



Notice of Meeting of

## **BUS ADVISORY BOARD**

**Tuesday, 30 April 2024 at 10.00 am**

### **Virtual**

To: The Members of the Bus Advisory Board

Chair: Cllr Richard Wilkins

---

For further information about the meeting, including how to join the meeting virtually, please contact Democratic Services.

All members of the public are welcome to attend our meetings and ask questions or make a statement **by giving advance notice** in writing or by e-mail to the Monitoring Officer at email: [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk) by **5pm on Wednesday, 24 April 2024**.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A: Access to Information.

The meeting will be webcast and an audio recording made.

Issued by David Clark, Monitoring Officer (the Proper Officer) on Monday, 22 April 2024

# **AGENDA**

**Bus Advisory Board - 10.00 am Tuesday, 30 April 2024**

**Public Guidance Notes contained in Agenda Annexe** (Pages 5 - 6)

**Click Here to View Online Meeting** (Pages 7 - 8)

**1 Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

To welcome attendees and receive any apologies for absence.

**2 Membership Update**

Report attached.

**3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (Pages 9 - 18)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024 as an accurate representation of the meeting.

**4 Public Question Time**

To receive any public questions or statements submitted three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

**5 ZEBRA 2 Update**

To receive a verbal update.

**6 Co-ordination of Bus Timetable Changes** (Pages 19 - 20)

Report attached.

**7 Update from Operators on £1 fare, Government £2 fare and any other relevant updates**

To receive any updates from operators.

8 **Draft Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) 2024** (Pages 21 - 92)

Draft version for consideration/discussion and contains highlighted text where information is still to be reviewed and added.

9 **Update from the Chair of Bus User and Stakeholders Group**

To receive a verbal update.

10 **Any Other Business**

To raise any other relevant issues from the Chair or Board members.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

To note that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 25 June 2024 at 10.00am.

This page is intentionally left blank

## Guidance notes for the meeting

### Council Public Meetings

The legislation that governs Council meetings requires that committee meetings are held face-to-face. The requirement is for members of the committee and key supporting officers (report authors and statutory officers) to attend in person, along with some provision for any public speakers. Provision will be made wherever possible for those who do not need to attend in person including the public and press who wish to view the meeting to be able to do so virtually.

#### Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the agenda should contact Democratic Services at [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) or telephone 01823 357628.

They can also be accessed via the council's website on [Committee structure - Modern Council \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#)

### Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: [Code of Conduct](#)

### Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

### Public Question Time

If you wish to speak or ask a question about any matter on the Committee's agenda please contact Democratic Services by 5pm providing 3 clear working days before the meeting. (for example, for a meeting being held on a Wednesday, the deadline will be 5pm on the Thursday prior to the meeting) Email [democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticserviceteam@somerset.gov.uk) or telephone 01823 357628.

Members of public wishing to speak or ask a question will need to attend in person or if unable can submit their question or statement in writing for an officer to read out, or alternatively can attend the meeting online.

A 20-minute time slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. Each speaker will have 3 minutes to address the committee.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with many people wishing to attend the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

### **Meeting Etiquette for participants**

Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.

Mute your microphone when you are not talking.

Switch off video if you are not speaking.

Speak clearly (if you are not using video then please state your name)

If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.

There is a facility in Microsoft Teams under the ellipsis button called turn on live captions which provides subtitles on the screen.

### **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time, ask participants to leave the meeting when any exempt or confidential information is about to be discussed.

### **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording, and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting.

## Microsoft Teams meeting

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 367 035 758 294

Passcode: JQeiAd

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

**Or call in (audio only)**

[+44 1823 772277,,542334568#](#) United Kingdom, Taunton

Phone Conference ID: 542 334 568#

[Find a local number](#) | [Reset PIN](#)

This page is intentionally left blank



## Bus Advisory Board – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Item 2 - Bus Advisory Board Membership

Authors: Natasha Bates, Service Manager – Transport Commissioning

Contact: [natasha.bates@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.bates@somerset.gov.uk) or 01823 357299

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Bus Advisory Board was established in 2021 as part of the response to the government’s National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better.
- 1.2 The organisations represented on the Board, remain unchanged, although the individuals representing them have changed over time. This is an opportunity to review the individuals listed to ensure the contacts remain correct.
- 1.3 Any future changes to the individuals representing each organisation should be notified to Democratic Services [DemocraticServicesTeam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:DemocraticServicesTeam@somerset.gov.uk) . This will enable an accurate record to be maintained for distributing agendas and reports.

Organisation	Representative Member	Deputy (where appropriate)
Somerset Council	Cllr Richard Wilkins (Chair)	Sunita Mill (Vice – Chair)  Also attends for presenting agenda items: John Perrett Natasha Bates Lisa Bentley
Operators		
First South West	Rebecca Mantyk	James Eustace
First West of England	Rob Pymm	Rob Sanderson
Southwest Coaches	Peter Fairey	
Libra Travel	Chris Higgs	
Fromebus	Andy Young	
Hatch Green	Nick Hutt	Josh Strickland
Bakers Dolphin	Max Fletcher	
Ridlers Ltd	Mark Jamieson	
Somerset Council Fleet	Lee Jones	

Southwest Community Transport	Victoria Butcher	
Mendip Community Transport	Martyn Starnes	
AtWest	Simon Stanford	
Faresaver	Daniel Pickford	
Stagecoach Southwest	Simon Ford	
Dartline	Mark Collins	
Local Express Coach Operators		
Berry's Coaches	James Berry	
National Express	Amy Poole	
Rail Operators		
Great Western Railway	Luke Farley	
South Western Railway	Andrew Ardley	
Crosscountry Trains	Richard Gibson	
Network Rail	Vacant	
Planning Representatives		
Area East	TBC	
Area North	Nick Tait	
Area South	John Hammond	
Area West	Alison Blom-Cooper	
Exmoor National Park	Dan James	
Bus Passenger Representatives		
	Peter Travis (BUS Group Chair)	Tony Reese (BUS Group Vice- Chair)
	David Redgewell	
Neighbouring Local Authorities:		
Devon	Damien Jones	Mike Tucker
Dorset	Deborah Fiddik	
North Somerset	Carl Nicholson	
WECA	Ed Hopkins	
Wiltshire	Phil Grocock	



Minutes of a Meeting of the Bus Advisory Board held virtually on Tuesday, 6 February 2024 at 10.00 am

**Present:**

Cllr Richard Wilkins (Chair)

Peter Fairey – Southwest Coaches	Deborah Fiddik – Dorset Council
Phil Grocock – Wiltshire Council	John Hammond – Somerset Council
Ed Hopkins - WECA	Dan James – Exmoor National Park
David Redgewell – Campaign for Better Transport	Tony Reese – Bus User & Stakeholder Group (Vice Chair)
Josh Strickland – Hatch Green Coaches	Peter Travis – Bus User & Stakeholder Group (Chair)
Sunita Mills – Somerset Council	Natasha Bates – Somerset Council
John Perrett – Somerset Council	Lisa Bentley – Somerset Council
Russell Inglis – Somerset Council	Chris Comer – Stagecoach
Thomas Hughes – First West of England	Terrance James – First South
Peter McNaughton – First South	Dan Ashworth – First West of England
George Burton – First West of England	

**In attendance:**

Cllr Dave Mansell, Rosa Kell, Linda Snelling, Andy Strong, David Northey and Fiona Gourley

**34 Welcome and Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1**

An apology for absence was received from Rebecca Mantyk (First South).

**35 Membership Updates - Agenda Item 2**

Natasha Bates, Service Manager – Transport Commissioning advised that there had been some changes to membership of the Board. The following was noted:

Rebecca Mantyk would be representing First South  
Darren Hewlett would be representing Dartline (Go South West)  
Ed Hopkins would be representing WECA

Martyn Starnes would be representing Mendip Community Transport  
Sunita Mills, Interim Head of Transportation, Somerset Council would be replacing  
Mike O'Dowd Jones  
Lisa Bentley, Public Transport Manager, Somerset Council would be replacing Ian  
Bell

**36 Election of Vice-Chair - Agenda Item 3**

Sunita Mills, Interim Head of Transportation was nominated by Cllr Richard Wilkins  
and seconded by Peter Travis.

No other nominations were received so Sunita Mills was duly elected as Vice-Chair  
of the Bus Advisory Board.

**37 Minutes of the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 4**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 were approved.

**38 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 5**

Questions were received from Linda Snelling, Rosa Kell and Andy Strong. The  
questions submitted and responses provided are as follows:

**Question 1**

The new Taunton Park & Ride contract includes a reduction in frequency on  
Mondays to Fridays to every 20 minutes. It is generally accepted across the country  
that a 15-minute interval is the minimum service level required to make a Park &  
Ride service attractive to car drivers.

There is a complicated relationship between Park & Ride fares, service levels and  
town centre parking charges. Now that Somerset Council controls all of those, it is in  
a position to set each of them in such a way that incentivises use of the Park & Ride  
service. This will be particularly important if funding to continue the subsidised £1  
fare is not forthcoming.

Will the Council review parking charges in Taunton and consider the relationship  
between them and Park & Ride fares and frequency, with a view to incentivising use  
of the Park & Ride service?

**Response**

There are a number of Park & Ride Services across the country that currently  
operate at 20-minute frequencies.

As part of the decision approved at Executive on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023, to award the Park & Ride contract, it was also agreed that the Integrated Parking Strategy for Taunton (included as an Appendix to the report) would be adopted and implemented. The Strategy is aimed at reducing demand for town centre parking and encouraging greater use of the Park & Ride and local bus services. More detailed work on the parking charges will commence in due course.

## **Question 2**

The enhanced partnership scheme (paragraph 4.7) states:

“Bus Operators providing services within the Taunton Town Fare Zone will use Tap On/Tap Off (TOTO) technology from quarter three of financial year 2023-24 and will work with SCC to develop a roll-out programme for vehicles used on routes within the Taunton Town Fare Zone.”

We are now past the committed start date but no operators are using Tap On/Tap Off technology in Taunton yet.

Please give full details of the roll-out programme.

## **Response**

First South have confirmed that they have started the initialising process but there have been some unexpected delays. It will take some time to complete the process, but they anticipate this being done by July.

We understand that Council Ticketer machines are capable of Tap-on/Tap-off but as many people will be aware, we have had technical issues with contactless payments, which has been our priority and now that is finally resolved, we will now explore the Tap-on/Tap-off option with Ticketer.

## **Question 3**

The frequency of Taunton town services 1, 6 and 7 in the morning peak on Mondays to Fridays was reduced on 27 November 2023 to facilitate the saving of one bus between 0750 and 0910. The Bus Advisory Board was not consulted on this at its last meeting on 12 October.

The enhanced partnership scheme (paragraph 4.11), states that: “When contemplating making changes to frequency of services included within the Enhanced Partnership Scheme, Bus Operators will consult with the Bus Advisory Board and take into account any comments made by the Bus Advisory Board prior to making such changes.”

