report requests the Contract Award decision is delegated to the Director of Place, advised by the Section 151 Officer and Head of Strategic Procurement. This approach is supported by the Chair of the Place Policy and Scrutiny Panel.
- 3.39. The Contract Award will be a Key Decision and will therefore be advertised on the council's Forward Plan and be subject to call-in periods, in line with the council's Contract Standing Orders.

#### **vii. Bus shelters and stop standards and the procurement approach**

- 3.40. WECA on behalf of the West of England highway and transport authorities have commissioned production of a draft bus stop and shelter design standards document. Following input from all authorities, this technical document will be approved by Directors across the West of England in March 2023.
- 3.41. NSC is completing a Procurement Plan for the development of a framework to which all Councils in the West of England will be named as a participating authorities on the framework. This approach will support cohesive branding over time and deliver a consistent and well designed network, which is one of the highest community priorities of the West of England Bus Strategy: 'a well-designed network that is simple, coherent, and efficient across the region'.
- 3.42. The Procurement Plan is being drafted for approval by the Executive Member (advised by Director and Head of Procurement) in late January/early February. The Contract Award decisions are to be approved by the Director, advised by Head of Procurement and Section 151 in accordance with Contract Standing Orders, in May.

#### **viii. DPS Extension**

- 3.43. The council uses a Dynamic Purchasing Agreement to secure passenger transport provision, this includes the supply of socially necessary bus services where the commercial market is unable to supply. The current DPS is due to expire in

September 2023. The increased revenue spend on supported services will need to be efficiently spent From April 2023 with a peak of spend in September 2023.

- 3.44. Under decision 1 We are seeking a decision to extend the DPS for a further 3 years, noting that any contracts tendered under the DPS require a sign off from the relevant budget holder and Director in accordance with the financial standing orders.

### **viii. ANPR - Commissioning and Procurement Plan, enforcement resourcing & investment**

- 3.45. A bus lane ANPR camera Commissioning and Procurement Plan is under separate cover to this meeting. The delivery and enforcement of the ANPR bus lane system forms a part of our commitment in the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme, which is a legally binding set of obligations to the Councils and operators that are signatories to it.
- 3.46. To secure the benefits of the investment being made in ANPR cameras to improve bus service operations – both service reliability and journey time savings – it is vital that we effectively enforce our new ANPR sites.
- 3.47. We propose to use BSIP funding to ensure teams are bolstered in all areas in a timely manner and to put relevant contracts in place in advance of ANPR locations coming into effect. Any recruitment will be subject to a separate Director decision.

## **C. Bus services improvement plans including traditional and Demand Responsive Transport services**

### **Traditional Services**

- 3.48. The BSIP sets out desired minimum service frequencies that should be provided to towns and villages in NSC according to population size. The network will be reviewed every 6 months, with key aims being to adjust the network to match or drive changing demand, and to restore suitable forms of service to meet these frequencies, either commercially in exchange for investment in bus priority measures, or as a supported service in the form of a fixed line bus route or DRT.
- 3.49. North Somerset has lost circa 25% of the network mileage as a result of the pandemic effects on consumer confidence and changed travel habits over the last couple of years. Patronage has only recovered to 80% of fare paying passengers, and 60% of concessionary fare users.
- 3.50. BSIP revenue funding enables the council to transform the network by implementing new or improved services with higher frequencies and longer hours of operation making buses the go-to choice for more of our travel requirements, this will be critical as the bus network and demand recovers.
- 3.51. The council will draw up a revised supported service network plan to be implemented over the next 12 months that align with the spending plans for our adopted BSIP (as outlined in Appendix 5). However, initial improvements to the network will be delivered by operators in exchange for pump priming funding to compensate extra resources

required to operate the services as the infrastructure is built over the next 2 years early improvements are likely to include;

- X1 increase to 15 minute frequency from every 20
- X4 increase to 20 minute frequency from every 30
- X5 to become a supported service, re-route via Yatton when improvement works completed
- X6 / X7 to return to pre-covid routing, increased off peak running up to 23:00 from 21:00
- X8 to return on an hourly basis
- X9 (no change)
- Service 3 to be supported until a redesign of the WSM network can be completed in 2023/24 as new infrastructure comes online.

These and other improvements will be considered in consultation with bus users and residents over the next 12 months.

