

Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Funding

1. Funding Allocation

- 1.1. Somerset has been awarded indicative funding of approx. £11.9 million. This is split into approx. £8.2m of capital funding and £3.7m of revenue funding.
- 1.2. The total funding allocation covers a three-year period from 2022/23 through to 2024/25.
- 1.3. Whilst the funding allocation falls significantly short of the original bid, we are really pleased that Somerset has been recognised in this highly competitive and considerably over subscribed process, particularly as many local authorities were not awarded any funding at all.
- 1.4. Confirmation of the final funding allocation is conditional on the submission and implementation of the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme. There are also a number of restrictions and priority areas stipulated by the DfT in relation to the use of the funding, which are set out in more detail in the report.

2. DfT Priority Areas

- 2.1 The DfT have identified several key priority areas for both capital and revenue funding which they expect Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to focus their funding on.

Capital Funding:

- Bus Priority measures are the top priority. For funding to be confirmed LTAs need to demonstrate they intend to deliver significant bus priority (or that it is demonstrably not required).

Revenue Funding:

- Ambitious and eye-catching initiatives that reduce and/or simplify fares, at pace. Funding will be confirmed for plans that capture the imagination of potential users. They are keen to see pilots that reduce fares, starting as soon as possible and expect to see LTA investment reduce as patronage grows.
- Increased service frequencies and new/expanded routes – including better evening and weekend services, new routes that serve identified priorities such as employment sites and new DRT. Funding should **not** be used to support existing service levels and patterns.

3. Funding Rules

3.1 The DfT have made it explicitly clear in terms of measures that should not be funded with the BSIP money. These are:

- Schemes where it is not clear that the primary benefits accrue to buses
- Generic marketing or advertising costs that are not directly related to specific improvements
- Provision of on-bus hardware such as CCTV or audio-visual equipment (DfT expect these to be operator led contributions)
- Investment in existing infrastructure (unless it directly tackles barriers to use e.g safety).

4. Other Funding Conditions

4.1 The DfT have also provided an additional list of anticipated funding conditions, which includes:

- There needs to be promotion of buses wherever possible including the English National Concessionary Travel (ENCTS) scheme
- Where BSIP funding is used for Demand Responsive Transport Schemes, free ENCTS travel should be allowed on these services (09:30 to 23:00 weekdays and all times on Saturdays, Sundays and bank holidays) and there should be clear plans to ensure a high standard of integration with other services and a clear timeline for delivery.
- Where Community Transport Groups are used to deliver DRT the DfT would expect to see a separate agreement or Memorandum of Understanding
- Any branding, press releases or media announcements need to be co-branded to emphasise the role played by government funding and allow sufficient time for the government to provide a comment if they wish.

5. Actions and Timescales

5.1 Following the funding announcement, LTAs need to provide additional information as follows:

- Submission of a summary table to the DfT by **2nd May 2022** setting out our intentions for using the funding allocation, prioritised interventions, delivery timelines, costs and how it will be reflected in the EP. (They recognise that some authorities have elections and therefore, we need to indicate on the submission whether or not it has formal or political approval at this stage)

- As soon as possible, and **by the end of June 2022** provide:
 - i) An updated summary table incorporating any feedback
 - ii) A draft EP or variation to an existing EP showing how the relevant aspects of BSIP will be implemented
 - iii) A separate document setting out how any commitments that fall outside of the EP will be delivered (e.g. tendering new services or new DRT schemes)
 - iv) Confirmation from the Section 151 Officer that the funding represents value for money and that they will continue to monitor and report on this
- 5.2 The DfT will review the EP before confirming funding and either agree it meets their expectations and award the funding or provide further feedback and an opportunity to strengthen the EP before they amend or withdraw funding.
- 5.3 If and when funding is confirmed – EPs need to be made or varied.