It is very disappointing that no consultation occurred, and that a similar failure occurred only a few months previously, as reported to the July meeting. Confidence in the enhanced partnership will be weakened if the parties to it do not follow the commitments they have given.

It is disappointing as well that the Council appears to have supported the application to register the reductions with the Traffic Commissioner at less than 6 weeks' notice, knowing full well that the Bus Advisory Board had not been consulted.

The agreement between the Council and bus operators on the Taunton Town Fare Scheme (Annex H to the EP Scheme) does not oblige bus operators to maintain their service levels - despite the fare subsidy being provided from the public purse. In my view, that was a significant omission.

The reductions were not made to address a punctuality problem because the running time on those services remained the same and the layover between trips is an average of 5.5 minutes during the period that only three buses are running.

Will First South explain why they failed to consult the Board on the reductions and restore those services to pre-Covid levels at the very least, to match the investment in the subsidised fare from the public sector?

### **Response**

Whilst the changes relating to the 1, 6 and 7 weren't reported at the October Board, they were shared with the Somerset Bus Partnership by email, on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023, asking for comment.

Now we have the two main change dates per year, with dedicated proformas, that should help facilitate discussion at the Board. However, where changes for exceptional circumstances are required outside of these dates, the changes will still be shared with the Somerset Bus Partnership via the Co-Chair.

### **Question 4**

The enhanced partnership scheme (paragraph 4.2.1) states: "Bus Operators with a fleet containing ten vehicles or more used primarily on locally registered bus services will commit to modernise their fleet of buses operating only on registered local bus services across Somerset by lowering the average age of their bus fleet by one year by each subsequent April from an agreed average fleet age baseline in April 2023 to a point in following years where no Bus Operator has a fleet of buses used on registered local bus services with an average age over six years."

Please (a) give details of the average fleet age baseline that was agreed for each operator in April 2023 and (b) provide an update on fleet modernisation to the next Bus Advisory Board meeting on 23 April 2024, outlining the progress made by each operator over the past year.

### **Response**

WSP were collating this as part of the Monitoring & Evaluation process, we are currently awaiting the final report which contains this information and will aim to provide an update at the next Board meeting in April.

## **39 Variation of Somerset's Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme - Agenda Item 6**

Natasha Bates, Service Manager – Transport Commissioning explained that as part of the funding stipulation from the Department of Transport (DfT), the local transport authority was required to update the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme and resubmit it to the DfT in order to release the 2024/25 BSIP funding tranche. There was a requirement for the EP to include a table of funded schemes which sets out what has been funded, what the outputs would be, who is responsible for delivery and the deadlines. She advised that the plan section of the document could not be updated without wider formal consultation with stakeholders and operators. As the BSIP was due for review by 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024, the plan section of the EP would remain unchanged and be amended following the review.

Natasha Bates outlined the proposed changes to the scheme element as highlighted in green in the document circulated with the agenda.

In response to a question regarding Taunton Transport Hub, Natasha Bates confirmed that work was taking place to move the project forward. She agreed to forward an update and the project timescales to David Redgewell.

At the conclusion of the item, the Operators approved the proposed changes, as highlighted in green, to Somerset's Enhanced (EP) Scheme through the 'bespoke variation mechanism'.

## **40 Timetable Changes Proposed for 15th April 2024 - Agenda Item 7**

The Chair invited Operators to present timetable changes proposed for 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Dan Ashworth of First West of England

outlined proposed changes to the following services:

- Service 20
- Service D2 & D2x
- Service 171, 173 & 174
- Service 55, 77, 77a
- Service 374, 375, 376 & 376a

Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions. A number of questions/comments were raised in relation to the following:

- Connectivity with Service 21.
- Connectivity with rail services and where possible identifying links with bus/rail interchange and making timetables clearer to identify routes that stop near railway stations.
- Somerset Bus Partnership were keen to meet with First West of England regarding the details of the ongoing timetables and following the outcome of discussions with BANES.
- The need for discussions with WECA/BANES on the naming of the Bath Interchange.
- The need for double decker buses on route 77.
- Strode College timings.
- Concerns relating to the earliest bus from Yeovil to Wells being at 8.55am and the 7.30am being missed off the timetable.
- Query regarding the timetable for Service 126.

Dan Ashworth agreed to circulate a copy of the presentation slides which included the proposed timetables.

With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Terrance James of First South outlined planned network changes to the following services:

- 21/21a Taunton – Bridgwater – Burnham on Sea
- 22/22a/X22 Taunton – Wellington – Tiverton
- 51 Yeovil Town Service
- EXMO Exmoor Coaster

Board members were given the opportunity to ask questions. A number of questions/comments were raised which included the following:

- The possibility of re-considering the finish date of 28<sup>th</sup> September on the



Exmoor Coaster as this seemed to be quite early. A finish date at the end of October would be able to include the half term school holidays.

- The need for the 21/21a to connect onto Weston-super-Mare.

He then proceeded to outline planned network changes due to the end of the BSIP Funding period on the following services:

- 25 Taunton - Dulverton
- 28/X28 Taunton - Minehead
- 54 Yeovil - Taunton
- 58 Yeovil - Wincanton

Terrance James agreed to circulate the presentation slides and proposed timetables following the meeting.

The Chair expressed his extreme disappointment over the lateness in receiving the proposed changes particularly of the intention to withdraw services 54 and 58 and the lower frequency of services on the 25 and 28. He said that these were important routes, and the proposals would have a huge impact on people's lives. There had been no opportunity for discussions to be held with Somerset Council and this was unacceptable. He suggested that an emergency meeting be held between First Bus and Somerset Council to discuss the proposals.

John Perrett, Service Manager – Transporting Somerset, said that a lot of work had been undertaken to try and raise numbers on the four under threat routes and he understood that numbers had increased on all four services. He referred to the lateness of the proposals presented and said that there had been no chance for discussions to be held and for the passenger numbers to be analysed in detail and possible options discussed. He advised that funding for the four under threat routes was from BSIP plus funding and had been agreed until 31st March 2024. Whilst BSIP Plus funding from government was not due to end until 31st March 2025 there was a reduction in the overall amount being received from government in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 and therefore less flexibility in the amount of funding available. He concluded that once further work had been undertaken and a meeting held an update would be provided.

Terrance James commented that he appreciated that the proposals had only recently been shared, however he believed that First Bus had always been very transparent in relation to the impact of reduced BSIP funding and the challenge in providing commercially viable services.

Members of the Board were given the opportunity to raise questions and comments

during which concerns were expressed regarding the proposed changes.

Peter Fairey, Operations Director of South West Coaches said that as previously reported the No 1 service from Shepton Mallet to Yeovil had been deregistered with the last date of operation being 13<sup>th</sup> April 2024. A procurement process was due to be undertaken shortly.

Chris Comer of Stagecoach said that they were looking to introduce Service 24 to operate between Tiverton and Taunton via Wellington linking in with the Taunton Park and Ride service.

#### **41 Update from Operators on £1 fare, Government £2 fare and any other relevant updates - Agenda Item 8**

Terrance James of First Bus provided a powerpoint presentation. The following was noted:

- Steady growth continued on the £1 fare in Taunton from June through to November. Whilst there was an expected drop in December, this was up 80% on December 2022.
- In terms of the Government £2 fare on single trips, there had been steady growth. A big proportion of trips was being seen on the 58.
- With regard to Somerset Passenger Recovery, overall passenger volumes were down from 21% in October to 19%. There had been a slowdown in passenger volumes since the beginning of December. Year on year growth in the past four weeks had been approximately 4%.

Thomas Hughes, Operations Manager for First West of England Bus advised that there had generally been an increase in growth from October to mid- December with an expected dip over the Christmas and New Year period. There had been a slower start to year as people returned to work from the holidays.

#### **42 BSIP Review 2024 - Agenda Item 9**

With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Natasha Bates, Service Manager – Transport Commissioning gave an update on the BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) Review 2024. The following points were noted:

- The original BSIP was produced in 2021.
- A high-level review was undertaken in 2022.
- The 2023 review was postponed at the request of the DfT due to new guidance

being released.

- The 2024 review was required to be submitted by 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
- The review of the BSIP was not a bidding document but was linked to the release of the 2024/25 funding.
- The key themes that the DfT were looking for in the review included:
  - Updating baseline data to reflect 2023/24 position.
  - Setting out the improvement programme for 2024/25.
  - Plans and ambitions beyond 2025 linked to the Local Transport Plan.
- Growing patronage remains the overall aim which related to 12 objectives set out by the DfT.
- There would be new reporting requirements linked to Bus Connectivity Assessments.
- There was updated guidance on Bus Passenger Charters.
- A future review was expected in 2025 and then less frequently.

Natasha Bates explained that the next step involved looking at all the guidance and what was required to be undertaken to meet the deadline for the 2024 review. She advised that operators and stakeholders would be engaged in the process and the BSIP Review would also go through Somerset Council's governance process.

#### **43 ZEBRA 2 - Agenda Item 10**

Natasha Bates, Service Manager – Transport Commissioning reported that a bid had been submitted to the DfT in partnership with First South and an announcement on the bid outcomes was expected in March. If the bid were to be successful, this would see 25 zero emission vehicles operating out of the First South Taunton depot and would be a combination of single and double deck vehicles. The bid was to operate these vehicles on services 21, 22 and 28, and Taunton town services 1 and 2.

#### **44 Update from the Chair of the Bus User and Stakeholders Group - Agenda Item 11**

Peter Travis, Chair of the Bus User and Stakeholder Group was invited to provide an update. His points included the following:

- The proposed withdrawal of the 54 service Yeovil – Taunton by First South was shocking news and was extremely concerning meaning more uncertainty for bus users. Somerset Bus Partnership were willing to support Somerset Council in any way possible with their discussions with First South.
- There needed to be a solution to depots in Somerset. It was felt that First South should be openly sharing their plans for the Yeovil bus depot.

- Concerns over the reliability of bus services, not just the cancellation of services but also individual bus services being cancelled due to unreliable and old buses.
- Somerset Council declared a climate emergency four years ago and one of the significant actions to take was to move people away from using the private car onto buses. A trend in this direction had not been seen.
- The Somerset Bus Partnership would be supporting and helping the bus companies as much as possible.
- In April, the Somerset Bus Partnership would be running 22 bus stalls in every town in Somerset giving out printed timetables. A lot of established bus users relied on printed bus timetables. First South had agreed to supply Buses of Somerset timetable booklets. Any other operators who were able to provide timetables was welcomed.
- It was felt that further promotion of the Bus Passenger Charter was required by Somerset Council through its social media channels and press releases.

**45 Any Other Business - Agenda Item 12**

David Redgewell highlighted that there was a West Of England review of Westlink currently being undertaken which linked into Axbridge and Weston-super-Mare.

**46 Date of Next Meeting - Agenda Item 13**

The Board noted that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024.