### **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services contract award**

- 3.52. The combined Authority has led a project to procure Demand Responsive Transport contracts across the West of England area. These have been targeted to areas that have failed to sustain bus services, these range from rural villages with low patronage, to conurbations where traditional buses cannot access due to physical restrictions.
- 3.53. Appendix 2 sets out the 3 DRT zones in NSC. DRT uses smaller vehicles to run more frequent services that route in response to bookings from customers (via call centre or mobile phone application). These services are designed to meet local needs and also to link residents into the bus network along key corridors reliably. DRT has been proven to deliver these outcomes in trials across the world, but schemes usually require a subsidy in the short to medium term to establish them.
- 3.54. The successful contractors and technology providers are well versed at promoting the products being long established multinational suppliers. A communications and marketing plan will be developed with over the next few weeks to educate and inform users on how to access the service and to promote its uptake. This will be joint project between the CA and NSC.
- 3.55. To ensure that customers can identify the service from other generic minibuses the DRT service will require a common brand, a key part of the BSIP is to introduce a common branding for the entire region, akin to that seen in London with 'red buses' and the TFL branding. At present the West of England area uses Travel West, however this is not a suitably distinctive brand. The branding project is now underway; however, it may not be developed enough to be deployed in time for the commencement of the DRT services in April. An interim measure will be to apply a basic logo to the vehicles when services start running.
- 3.56. This report seeks to approve the Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Contract award for the zones as shown in Appendix 2, noting that these may be amended across the life of the contract as the introduction of DRT is a trial.

## 4. Consultations

4.1 There has been substantial public consultation and engagement in the development of the West of England Bus Strategy and BSIP, and subsequently the EP is currently completing its statutory consultation processes, prior to being legally made.

4.2 As shown in paragraph 3.19 the project team have undertaken engagement with stakeholders on the package of the first seven infrastructure schemes. The engagement report is published online. Further engagement will be undertaken on the other schemes listed in the BSIP and EP, and for which DfT funding has been secured, as appropriate and in accordance with Council processes.

4.3 In advance of bringing proposals to this committee, officers attended Scrutiny Panel (all Councillor invitation) to discuss the proposals contained in the bus services improvement and enhancement proposal, which we are seeking approval of today. A verbal report will be given to Executive given the late date of this consultation.

## Financial Implications

1.1. The funding arrangements for the joint BSIP were confirmed in a letter from the DfT on the 24 November 2022, significantly later than anticipated. The total joint award of £105,488,498 – split into a specific capital award for North Somerset of £47,983,000, and a joint NSC/WECA revenue allocation of £57,505,498.

1.2. The DfT has provided a specific North Somerset capital investment fund over 3 years. The majority of this investment is to deliver the bus priority corridors to support the regional bus network as per the table below.

<b>Capital costs</b>	<b>Total project costs</b>
Bus Priority – A38	5,850,000
Bus Priority – Portishead to Bristol	4,760,000
Bus Priority – Clevedon	9,500,000
Bus Priority – WSM routes	4,100,000
Bus Priority – WSM to Bristol corridor	10,950,000
Other infrastructure and ticketing	12,823,000
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>47,983,000</b>

1.3. This will now form part of the Councils capital programme and will be monitored through the Councils capital governance process.

1.4. Indicative allocations of the BSIP revenue funding are to be based on population shares (ONS 2021 Census) of 22.5% for North Somerset and 77.5% for the West of England Combined Authority. The table below shows the indicative funding for North Somerset Council.

<b>Annex 4 allocations</b>	<b>Indicative NSC project costs</b>
Fares support	4,947,043
Ticketing reform	24,750



Bus service support	6,026,319
Marketing	1,282,500
EP delivery LTA costs	607,500
Other infrastructure	50,625
<b>Total costs</b>	<b>12,938,737</b>

1.5. Joint revenue funds will be pooled and held by WECA with most of the revenue spend being delivered by a joint central team. Annual spend, spend profiles and Annex 4 allocations may be adjusted by both partners as funding requirements are likely to change and vary depending on how the market responds to investment in different parts of the sub-region or through new fares or ticketing products, these amendments will be approved as per the governance arrangements outlined in this report. North Somerset's total BSIP funding allocation is shown in the table below.