**(The meeting ended at 12.00 pm)**

.....  
**CHAIR**

## Bus Advisory Board – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### Item 6 - Coordination of bus timetable changes

Authors: John Perrett, Service Manager, Transporting Somerset/ Natasha Bates, Service Manager – Transport Commissioning

Contact: [john.perrett@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:john.perrett@somerset.gov.uk) or 01823 356968 / [natasha.bates@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:natasha.bates@somerset.gov.uk) or 01823 357299

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 At the Bus Advisory Board meeting in October 2023, members agreed to two main timetable change dates per year, with flexibility maintained for unforeseen/emergency operational issues and seasonal changes where it is not possible to confirm the changes at the two main agreed dates.
- 1.2 The second change date for 2024 is 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024.
- 1.3 A reminder of the timetable for the bus service changes, registrations, consultation, and Board meetings relating to the September change date, is provided below.
- 1.4 Operators are asked to discuss their changes with Somerset Council in sufficient time for the proposals to be considered and reviewed, ahead of the Board meeting in June. A proforma will be sent out ahead of this.

Date	Event/Action	Comments
24 <sup>th</sup> June – 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2024	Consultation period	28 days for consultation with Somerset Council, the Bus Advisory Board and Key Stakeholders.
<b>25<sup>th</sup> June 2024</b> (re-arranged from 16 July)	<b>Bus Advisory Board Meeting (Q3)</b>	<b>Operators to introduce changes to the Board for consideration/discussion.</b>
22 <sup>nd</sup> July – 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2024	Registration period	42-day registration period (no further changes can be made during this time)
<b>Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024</b>	<b>Service changes take -effect</b>	<b>Change Date 2 for 2024</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>	<b>Bus Advisory Board Meeting (Q4)</b>	Agree specific date changes for 2025

This page is intentionally left blank



**Somerset Council**  
**Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**  
**2024**

**DRAFT**

## **Contents**

### **Design team to add page numbering**

#### **Section One:**

Foreword

Executive Summary

Our Bus Vision

#### **Section Two:**

Our Current Bus Offer

#### **Section Three:**

Improvement Programme to 2024/25

#### **Section Four:**

Ambition 2025 and beyond

Ambition Timeline

#### **Section Five:**

Targets, Performance Monitoring and Reporting

#### **Section Six:**

BSIP Overview Table



## **SECTION ONE:**

### **Foreword from Lead Member**

Add Foreword and photo

### **Executive Summary**

Add summary once complete

## **Our Bus Vision**

### **Introduction:**

Following the launch of the government's new National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better, Local Transport Authorities were required to produce a BSIP setting out the high-level ambition for transforming public transport and to bid for funding to deliver the proposals set out in the Plan.

Somerset's bid was for £165m over a 3-year period, to deliver an ambitious set of proposals to transform the public bus network in the County. Whilst the final funding allocation was £11.9m, Somerset was extremely fortunate to have been recognised in a highly competitive process which saw less than half of the Local Transport Authorities across the country receiving any funding.

The funding has enabled Somerset to deliver a combination of capital and revenue funded schemes, which are set out in more detail under section 3 of this document.

This version of the BSIP continues with the ambition set out in the 2021 version but provides an updated, refresh to those deliverables in-line with the Local Transport Plan (LTP) vision and to reflect the feedback from key stakeholders.

### **Area covered by the BSIP:**

Somerset's BSIP covers the whole of the Somerset unitary authority area. The new authority was formed in April 2023, which saw the four former District Councils (Mendip, South Somerset, Sedgemoor and Somerset West & Taunton) and Somerset County Council merge to become the new Somerset Council. The area covered by the BSIP remains the same as the original 2021 BSIP and is depicted in the map in Figure 1.

## Figure 1 - Map of Somerset

Figure 2.1 – The Somerset County Council BSIP Area



Whilst most local bus services outlined within the BSIP operate wholly within the BSIP area, a number operate into neighbouring LTA areas. As such we consulted and worked with these areas when developing the initial BSIP and then invited them to sit on our Enhanced Partnership's Bus Advisory Board. We have representation from Devon County Council, Dorset Council, Wiltshire Council, Bath and North East Somerset (BANES) (as part of the West of England Combined Authority) and North Somerset.

### Somerset's Enhanced Partnership:

Somerset has an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme which also covers the Somerset unitary authority as set out in the map at Figure 1. The EP came into effect in April 2022 and the EP 'Scheme' document has been updated several times since then, using the 'bespoke variation mechanism' set out in the EP.

### BSIP Duration:

The BSIP sets out Somerset's ambition for an initial four-year period between 2025/26 and 2028/29, and then looks at longer term ambition beyond that until 2034/35.

### BSIP Monitoring and Evaluation:

The BSIP will be reviewed and updated, as and when necessary but a further review is anticipated in 2025. The 2024 review has been approved by the Transport and Planning Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Council's Executive and focusses on specific planning and transport related issues.

Future updates, where appropriate, will be agreed by the Lead Member for Transport and Digital, through the delegated authority agreed at the Transport and Planning Committee.

The BSIP updates will be published on Somerset Council's National Bus Strategy webpage [The National Bus Strategy – Bus Back Better \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/the-national-bus-strategy-bus-back-better)

## Our Bus Vision:

“Our vision for Somerset is to provide a more extensive and frequent network of services, that are comfortable, easily accessible, reliable, coordinated, and affordable which is aimed at making the bus a more attractive travel option and increasing bus patronage. Alongside this, we aim to reduce carbon emissions from the public transport sector”

## Spotlight on Somerset’s BSIP Aims and Links to National Bus Strategy (NBS)

Somerset Aim	Link to NBS Aim
<p><b>Transport Decarbonisation</b> Creating a modal shift to the bus and decarbonising the public bus fleet with new zero emission, modern vehicles.</p>	<p><b>Greener Buses</b>  <b>Better to ride in</b></p>
<p><b>More extensive and frequent network of services</b> Improve the frequency of the core network including evening and weekends. Reduce journey times with express services.</p>	<p><b>More frequent buses</b>  <b>Faster, more reliable</b>  <b>More comprehensive</b></p>
<p><b>Reduce the cost of travel –</b> Introduce lower and capped fares in key towns, reduced fares for young people, families and groups.</p>	<p><b>Cheaper</b></p>
<p><b>Improved co-ordination</b> Improve links with rail stations and long-distance coaches. Expand Digital DRT with links to mobility hubs and express services.</p>	<p><b>Better integration with other services and other modes</b></p>
<p><b>An easily accessible and reliable network</b> Bus priority measures to speed journey times, improved ticket integration across modes and improved bus information cross the network.</p>	<p><b>Easier to understand</b>  <b>Easier to use</b></p>
<p><b>A comfortable network with improved facilities –</b> Bus Stop Design and improved waiting facilities including bus stations.</p>	<p><b>Accessible and inclusive</b></p>
<p><b>The Somerset Council BSIP remains an ambitious plan and subject to securing funding, seeks to deliver the aims of both Somerset’s emerging LTP and the wider NBS.</b></p>	

## Relationship between Somerset's BSIP and the Local Transport Plan (LTP):

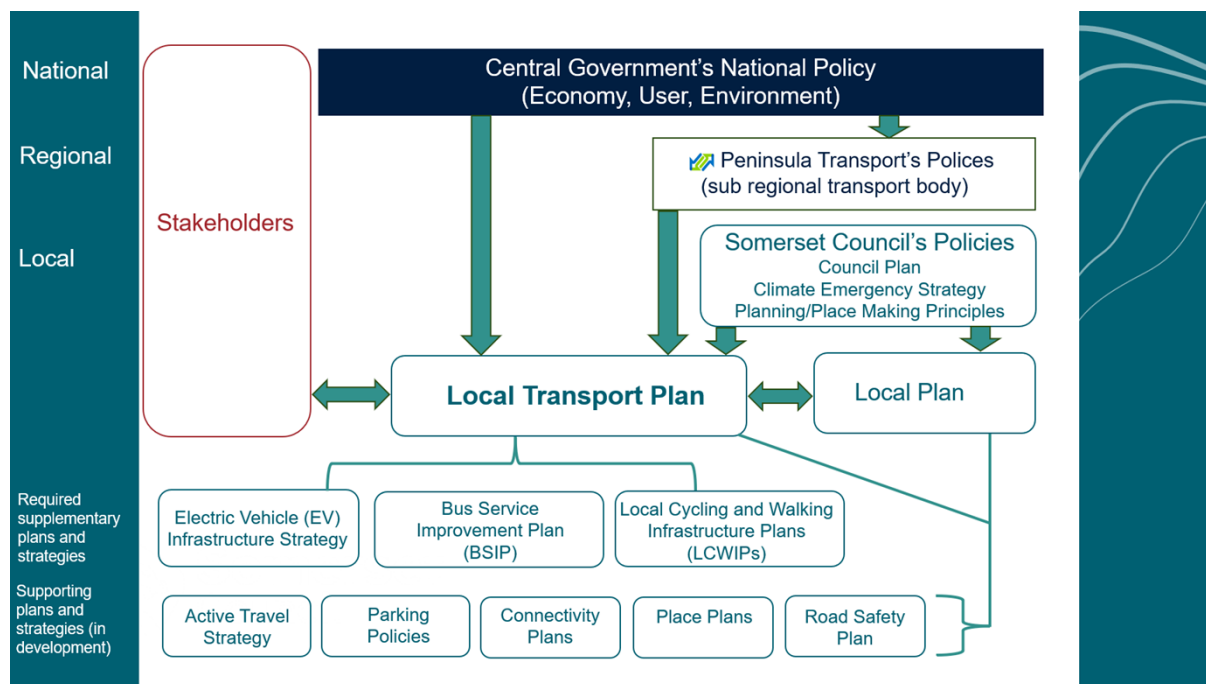
The BSIP is a supplementary plan to the over-arching LTP for Somerset. The BSIP vision aligns with the wider emerging vision of the developing Somerset Local Transport Plan (LTP) which aims to:

- Reduce Environmental Impact
- Create Healthy Places – a great and healthy place to live, work and visit
- Provide a resilient and reliable transport network

Future reviews of the BSIP will ensure that the overall aims continue to align with the wider strategy within the LTP.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between Somerset's BSIP and LTP. The BSIP is a subsidiary to the over-arching LTP.