Financial Year	NSC Capital Grant	Indicative NSC Revenue Grant	Total NSC BSIP Grant
2022/23	£6,660,000	£1,249,621	£7,909,621
2023/24	£20,513,000	£6,693,780	£27,206,780
2024/25	£20,810,000	£4,995,336	£25,805,336
<b>Total</b>	<b>£47,983,000</b>	<b>£12,938,737</b>	<b>£60,921,737</b>

1.6. Additional staff resources have been recruited at both WECA and NSC to service the EP and the significant amount of BSIP schemes. Provision has been made in the revenue costs above, these staff will complement the existing core teams in NSC and WECA. Further staff are still being recruited to deliver the capital projects with these costs being capitalised directly against the appropriate scheme costs.

1.7. The EP requires Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to memorialize its revenue expenditure of £2,818,000 for supported buses, and the associated infrastructure, enforcement, Concessionary fares and publicity.

1.8. Now the indicative revenue funding allocations for North Somerset have been confirmed, the necessary approvals to increase the Councils revenue budget will be progressed as per recommendation 8 of this report.

## 4. Legal Powers and Implications

1.9. North Somerset Council are both the highway and Local 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).

1.10. 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 and reflects the draft Enhanced Partnership Plan attached.

### Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- a. The adopted BSIP and proposed Enhanced Partnership plan and schemes will provide a system to formally improve the existing bus network. If the aims

are achieved then there will be a significant behaviour change in the district, specifically an increase in the proportion of trips by bus, replacing trips otherwise undertaken by the more polluting (and less space-efficient) single occupancy petrol/diesel cars. The EP and BSIP contain legally binding environmental standards starting with Euro VI minimum emissions standards across the entire region's bus fleet by the end of 2023, and a road map to introduce zero emissions buses starting as early as 2025, with full zero emissions by 2035. All specific infrastructure projects will undertake a more detailed environmental assessment.

## 5. Risk Management

b. 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.  
• *Adopt EP and proposed Schemes to meet the ambitions of the national bus strategy.*

(ii) Insufficient revenue budget in longer-term to maintain enhanced bus network after the initial Transformation Funding ends in 2025.

- *Maintain regular dialogue with bus operators through the EP Governance mechanisms. Use our regional joint evaluation tool to help prioritise bus revenue support if necessary.*
- *Robustly monitor new or improved services to ensure corrective action is taken.*
- *Promote the network to build patronage and reduce the need for public subsidy*
  - *The 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.*
- *Consider alternative funding sources and re-investment of any revenues generated such as enforcement.*

(iiii) Ability to recruit and retain staff.

- *The council will seek to recruit staff to support the delivery of the BSIP programme by aligning the grades with the equivalent of those in the WECA. Where inability to recruit persists we will seek external resources and amend our delivery models.*

(iiiiii) Disruption to the network during construction.

- *The capital works will be co-ordinated to ensure that the disruption to the network is minimised. This will include using a communications team to inform all the relevant parties of the schedule of works.*

## 6. Equality Implications

c. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

d. 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, simplified ticketing and easy 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.

e. The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), includes several key objectives, including but not limited to:

- high quality bus service.
- high quality waiting environment.
- high vehicle standards.
- Low fares, simple ticketing and easy means of payment

f. 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/wheeling 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.

These are just some of the objectives and attributes set to be included within our BSIP and reflected in future EP schemes, 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.

## **7. Corporate Implications**

- g. The adoption of the proposed BSIP Funding and EP provides a flexible mechanism to deliver the ambitions of the adopted BSIP. This also means the council is jointly responsible for the delivery of the services, meaning 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.
- h. More focused to NSC Corporate policies, the national bus strategy (via our more specific BSIP for North Somerset and the West of England) set out a new long-term 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. The adoption of the Enhanced Partnership provides the flexible

mechanism to deliver the ambitions of the BSIP aligned with our 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).

i. 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 are detailed in the BSIP and proposed EP schemes, the Corporate Plan aims to see:

- An increase in bus patronage
- An increased range of effective and frequent services.
- The delivery of at least Three new showcase corridors by 2025, and.
- Measures to enable the unhampered movement of buses.

j. Adopting the proposed Enhanced Partnership provides the necessary legal mechanism to 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.

## **8. Options Considered**

k. The alternative of a franchise has been discussed and discounted as a viable short term delivery model as part of the BSIP submission, this would also require specific approval from the Secretary of State. The collaborative approach taken with the Enhanced Partnership has resulted in genuine innovation and improvements outweighing the need to consider this approach at this time.