**Figure 2: Relationship between the LTP and BSIP**



## SECTION TWO – Our Current Bus Offer

### Somerset

Somerset is predominantly rural in nature and has a population of 571,600 as of 2021. Figure 3 identifies the key land use and demographic metrics within Somerset and how this compares to the rest of England

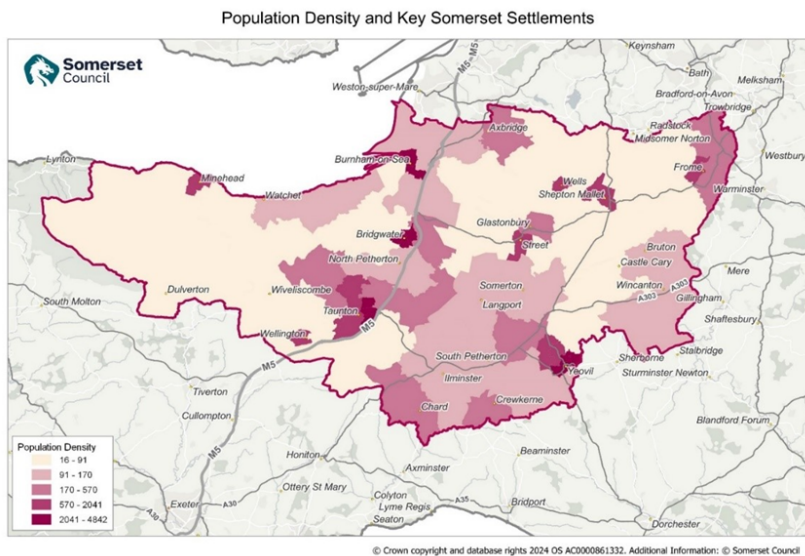
#### Figures 3 – Land Use and Demographic Metrics

Metrics	Somerset	England Comparison
Population Density	165.7 persons/km <sup>2</sup>	227.05 persons/km <sup>2</sup>
Population in rural areas	48%	18%
Roads classified as rural	88%	58%
Population aged 65+	25%	18%

The rural nature of the County, including the road networks and very dispersed pattern of settlements make planning and provision of local bus services very challenging as there is limited population between principal settlements and no critical mass to provide a robust customer base.

The principal urban centres include Taunton (county town), Bridgwater and Yeovil with secondary centres at Wellington, Burnham-on-Sea/Highbridge, Chard, Crewkerne, Frome, Glastonbury, Ilminster, Minehead, Shepton Mallet, Street, Wells and Wincanton. The impact of rapid growth in towns such as Wellington, close to Taunton in the west of the county, and Burnham-on-Sea, close to Bridgwater in the north, has been considerable with the M5/A38 corridor through the centre of the county becoming increasingly congested.

**Figure 4 – Population Density and Key Somerset Settlements**

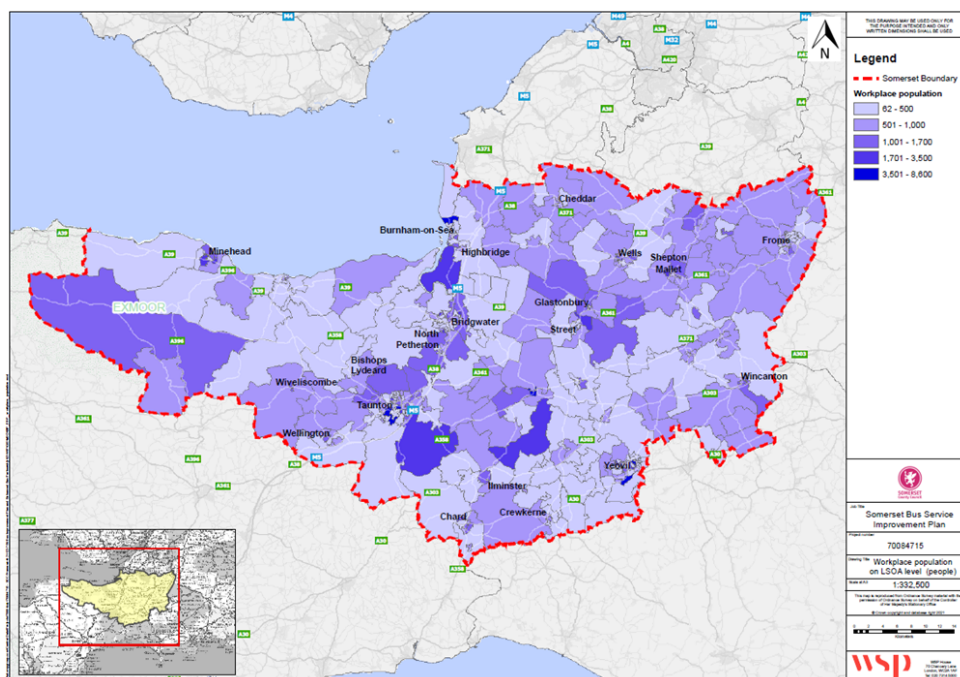


**Workplace Population**

The 2011 census data (see Figure 5) showed that Somerset’s workplace population is dispersed across the county, with clusters in/around Taunton/Wellington, Bridgwater, and Yeovil plus a notable concentration to the north of the county around Cheddar, Frome, Glastonbury/Street, Shepton Mallet and Wells, reflecting the boundaries of the Bristol/Bath travel to work area(s).

The latest 2021 census data was very much impacted by the pandemic and large percentages of the working population were working from home, which doesn’t show a clear picture of the current situation and therefore the 2011 data remains more relevant.

**Figure 5 – Distribution of Workplace Population**



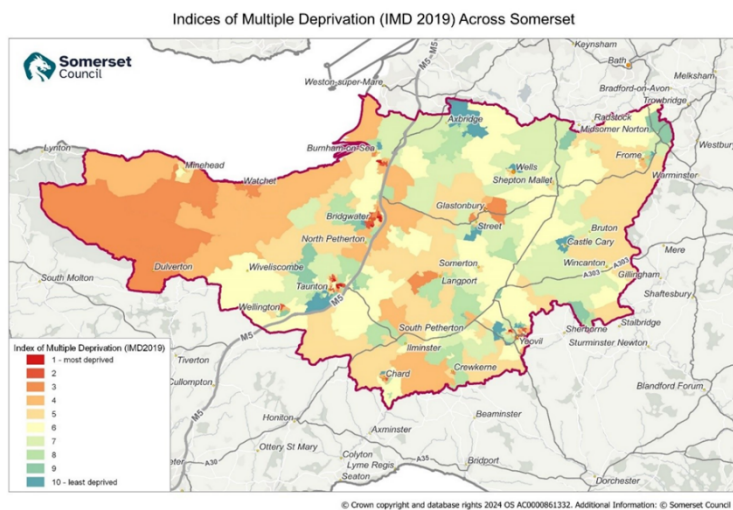
## Economy

The county's economic activity is concentrated on Taunton, Bridgwater, Yeovil, Frome and some smaller towns. The M5/A38 corridor is a key commuting route to the neighbouring counties and Bristol.

Major planned employment zones are located on the M5 growth corridor, e.g., the new 'Gravity' Enterprise Zone close to Junction 23 and 'Nexus 25' at Junction 25. It will be important to ensure these sites are well served and highly accessible by buses so people can access work easily whilst minimising carbon emissions and pressure from traffic on the surrounding highway networks.

As illustrated in Figure 6, several towns within the County sit within poor Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) deciles, including the West of the County which covers Exmoor National Park and the more isolated areas with very low population density.

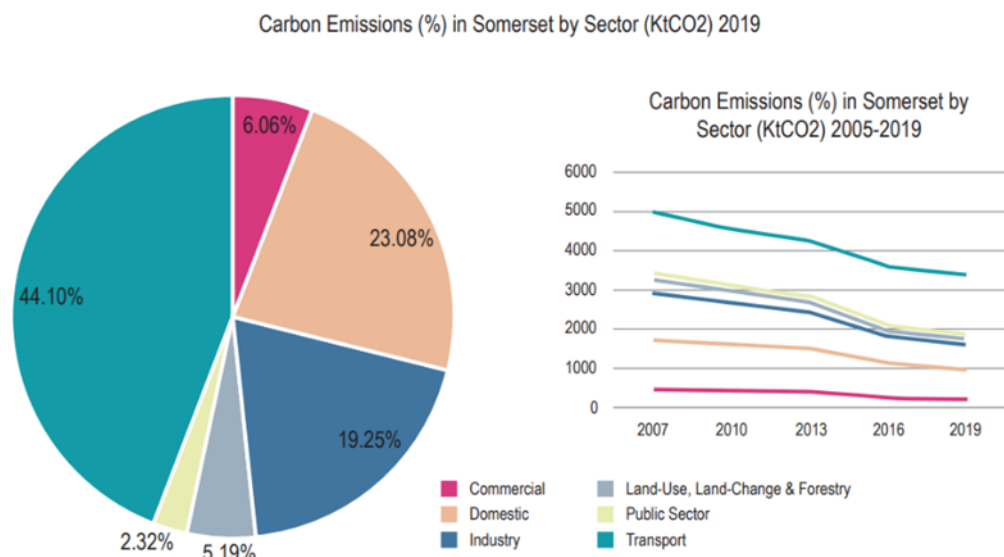
**Figure 5 – Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2019) Across Somerset**



## Transport Carbon Emissions

At a national level, transport is the largest contributor to the UK's domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, responsible for 27% in 2019. Where emissions from other sectors have fallen in the last 30 years, domestic transport GHG emissions have remained relatively static, with improvements in efficiency of new cars largely offset by their increased use.

## CO2 Emissions by Sector for Somerset (2019) and changes from 2007 (inset)



Transport emissions in Somerset have also remained stubbornly high (see Figure XX) with little change in the volume of emissions since the mid 2000's despite improvements in modern vehicles becoming cleaner, less polluting and more efficient.

**Figure XX – Transport Emissions and Car Ownership**

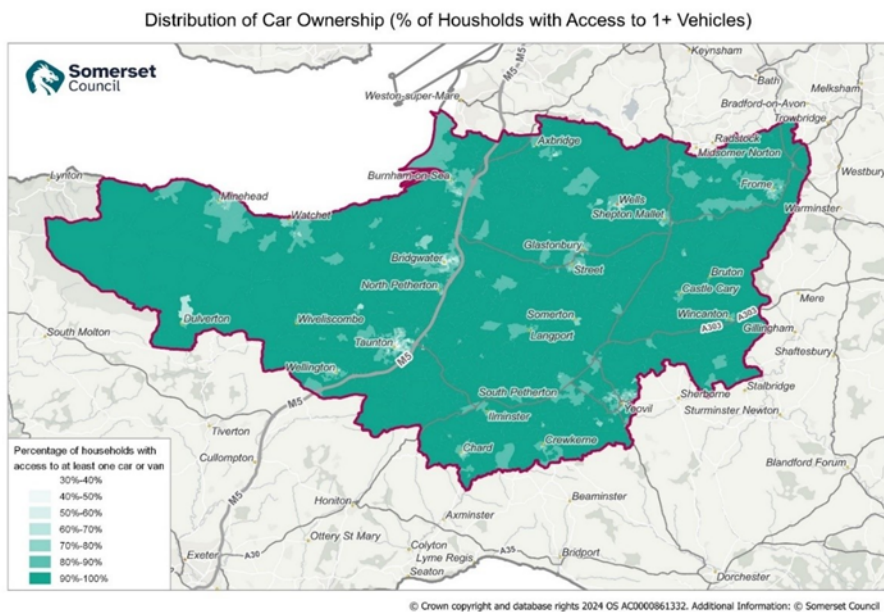
Metrics	Somerset	England Comparison
Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Emissions from Transport	44%	27%
Households with access to one or more car	87%	76.5%

Somerset's rurality contributes to a lack of alternatives to private motorised transport. This is reflected in data from CREDS place based carbon calculator which shows car use in Somerset is significantly higher than the national average see Figure XX.