Authors:

Bella Fortune – Head of Transport & BSIP

Carl Nicholson – Head of Passenger Transport

James Padgham – Infrastructure Delivery Manager, BSIP

# Appendices:

- **Appendix 1: West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan**  
<https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/transport/bus-service-improvement-plan/>

- **Appendix 2 – Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme**



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England EP Plan and S

- **Appendix 3: Public Transport Memorandum of Understanding - February 2023**

## **The Parties**

1. North Somerset Council Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ
2. The West of England Combined Authority, 70 Redcliff Street, Bristol BS1 6AL.  
As the respective Local Transport Authorities responsible for public transport in their areas.

## **Purpose**

3. The purpose of the MOU is to promote effective partnership working and improve co-ordination and co-operation between the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council in relation to public transport. It is also in place to ensure a proportionate, consistent and equitable allocation of resources between the two partners in implementing the overall Bus Service Improvement Plan and securing its objectives.
4. The two partners have prepared a joint Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and now agree to enter into a single statutory Enhanced Partnership (EP) with bus operators covering the whole of the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset areas.
5. As these plans are developed, and funding arrangements from Government are made clear, the principles set out in this MOU may need to be incorporated into Inter-Authority Agreements which will set out the detailed operational arrangements for joint working. These will build upon similar agreements that are already in place that cover the operation and delivery of Concessionary Travel, the Real-Time Information and for metrobis iPoints across the two partner authorities. These related agreements are listed in Appendix 1.
6. This Memorandum of Understanding builds upon and develops the long history of joint working on public transport in the West of England.

The parties agree:

## **Strategy**

7. The West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council have previously agreed and adopted a Joint Local Transport Plan 4 and a Joint Bus Strategy. Both partners will continue to commit to these arrangements and look to prepare and adopt a joint Bus Information Strategy in due course.
8. The Joint BSIP and EP will deliver the aims and objectives of the joint Bus Strategy and JLTP4, utilising the infrastructure plans set out in the Combined

Authority's and North Somerset Council's Transport Capital Programmes to deliver a joined-up investment programme to improve bus services.

### **Partnership Working**

9. In line with BSIP and EP guidance it is proposed to establish an Enhanced Partnership Board and Enhanced Partnership Advisory Panel, along with a Bus User Forum.
10. The Enhanced Partnership Advisory Panel will review EP scheme delivery and operations, undertake the 6 monthly review of BSIP progress against targets, propose amendments to the EP Scheme and EP Plan and consider views of the Bus User Forum.
11. The Enhanced Partnership Advisory Panel will form the partnership with operators to assist the implementation and operation of both the BSIP and EP. The partners will aim to appoint an independent chair. However, this does not preclude a representative of either the Combined Authority or North Somerset Council chairing these meetings if both parties agree.

### **Reporting**

12. The annual update or refresh of the Joint BSIP between the Combined Authority and North Somerset Council will be approved by each authority separately. Progress on delivery of the BSIP will be reported periodically by Directors to Members with transport portfolios. BSIP targets will be reported to Government on an approximate six-monthly basis.
13. The joint Enhanced Partnership will also be approved by the Combined Authority and North Somerset Council. In line with Government Guidance, it is likely to need to be reviewed following the update of the BSIP or as required.

### **Funding**

14. Overall, the aim of both the Combined Authority and North Somerset Council is to ensure proportionate, consistent and equitable allocation of resources whilst implementing the regional BSIP programme, considering the following:
  - o Investment priorities
  - o Delivery of BSIP service standards
  - o Quality of existing infrastructure
  - o Performance indicators (esp. those that the BSIP guidance says we need to monitor)
  - o Population
  - o Demographics
  - o Availability of other resources
15. The proposed programme of bus-based capital investment in the Combined Authority area is set out in the BSIP and was reflected in part through the (earlier) CRSTS submission by the Combined Authority. Capital investment proposals for bus infrastructure in the North Somerset area are set out in the BSIP submission itself. The use of any funding or investment secured through the joint BSIP process will be based as far as possible on delivering a consistent approach to public transport across the Combined Authority and North Somerset areas.
16. Capital grant funding from Government to the joint BSIP is allocated to cover the North Somerset area and will be passported from the Combined Authority on receipt. Revenue funding will be managed by the Combined Authority as a joint resource. Joint WECA NSC finance meetings will be held at least monthly to

administer and govern the spend of shared funds. Annual spend, spend profiles and Annex 4 allocations will need to be agreed or adjusted by both parties as funding requirements are likely to change and vary depending on how the market responds to investment in different parts of the sub-region or through new fares or ticketing products.

17. Indicative allocations of the BSIP revenue funding are to be based on population shares (ONS 2021 Census) of 22.5% for North Somerset Council and 77.5% for the West of England Combined Authority. The BSIP grant amount awarded totals £105,488,498 (of which £47,983,000 is capital and solely for North Somerset Council, and £57,505,498 is revenue for both authorities) for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25. Although both parties acknowledge that revenue spend may not easily be attributable geographically between the two LTAs, the overall indicative share of revenue funding for each authority is shown in the table below:

Financial Year	Joint BSIP Revenue Grant	Indicative North Somerset Council share	Indicative West of England Combined Authority share
2022/23	£5,553,871	£1,249,620.98	£4,304,250.03
2023/24	£29,750,134	£6,693,780.15	£23,056,353.85
2024/25	£22,201,493	£4,995,335.93	£17,206,157.08
Total	£57,505,498	£12,938,737.05	£44,566,760.95

18. The summary profile for each funding year is set out in the following table extracted from the grant award confirmation letters and table:

Financial Year	Revenue Funding	Capital Funding	Total Funding
2022/23	£ 5,553,871	£ 6,660,000	£ 12,213,871
2023/24	£ 29,750,134	£ 20,513,000	£ 50,263,134
2024/25	£ 22,201,493	£ 20,810,000	£ 43,011,493
Total	£ 57,505,498	£ 47,983,000	£ 105,488,498

### Information and Data Collection

19. Information requests between the parties will be provided as quickly as is reasonable depending on the complexity of the request and information available. Requests are to be as detailed as possible.
20. Where appropriate, data collection will be co-ordinated between the parties to maximise the use of data and enable cost-sharing. Each party will ensure it has the appropriate non-disclosure agreements in place with operators to ensure that commercial confidence is respected.
21. A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan will be developed in line with guidance published by the Department for Transport to ensure there is a clear link between the BSIP objectives and broader transport outcomes in the longer term.

## **Branding, Ticketing, Information and Marketing**

22. A key requirement of the BSIP, especially as it is being produced jointly between two adjacent Local Transport Authorities, is to present the local bus network as a single system that works together for the region. The Combined Authority and North Somerset Council will therefore agree the common branding to be used, with its implementation incorporated into the BSIP programme and reflected as commitments in the EP. Similarly, any information about or marketing of public transport, by either partner or jointly, will ensure that it is presented in a co-ordinated manner and supports the objective of presenting the local bus network as a single system. Ticketing products will also recognise the cross-boundary nature of many bus services and be developed with operators in a consistent and joined-up way and follow any requirements in the branding guidelines.
23. Any changes or updates to the brand or the branding guidelines will be jointly agreed. The costs of changing or updating the brand on any infrastructure within each partners' area will be borne by the relevant partner. Updates to printed and other materials will be agreed on a case by case basis. Both parties recognise that updating brands can be expensive and will endeavour to ensure it is done in a cost-effective way, including potential transition periods where stocks of printed material can be run down.

## **Joint Operational Arrangements**

24. The two parties already have joint arrangements in place for Concessionary Travel, Real Time Information and cross-boundary supported services where these are jointly prioritised.
25. The two parties will continue to work together, as set out in the relevant Inter-Authority Agreements, to deliver these functions in the most efficient and effective way possible.
26. With the development of a joint BSIP and EP, the two parties recognise that closer working of their public transport operational functions will be beneficial to ensure that the bus network in the West of England is presented as a single system and to deliver value for money. This will include, but is not limited to, bus network planning, bus service contract procurement and management, passenger information provision, ticketing and shelter procurement and maintenance.
27. Alongside the development and delivery of both the BSIP and EP, the two parties commit to developing further proposals for closer working.

## **Communications**

28. Any public communication with the media, MPs or other key stakeholders regarding public transport in the West of England, and particularly the BSIP or EP, will usually be agreed by both partners before being released and will be branded or written in such a way that it clearly represents both the Combined Authority and North Somerset Council. It is recognised that in exceptional circumstances an immediate response may be required from either party and that it is not always possible to check with the other party any communication first. Should this occur, then the party who has independently released the communication will inform the other within one working day and provide details or copies of any communication released. If the issue is likely to be ongoing then a protocol for how communications will be dealt with subsequently will be agreed to ensure that the views of both parties are represented as soon as possible.