Decarbonising the public bus fleet will go some way to supporting the move to net zero but cannot be done in isolation. The challenge through the LTP and the BSIP is to both reduce the need to travel and where this is necessary, reduce the reliance on the private car by making public transport more convenient and attractive to create a modal shift.



**Figure 6 – Distribution of Car Ownership**



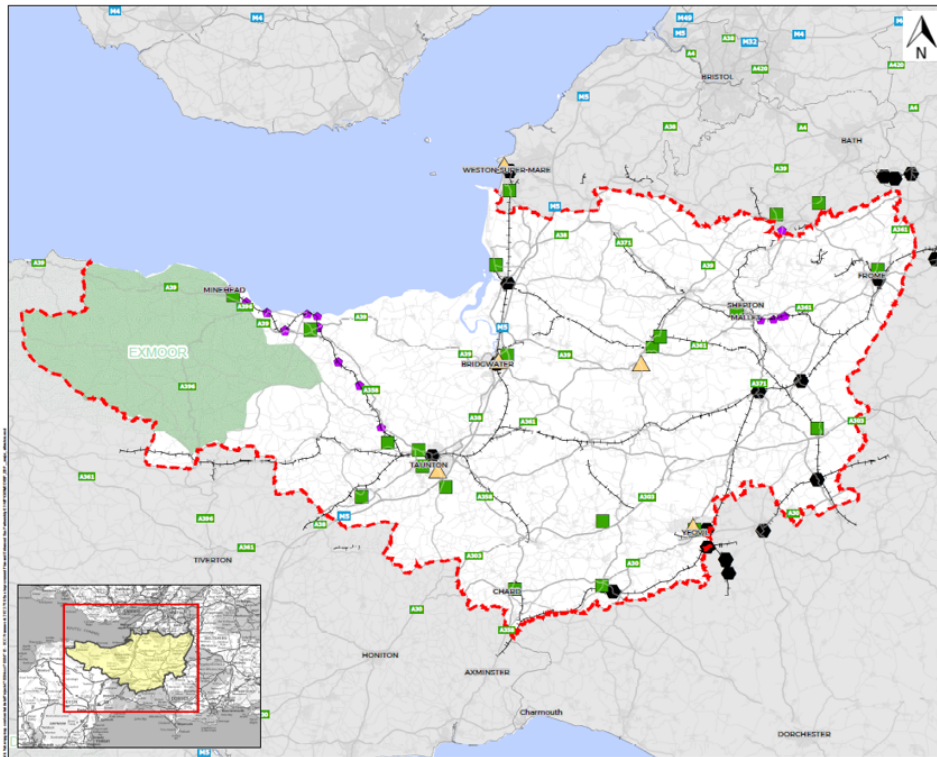
### **Access to Healthcare and Education**

There is a good distribution of hospitals across the county, every key town having access to at least one facility, including some hospitals situated just over the boundary in BANES and North Somerset. Some smaller gaps do exist in the rural centre of the county, situated to the north and south of the Glastonbury/Street area and the far west of the county around Exmoor.

Further Education (FE), college institutions are situated in the three main towns (Taunton, Bridgwater, and Yeovil) plus a fourth location in the centre of the county at Street (Strode College) and then further opportunities are available outside of the Somerset boundary in Weston-Super-Mare and Bristol.

The locations of major trip attractors across Somerset are summarised in Figure **XX**. Good access through public transport is required to these locations, and would be addressed through the Core Network.

**Figure XX – Location of Healthcare and Colleges**



### **Links to Rail Services**

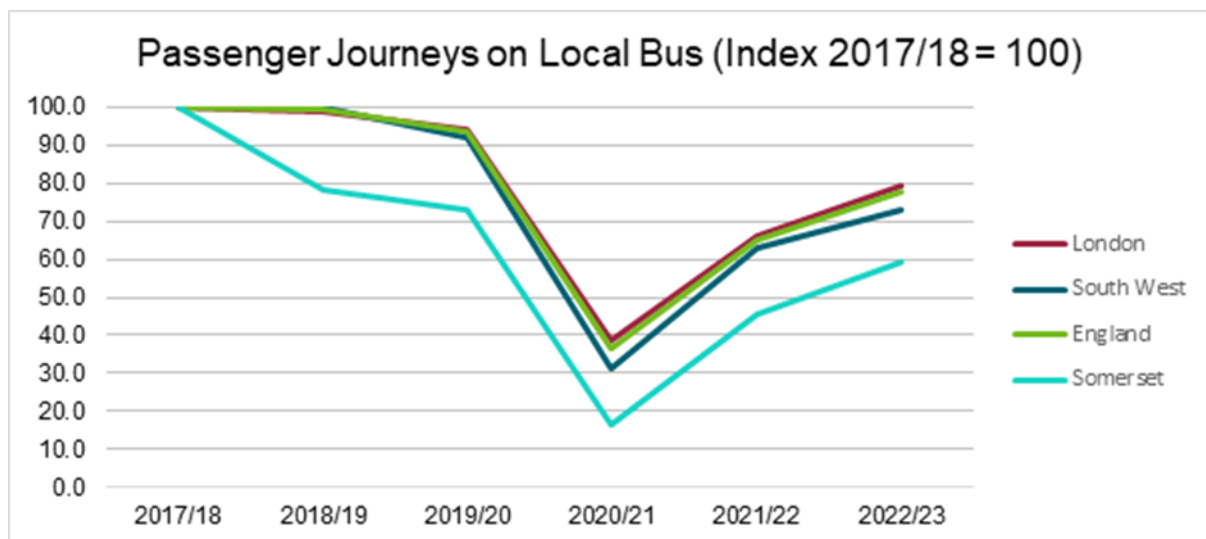
Somerset's rail network is limited in terms of connectivity and choice of services, with only 10 local stations serving the whole county. Local bus services could and should play a greater role in providing access to these stations and facilitating integrated journey opportunities. There is a new station planned for Wellington in 2026, conversations are underway to explore options for public transport and active travel to ensure the station is easy to access.

# Local Bus Network

## Passenger Volumes

Somerset had the fifth lowest bus use per population in England and lowest in the South West region, with an estimated 6.3 million bus journeys in 2018/19 (a decrease of 36% versus 2009/10). 42% of all journeys (2018/19) were made by concessionary passengers.

Patronage levels across the country were significantly impacted by the covid-19 pandemic and Somerset still remains low in comparison, moving to the sixth lowest bus use per population in 2022/23 with an estimated 4.8 million bus journeys in 2022/23. Despite these lower levels, patronage is making a recovery from the peak of the pandemic in 2020/21 when patronage levels fell to an all-time low of 1.3 million bus journeys. This has been aided by the BSIP initiatives and the government’s national £2 fare scheme. Further details relating to these schemes can be found in Section 3 of the BSIP.

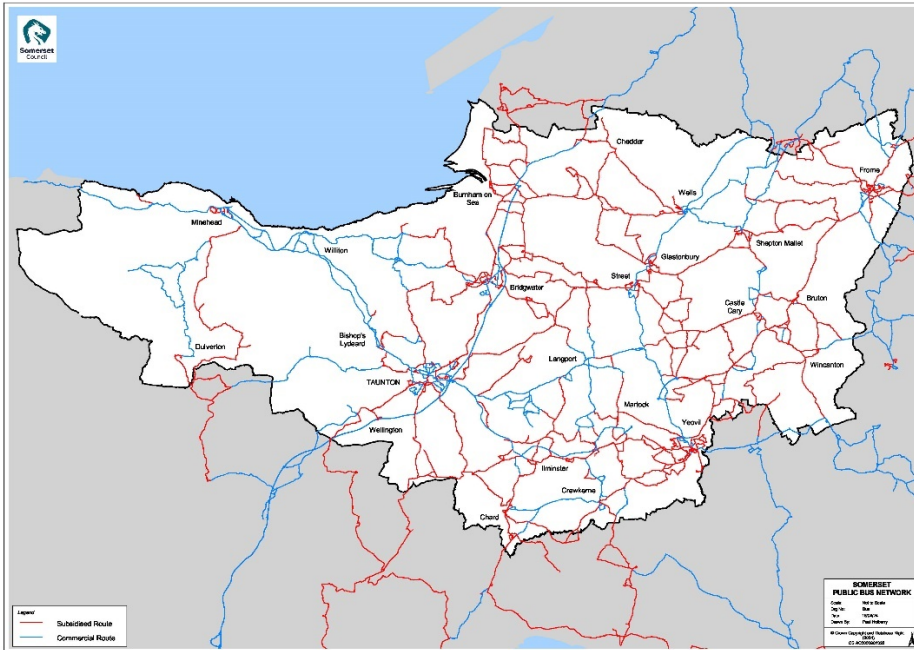


**Add graph for just Somerset patronage**

## Local Network Overview

There is one major operator in the County providing the majority of the commercial bus network and then a number of SMEs making up the rest of the network providing a small proportion of commercial services but predominantly tendered services under contract to the LTA.

Local bus networks are focussed on Taunton, Wellington, Bridgwater, Yeovil and Wells, plus secondary towns such as Glastonbury and Minehead. The current network is illustrated in Figure XX with commercial routes shown in blue and the tendered routes shown in red. This really demonstrates the level of support that goes into the bus network.



Commercial operation of services is extremely challenging and following the pandemic there has been a reduction in the commercial network and a subsequent increase in supported services. Figure XX shows the change in the network from 2021 to 2024.

**Figure XX – Local Bus Service Type in Somerset**

Local Bus Service Type	2021 Number of Routes	2021 Proportion	2024 Number of Routes	2024 Proportion
Commercial	46	39.7%	30	24.0%
Deminimis	10	8.6%	24	19.2%
Subsidised (includes cost and subsidy)	59	50.8%	70	56.0%
Sub total (Local Bus Only)	115	99.1%	124	99.2%
Registered Express (scheduled)	1	0.9%	1	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Vehicle Age

Whilst the average vehicle age within the County hasn't reduced overall, the make-up of the vehicles within the fleet has really improved. Since 2021 we have seen the removal of all Euro 3 engines and a significant increase in Euro 6 engines.

This is set to improve further in 2025 following the successful ZEBRA 2 bid, which will see First South West investing in 25 new electric vehicles for operation on the network.

**Table XX – Somerset Bus Fleet Characteristics**

Key Metric	Somerset Fleet (2021/22)	Somerset Fleet (2023/24)	Somerset Fleet (2024/25)
Average Fleet Age	9 years	10 years	10 years
< 3 years old	4%	Not collected	10%
< 8 years old	39%	Not collected	26%
Euro 6	11%	32%	73%
Euro 5	46%	58%	17%
Euro 4	31%	10%	10%
< Euro 3	12%	0%	0%

## Payment Methods

Since the end of 2023, all ticket machines on public bus routes within the County are now able to accept contactless payments. There has been a significant shift in payment method with contactless now outweighing cash see Table XX.

**Table XX – Typical Ticket Sales**

	Cash %	Contactless %
2019/20	67%	33%
2023/24	38%	62%

## Passenger Satisfaction

An annual survey will be conducted each Autumn. In 2023, a total of 1246 responses were received across 14 bus routes within the County.

**Overall satisfaction:**

76% of respondents were either satisfied 😊 or very satisfied 😄 with their overall journey/experience.

Only 5% were either dissatisfied 😞 or very dissatisfied 😡 with their overall journey/experience.

**Bus Services:**

<b>89%</b> Satisfied/Neutral Location	<b>82%</b> Satisfied/Neutral with cleanliness/Repair
--	---

<b>32%</b> Highlighted reliability/punctuality as an issue	<b>26%</b> Highlighted frequency/convenience as an issue
---	---

<b>22%</b> Journeys delayed	<b>29%</b> Less than 5 mins	<b>12%</b> More than 5 mins
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Only 3%</b> Felt unsafe travelling on the bus
---

**Bus Stop Facilities:**

<b>89%</b> Satisfied/Neutral Location	<b>82%</b> Satisfied/Neutral with cleanliness/Repair
--	---

<b>25%</b> Disappointed with the availability of seating	<b>20%</b> Disappointed with clarity of the timetable
---	--

**Bus Service Improvements:**

40% of respondents viewed extra morning and later evening services, as the top priority regardless of whether the route used was urban, inter-urban or rural.

This was followed by more reliable services at 17% which remained the 2<sup>nd</sup> priority for urban and inter-urban routes, although this is slightly overtaken by more direct services on rural routes.

**Fares Initiatives:**

<b>17%</b> New User due to £1 or £2 fare initiatives	<b>54%</b> Increased usage due to £1 or £2 fare initiatives
---	--

### Current offer strengths & weaknesses

The National Bus Strategy: Bus Back Better, set out 12 main objectives for improving bus services. The current offer within Somerset has been reviewed against these objectives, taking into consideration passenger and stakeholder feedback, to identify strengths and weaknesses to help shape the areas for improvement.

Key Goals:	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>More frequent buses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Good DRT (Slinky) coverage across the County</li> <li>❖ Trial of Digital DRT in Somerton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Frequency of services reducing due to commercial viability</li> </ul>
<b>Faster and more reliable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Bus priority measures planned for Taunton</li> <li>❖ Recruitment and retention of drivers has improved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Distances and rural road network mean journeys take longer</li> <li>❖ Parking issues in smaller towns/villages causing congestion/delays</li> </ul>
<b>Cheaper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ P&amp;R lower fare</li> <li>❖ Taunton Town Zone lower fare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ No generic county wide youth concession</li> <li>❖ Lower fares focussed in Taunton only</li> <li>❖ Distances travelled mean high fares</li> </ul>
<b>More comprehensive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Evening services into and around Taunton</li> <li>❖ Somerton DRT operating 7am to 7pm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Limited or no evening services in other parts of the County</li> <li>❖ Sunday network is sparse</li> <li>❖ Design of edge of town developments – difficult to serve</li> </ul>
<b>Easier to understand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Think Travel portal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Bus stop displays</li> <li>❖ No clear identity</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Two main change dates per year for consistency</li> <li>❖ Bus It campaign</li> </ul>	
<b>Easier to use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Contactless payment available on all buses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Bus stop/interchange facilities</li> <li>❖ No system wide ticket</li> <li>❖ No through ticketing between operators</li> </ul>
<b>Better integration with other services and other modes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Somerton DRT linking to the main bus network</li> <li>❖ Connections to Taunton Train Station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Links to other rail stations</li> <li>❖ Frequency of bus services makes linking very difficult</li> </ul>
<b>Better to ride in</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ New DDRT vehicles</li> <li>❖ Modern Electric vehicles due in Taunton</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Generally older fleet</li> <li>❖ Lack of investment due to challenging commercial environment</li> </ul>
<b>Greener</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Successful ZEBRA 2 bid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Currently no Zero Emission Buses on the Somerset bus network</li> <li>❖ Increasing car ownership</li> </ul>
<b>Accessible and inclusive network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Comprehensive DRT provides accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Rural bus stops</li> </ul>
<b>Innovative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Mobility Hubs</li> <li>❖ DDRT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Lack of commercial network restricts operator investment</li> <li>❖ Local Authority financial situation</li> </ul>
<b>Safe mode of transport, seen as safe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Bus Passenger Charter -setting standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Perception during winter months when travelling to and from stops</li> </ul>



## SECTION THREE:

### Improvements Programme to 2024/25

Somerset was fortunate enough to be recognised in the first round of BSIP funding from the Department for Transport and secured approx. £8.2 million in capital funding (for one-off fixed assets) and approx. £3.7m in revenue funding (for on-going operating expenses). This enabled us to develop an exciting programme of capital and revenue schemes aimed at making the bus more attractive and driving up patronage.

The approach taken was to target the majority of the funding in one specific area of the County to create a transformational bus town in Taunton, with a view to rolling this model to other towns in the future if successful and if future funding were to become available.

**Achievements to date include:**

#### Fares Support:

##### Scheme: Taunton Park & Ride Fare Reduction

**Details:** From September 2022, a £1 single and £2 return was introduced for all adult passenger journeys. Children are charged 50% of the adult fare and English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) pass holders travel free after 9.30am.

**Outcome:** This has been extremely positive and achieved the intended outcome of retaining and growing patronage on the service. The low fare was introduced following a period of free fares related to mitigating the impact of major roadworks in the town as illustrated in the chart.

**Best Practice:** The period of free fares (pre-BSIP) generated a significant patronage increase and then being able to re-instate fares at a lower level beyond this free period, has been instrumental in retaining and growing passenger numbers.

Park & Ride Passenger Journeys - Monthly Total



## Scheme: Taunton Town Fare Cap

**Details:** From December 2022, a £1 single fare was introduced for all adult passenger journeys, with children paying 50% of the fare. This applied to all journeys taking place entirely within the zone.



**Outcome:** This has been very well received by passengers and aided in growing patronage during the recovery stage following the pandemic and patronage is higher than the 2019 patronage.

Add graph

Lesson Learnt: Add text

## Bus Service Support:

### Scheme: Taunton Bus Town – Additional Services

**Detail:** Evening journeys were introduced from 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023, on five routes into and around Taunton, with last journeys taking place around 11pm, Monday to Saturday.

**Outcome:** Through targeted marketing the patronage has grown **add more description.**

Add graph

### Lesson Learnt/Best Practice:

The routes chosen for evening journeys were those routes that are currently operating commercially and already had journeys running up until 7 to 8pm. Patronage was slow to grow and whilst they are proving popular the patronage remains lower in the evenings than during the peak. This highlights the viability of evening services and strengthens the argument that they are more likely to be sustainable where routes are already commercial.

## Marketing

### Scheme: Marketing Support across a range of mediums

**Details:** The 'Bus It' branding was created and is used across all public transport promotion, not just BSIP focussed.

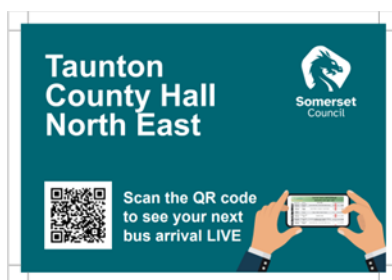


**Outcome:** We have been able to deliver a comprehensive, coordinated 'Bus It' campaign across Somerset. Through the use of the new branding, the messaging in relation to using the bus remains consistent and is easily adapted for new BSIP schemes.

### Other non-BSIP funded initiatives:

#### QR Codes at Bus Stops

These have been rolled out across town centres bus stops in Taunton town centre initially and then Yeovil town centre has followed. When scanned the QR code links to a dashboard of bus services serving that stop and shows when they are expected.



#### Timetable Co-ordination

Through Somerset's Enhanced Partnership (EP) timetable changes are now introduced at two key points in the year aligning with Easter and the start of the academic year. Specific dates are agreed at each October Bus Advisory Board meeting for the following calendar year and subsequent Board meetings are arranged to coincide with the commencement of the consultation period ahead of

registrations being submitted. Operators are required to present their proposed changes to the Board and this facilitates discussion with Board members to understand the potential impact and allow mitigating action to be taken where appropriate.

## **Further developments due by the end of 2024/25**

### **Bus Priority Measures:**

#### **Scheme: Taunton Bus Town – Taunton West Greenwaves**

**Detail:** This scheme aims to improve the bus journey times and reliability along the A38 corridor from Wellington to Taunton. The feasibility study and subsequent concept designs have resulted in deciding to implement the following measures:

- Bus Priority Infrastructure (Bus Lane East-Bound only) along A38 between Rumwell (Park & Bus) and Tangier.
- Bus Priority Infrastructure (Bus Gate) at the Corporation Street/Park Street roundabout.

This scheme is currently in detailed design, and we are working through network availability to schedule these works.

#### **Scheme: Taunton Bus Town – Taunton East Greenwaves**

**Detail:** This scheme aims to improve bus journey times for buses coming in and out of Taunton Town Centre. The feasibility study and subsequent concept designs have resulted in deciding to implement the following measures:

- Bus Priority Infrastructure (Bus Lane both directions) along East Reach and East Street between Wordsworth Drive and Market House.
- Traffic Signal improvements to Hurdle Way.
- Traffic Signal adjustments to various Traffic Signals along the corridor.

This scheme is currently in detailed design, and we are working through network availability to schedule these works.

#### **Scheme: Taunton Bus Town – Taunton North Greenwaves**

**Detail:** This scheme aims to improve bus journey times between the town centre and the train station. This scheme remains in feasibility and decisions are yet to be made as to what will be implemented.

## Other Infrastructure:

### **Scheme: Somerton Rural Mobility Hub**

**Detail:** Subject to consultation we plan to deliver a rural Mobility Hub to facilitate interchange between Somerset's reviewed and modified bus network and plans for a new Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) service operating to the East of the county, in the Somerton / rural Yeovil area.

The mobility hub will allow sheltered interchange between scheduled bus services, connection with DDRT services, printed and electronic information access (to Somerset's Think Travel Portal), Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), and cycle storage.

This scheme is currently nearing the completion of concept design and will be delivered by March 2025.

### **Scheme: Taunton Urban Mobility Hub**

**Detail:** A Taunton Mobility Hub will be developed to support mode/mode and multimode transfer in the town centre. The site will incorporate a multi-bay bus interchange and will bring inter-city coach services into one place at coach stops adjacent to the Mobility Hub.