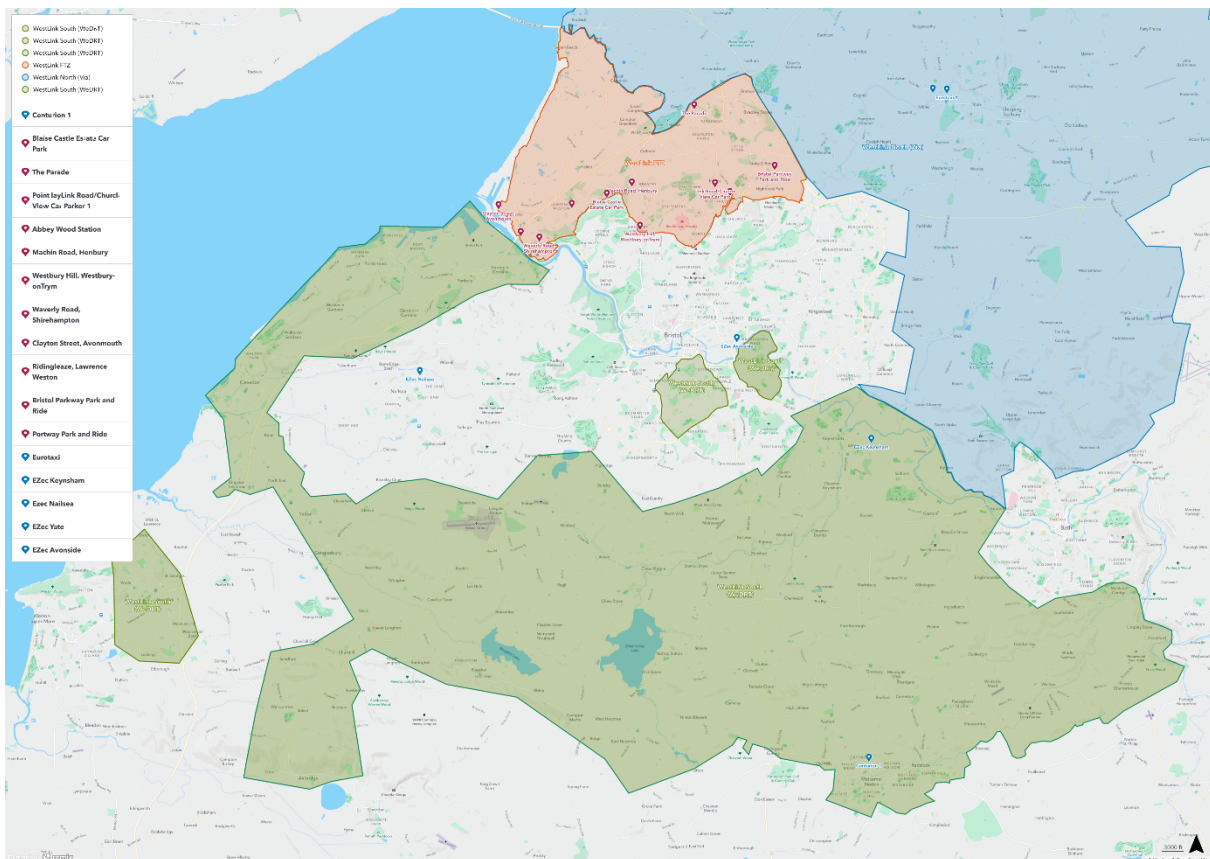




## APPENDIX 2 - EP Plan and EP Scheme timeline

	Autumn 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Jan 2023	Feb 2023
Activity	EP development	Formal engagement with all parties	Operator objection period	Stakeholder consultation. Inter Authority Agreements developed	Formal notice of EP Plan and Scheme	EP Plan and Scheme submitted. Move to BAU

- **Appendix 4 - Bus Service Improvement Plan. Package 1 Engagement Report** - <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/parking-travel-roads/transport-travel/bus-travel/bus-service-improvement-plan>
- **Appendix 5 - Demand Responsive Transport Zones**



## Background Papers:

- Executive Report of 22nd June 2022
- Executive Report of 23rd June 2021
- Executive Report EXE 54 20th October 2021
- The West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan
- 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
- DFT Annex 4 Draft Submission 03/05/2022
- DFT Annex 4 Draft Submission 10/2022
- BSIP Award Letter
- BSIP Funding Summary (DFT annex 4)