The Mobility Hub will include elements such as bus EV charging points, waiting spaces for public transport customers, bike storage and repair facilities, e-scooter facilities, other concessions as required following user consultation, travel information (including access points to Somerset's Think Travel Portal), Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), and taxi / private car drop off facilities.

The local bus network will be redefined to see all local and intra-urban services operate through the Mobility Hub, providing direct links from the hub to Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton Railway Station, local enterprise zones and business parks, and the Taunton Park & Ride sites.

The scheme is entering the detailed design and planning phase and delivery proposed for 2025.

## Bus Service Support:

### **Scheme: Taunton Bus Town – Somerton DDRT**

**Detail:** A trial of Digital DRT is being rolled out in the Somerton area of the County. The service operates 7am to 7pm, Monday to Friday feeding passengers into local services in Somerton and also into the public bus network that serves Somerton.

**Add photo**

This service is a responsive transport provision, enabling passengers to book up to 1 hour before they need to travel.

**Best Practice:** The newly launched service will be reviewed between now and the end of March 2026, to identify what is working well and any key lessons learnt, which can be used to inform the future roll out of DDRT across the County.

## **Other non-BSIP funded initiatives proposed:**

### **Develop an Integrated Parking Strategy for Somerset**

Following the move to a new unitary authority, off-street parking across the County falls under the remit of the new Somerset Council. This aides in the creation of a more joined up, cohesive strategy which supports the aims of the Local Authority. A project to review the Parking Policy will be undertaken with the aim of supporting and promoting the use of public bus services into and around the key towns in the County. This will also support and encourage the use of the Taunton Park and Ride Service.

### **Commencement of ZEBRA 2 project**

Somerset has recently been awarded £2.2m of ZEBRA 2 funding from government. Alongside this grant funding, the successful application also includes significant investment from First South West of approx. £13m. This is an exciting opportunity to introduce electric buses into the Somerset bus network and we are very pleased to be working with First South West on this project. This scheme will see 25 electric vehicles (both single and double deck vehicles) being introduced into the network operated out of the First South Taunton depot on Hamilton Road. The depot will be installed with the necessary charging infrastructure to support the operation of the buses. Work is commencing during 2024/25 to get the ball rolling on delivering the project.

## **Bus Driver Recruitment and Retention**

Bus Driver recruitment was significantly impacted by the covid 19 pandemic with many drivers leaving the industry. It has taken some time to recover but operators within Somerset are now reporting positively in relation to recruitment with no depots within the County currently experiencing vacancy issues. Much work has been done across all operators to improve retention of drivers with all operations reporting similar initiatives which include:

- Salary reviews
- Shift allocation – providing more consistency for drivers and pre-determined rest days
- Management support and communication
- Pastoral support
- Training programmes

Other roles within bus operations that could impact the delivery of services such as engineers/mechanics and cleaning staff are all reported to be currently sufficiently staffed with no particular concerns.

Somerset Council will continue to monitor the situation with operators and if further support with recruitment is required, this can be provided. Initiatives could include:

Boot Camps	Accelerated Apprenticeships	Supported Internship/ Supported Employment
Links to Colleges (particularly as fleets move to zero emission)	Training locations	Targeted advertising

## SECTION FOUR:

### BSIP Ambition Beyond 2025

A review of the current bus offer in Somerset compared to the position in 2021 and analysis of the Autumn 2023 bus passenger survey results, has been undertaken to ensure we are still focussing on the right key priority areas within Somerset. Engagement with key stakeholders including local bus operators, bus passenger representatives and the Bus Advisory Board has taken place to ensure their views are captured in our future ambition. The existing key deliverables and policies, from the 2021 BSIP have been updated and developed further, **which subject to securing sufficient, additional funding** will aim to revitalise the bus market across Somerset and put the passenger first in terms of accessibility and confidence in the network.

In seeking to reverse decades of local bus passenger decline and improve Somerset's position nationally regarding passenger journeys per head, the ambitious deliverables and policies outlined in this section have focused on building on the achievements and ambition from the first round of BSIP to try and continue making the network more attractive, expansive, easy to use, more direct and more affordable.

The deliverables, which are subject to securing additional funding, are underpinned by a strong set of aims, objectives and targets and sit in parallel with equally ambitious plans to decarbonise the local bus fleet, bring parking and planning development in line with local bus network design and deliver the BSIP progressively through a well-established Enhanced Partnership approach with multiple partners representing a wider audience than just public transport providers.

As summary of the deliverables is set out in the table below:

BSIP Objective	Deliverable	Outcome
Service Level & Network Coverage	1	7am – 7pm Minimum 60-minute core bus network
	2	Evening Buses
	3	Demand led hub & spoke feeder network
	4	Digital DRT – the next step for Somerset
	5	Express Services
	6	Integration between rail and coach across Somerset
Bus Priority	7	Progressive Increases in Bus Priority measures
Fares & Ticketing	8	Reduced flat fares across Somerset towns
	9	Youth fare 16-25 year olds across Somerset
	10	Integrated ticketing with DDRT
	11	All operator family and group tickets
	12	No fuss multi-operator ticket
	13	Somerset Transport Hub strategy



Bus Passenger Experience	14	The Somerset Bus Information and Branding Strategy
	15	Promotion and incentivisation of bus travel
	16	Stop design and information – increased user confidence
	17	Educational training package for bus use
	18	Continued provision and promotion of the Bus Passenger Charter
Bus Fleet	19	Somerset local bus network – decarbonisation plan
	20	Park & Ride – Electric buses
	21	Somerset local bus network – vehicle standards

# Improving Service Level and Network coverage

## Deliverable 1:

### 7AM – 7PM MINIMUM 60-MINUTE CORE BUS NETWORK BY 2026

- ✓ DfT objective for more intensive services & investment
- ✓ Our aim for a more extensive & frequent service network
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for higher frequency & direct routes
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

Across Somerset there are currently very few high intensity local bus services, most higher frequency routes, where they do exist, operate across the core route network at 30-to-60-minute headways.

Our plan is to re-examine the current network and re-balance corridor provision across a wider geographical area, linked to the emerging Local Transport Plan (LTP) and place-based solutions. We will work to identify key locations that need to be served as part of the core network, to significantly improve bus links to strategic locations.

## ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>A core strategic network operating at minimum headways ranging from 15-to-60-minutes by 2026</p> <p>Selective further route frequency progression dependent on demand in following years</p>	<p>An aspiration to reach 'turn-up-and-go' frequencies on key corridors by 2035 on a commercial basis.</p> <p>Develop a rural strategy and model to support the delivery of a countywide sustainable network.</p>

## Deliverable 2:

### EVENING BUSES

- ✓ DfT objective for more intensive services & investment
- ✓ Our aim for a more extensive & frequent service network
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for more early morning and late evening buses & direct routes
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

**40%**

**Of bus users surveyed in Autumn 2023 viewed extra morning and later evening services as a priority**

Most local bus services in Somerset generally stop running between 6pm and 7pm with a few notable examples running for longer periods in the north and north-east of the county. Through the original BSIP funding we have been able to extend evening services on five bus routes operating in and round Taunton, up until 11pm.

Our plan is to build on the evening service network by continuing the provision in Taunton and expanding out to other key towns in the County, starting with Yeovil, with the aim of providing a more inclusive local bus network that appeals to more user groups, promotes social inclusion, creates leisure and social travel opportunities, and assists lower paid shift worker patterns.

The plan is delivered in tandem with an improved and flexible feeder service network that provides more opportunities for passengers in the more rural parts of the county to access the bus network.

### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>A network guarantee for core services to operate at least 7am to 7pm Monday to Saturday and 9am to 5pm Sundays</p> <p>Address the significant gaps in weekend services</p> <p>Additional late evening and night-time buses until 11pm on some cores services</p>	<p>Evening and weekend services to form part of the wider rural strategy.</p>

### Deliverable 3:

## DEMAND LED HUB AND SPOKE FEEDER NETWORK

- ✓ DfT objective for hubs and spoke systems & branch routes
- ✓ Our aim for Improved Coordination
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for more bus services & direct routes Stakeholders aims for more bus services & direct routes

**70%**

### Increase in direct services across Somerset with the use of a core network and feeder service

Central to Somerset's ambitious plans is a flexible approach to feeder service provision that will be linked to place based solutions identified through the LTP and people's propensity to use public transport - meeting the DfT's vision of community service levels set in partnership with residents and local bus operators.

Using a mix of strategic hub locations, Somerset's feeder network will synchronise with core network frequencies, and ensure networks are designed to minimise journey time and encourage interchange.

Feeders will be delivered through changes to existing fixed bus services operated under the subsidised network in addition to expanding the use of Digital DRT.

### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Provide a network of flexible and fixed feeder services coordinated with the core bus network across a core daily period, 7am to 7pm, and providing evening and night connections focused on town centre locations and their rural hinterlands.</p> <p>Develop a strategy for interchange locations (mobility hubs) in tandem with the delivery of the LTA areas bus stop design guide and hierarchy approach with infrastructure re-designed to enable safe and easy interchange.</p>	<p>Wider roll out of the mobility hub strategy.</p>

## Deliverable 4:

### DIGITAL DRT – THE NEXT STEP FOR SOMERSET

- ✓ DfT objective for increased use of DRT solutions in rural areas
- ✓ Our aim for an easily accessible & reliable network
- ✓ Stakeholders aim for increased rural transport & access
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

## 1 hour

### Was the maximum booking window required to make DRT attractive and viable for stakeholders

The Slinky DRT service currently covers 80% of the land area of Somerset, however, with the exception of the BSIP trial area within Somerton, 24-to-48-hour pre-booking via a phone line is required. This creates significant barriers for spontaneous travel and excludes a large majority of potential users. A step change is required to remove rural travel barriers and reduce social isolation.

A significantly improved DRT offer is required across the county focusing on Digital DRT technology, lowering booking time periods to 60-minutes or less and feeding into the core network, in line with DfT aspirations for rural transport through the BSIP, and being developed in-step with the LTP placed based solutions, in each designated Digital DRT zone.

Making the service appeal to a wider user base will be critical to Digital DRT's success.

### ...What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Draw on the results of the Somerton trial to digitalise the rest of the DRT services.</p> <p>Transform the image and perception of DRT through the use of modern vehicles with eye-catching branding and a booking App.</p> <p>Expand the service operation from 7am to 7pm to feed into the core network of services.</p>	<p>Review and develop the DRT service as required to meet the future needs, linked to the wider rural strategy and the LTP.</p>

**Deliverable 5:  
EXPRESS SERVICES**

- ✓ DfT objective for more intensive services & investment
- ✓ Our aim for a more extensive & frequent service network
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for higher frequency & direct routes
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

**88%**

**of Somerset’s roads classed as rural**

Somerset by its very nature is a rural county with many public bus services covering large distances on a daily basis, this can be a barrier to travel for many people particularly those living at the start of these long routes. It can often deter young people from accessing Further Education and improving their future prospects.

More direct routes are required to speed up journeys and encourage people to travel to their intended destination by public bus.

First South West have introduced more direct journeys on their service between Minehead and Taunton and we are keen to explore other opportunities to provide additional faster journeys across the network where required and feasible.

**... What we will do**

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Introduce express journeys, with limited stops, from more remote areas at peak travel times.</p> <p>Link to Further Education colleges and key employment centres.</p> <p>Provision of more direct services will be linked to the LTP place based solutions.</p>	<p>Apply lessons learnt and best practice to future roll out of express services, linked to the wider rural strategy and the LTP.</p>

**Deliverable 6**

## INTEGRATION WITH RAIL AND COACH ACROSS SOMERSET

- ✓ DfT objective for integration with other modes
- ✓ Our aim for Improved Coordination
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for **increased intermodal integration**
- ✓ Our decarbonised aims for growing public transport mode share

**2%**

### Of local bus services are timetabled to meet onward rail or coach modes

Somerset has opportunities to integrate with the national long distance coach network and the national rail network at several locations across the county.

We will build on discussions that took place with rail and coach operators during the preparation of the original BSIP to facilitate coordination and interchange where possible, through service and infrastructure improvements. Rail and express coach operators sit on the Bus Advisory Board, issues will be raised and discussed in this forum to ensure better timetable coordination and infrastructure management.

The revised core bus network will focus on rail and coach connections, bus to bus integration through the hub and spoke concept, guarantee hourly rural connections, and improve bus stations/deliver mobility hubs and supporting walking and cycling routes to the local bus network.

### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
Upgrade bus stops to allow bus to coach connections with the 24-hour / 7-day per week Falcon coach service.	Apply best practice for future mobility hubs and rail stations facilities, to facilitate co-ordination with local bus services.
Timetable local bus connections to the key rail services in Somerset.	Future timetable coordination to form part of the wider rural strategy.
Review of bus station facilities and mobility hub requirements in key Somerset towns – learning from the Taunton Mobility Hub due to be operational from 2025.	

## Bus Priority

## DELIVERABLE 7:

### PROGRESSIVE INCREASES IN BUS PRIORITY MEASURES

- ✓ DfT objective for improved journey time & bus speeds
- ✓ Our aim for a more frequent, accessible, & reliable network
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for direct & higher frequency buses
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

Current bus priority measures are being implemented where the service frequency warrants them. Further measures will be considered and developed as the overall frequency of buses improves and necessitates additional measures to support these enhancements.

An overarching policy will guide bus priority improvements as a progressive activity through the BSIP. Coupled to bus network frequency improvements, buses will become faster and more reliable, competing with the car, and driving up reciprocal improvements in bus service quality, vehicle standards, and affordable fares.

### ... What we will do

Somerset will tailor bus priority improvements to bus network enhancements, working in partnership with local bus operators. Priorities will be designed-in to new land developments, funding bus measures. A range of bus priorities will be used including bus lanes, bus gates and selective vehicle detection.

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Work in partnership with local bus operators to have a continuous detailed list of bus priority measures as and when funding becomes available.</p> <p>Review the effectiveness of the bus priority measures post implementation on bus priority times.</p> <p>Bus priority infrastructure to be designed into new land developments during the planning phase.</p>	<p>Apply best practice for future bus priority infrastructure.</p> <p>Continue to review and update the list of potential bus priority measures.</p>

## Improving Fares & Ticketing



## Deliverable 8

### REDUCED FLAT FARES ACROSS SOMERSET TOWNS

- ✓ DfT objective for low flat fares & fare caps in towns
- ✓ Our aim for reduced cost of travel
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for general fare reductions
- ✓ Our decarbonised aims for growing public transport mode share

**54%**

Of bus passengers surveyed in Autumn 2023 confirmed they use the bus more due to the £1 and £2 fare initiatives

Provision of heavily reduced bus travel across key Somerset towns is another area of our BSIP as this will drive change across wider agendas on social mobility, accessibility, and decarbonisation.

Learning from the Taunton £1 fare initiative, we will work with operators to deliver lower, more simplified fares that are attractive and affordable to passengers, whilst being sustainable for operators longer term.

### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Develop a strategy that identifies the optimum price point for operators and passengers with a view to becoming commercially sustainable in the future.</p> <p>Introduce the lower flat fares offering discounted travel within the Somerset towns of Yeovil, Bridgwater and Frome.</p>	<p>Review the outcome and develop the longer-term strategy for fares initiatives in the County.</p>

## Deliverable 9

## YOUTH FARE FOR 16 TO 25 YEAR OLDS ACROSS SOMERSET

- ✓ DfT objective for lower & simpler fares
- ✓ Our aim for reduced cost of travel
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for cheaper & simplified fares
- ✓ Our decarbonised aims for growing public transport mode share

**Approx 55,000**

**Young people aged 16-25 in Somerset**

The original BSIP aimed to reduce fares for young people aged 16 to 25 and whilst it was not possible to facilitate this aim within the BSIP funding allocation, it still remains a firm ambition of the BSIP.

There still remains strong support for the introduction of a ‘Youth’ fare for those aged 16 to a maximum of 25 years old, to support those continuing in full-time education, training or seeking/commencing employment. This will also help to address issues surrounding social isolation amongst younger people living in rural communities by providing an affordable, independent means of mobility.

In the 2023 National Highways and Transport Survey, satisfaction with bus fares in Somerset scored 55%, versus the national average of 54%.

### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Introduce a <b>Young Person’s Bus Card</b>, with a 3-year validity and administered by an annual charge. The card will entitle holders to <b>discounted fares</b>. Eligibility checks during registration would be required, plus a photo card to prevent fraudulent use and avoiding any issues with drivers challenging young people on their age.</p> <p>Implement a phased roll out to the scheme with 16-19 year olds initially, followed by 20-25 year olds.</p>	<p>Review the outcome and develop the longer-term strategy for a young person’s concessionary fares scheme.</p>

## Deliverable 10

## INTEGRATED TICKETING WITH DIGITAL DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT (DDRT)

- ✓ DfT objective for lower & simpler fares
- ✓ Our aim for reduced cost of travel
- ✓ Stakeholder priorities cheaper and simplified fares
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

**Approx 32,000**

### Passenger journeys made a year on Slinky DRT Services

With the plan to digitalise Somerset’s entire DRT service and create a feeder network into key hubs and interchanges facilities, it is vital to support this plan with affordable and simple fares, making it easier for passengers to buy a ticket that covers their full journey.

Working with operators, Ticketer and our Digital DRT software provider, we will introduce a process that easily allows passengers to book and pay for travel via the App, issuing one ticket that is accepted on both the DRT service and the public bus.

We will agree a sustainable fare that provides a level of discount for the passenger from buying a through ticket as opposed to purchasing tickets for each leg of the journey at the full price.

### ...What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Introduce a simple process and single fare to enable through travel from the DDRT service on to the public bus network, linked to the phased roll out of Digital DRT.</p> <p>This will link to the work on the mobility hub strategy to ensure DRT is feeding into a central point where passengers feel safe and comfortable to wait for their onward connection.</p>	<p>Review and develop future ticketing strategy as part of the wider rural strategy and linked to the LTP.</p>

## Deliverable 11

## ALL OPERATOR FAMILY & GROUP TICKETS

- ✓ DfT objective for lower & simpler fares
- ✓ Our aim for reduced cost of travel
- ✓ Stakeholder priorities cheaper and simplified fares
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

Provision of significantly reduced bus travel across Somerset towns is another area of our BSIP that will drive change across wider agendas on social mobility, accessibility, and decarbonisation.

Our approach will see the development of a common family/group ticket accepted by all operators across the Somerset network and funded by local operators following agreement of the remuneration mechanism through the EP. All operators are committed to this simple approach that will open the bus network to residents and tourists alike.

To deliver this ticket on the ground we will work through the EP process to harness the power of new ticket machine and app technology to provide seamless travel across the network using this common operator ticket, with back-office systems providing equitable and direct operator remuneration.

### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Through the EP process we will work with all operators to agree the mechanisms for an all-operator family / group ticket.</p> <p>Understand the range of group and family tickets currently offered across all local bus operators in Somerset and seek to agree a common product and price structure that will allow a new, single product to be rolled out commercially across the network.</p>	<p>Review and develop future ticketing strategy as part of the wider rural strategy and linked to the LTP.</p>

### Deliverable 12

## NO FUSS MULTI OPERATOR TICKET

- ✓ DfT objective for integrated ticketing
- ✓ Our aim for an Easily Accessible & Reliable Network
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for improved information
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

Through the Enhanced Partnership, Somerset Council will bring together a sub-group of local bus and rail operators to understand the potential for multi-operator ticketing schemes. Keeping abreast of developments within project Coral, the DfT supported project to develop a contactless transport ticketing broker system, to simplify fares and ticket purchases.

All local buses across Somerset now accept contactless payments and through discussions with bus, rail, and coach operators we will understand the potential to harness existing tap-on/tap-off technology which may provide more cost-effective methods to realise the policy aims and instead move the focus to daily local bus and multimodal fare-caps to encourage more local travel utilising all services where possible.

### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Somerset Council will lead a multi-operator sub-group of the Enhanced Partnership to explore options for the roll-out of multi-operator ticketing using appropriate and cost-effective technology and processes linked to DfT back-office systems.</p> <p>This work will include daily fare caps for all public transport journeys and a pilot between local bus and express coach services through ticketing.</p>	<p>Review and develop future ticketing strategy as part of the wider rural strategy and linked to the LTP.</p>

## Improving the Bus Passenger Experience

## Interchange/ waiting facilities:

### DELIVERABLE 13

#### THE SOMERSET TRANSPORT HUB STRATEGY

- ✓ DfT objective for a better integrated and accessible network
- ✓ Our aim for improved co-ordination and a comfortable network
- ✓ Stakeholder aims for **increased intermodal integration**
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

We recognise that bus interchanges and waiting facilities are a key element of the bus journey, influencing the convenience, comfort, safety and attractiveness of using the bus service. We have an ambition for improving the bus interchange and waiting facilities across Somerset, as part of our wider vision for enhancing the bus passenger experience and increasing the use of public transport in the county.

Transport hubs are a new concept in the transport sector. The hubs in Taunton and Somerton are setting the standard for Somerset. We need a strategy for transport hubs to help us create a network of hubs across the county. This strategy would help us prioritise where in the county to locate the hubs as well as how we can provide interconnecting transport modes between the hubs.

#### What we will do.....

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>We will work in partnership with bus operators, community groups and other stakeholders to develop a prioritised list of bus interchange and waiting facility improvement projects, with indicative costs, benefits and timescales, and potential funding sources and delivery partners.</p> <p>We will prioritise the improvement of bus interchange and waiting facilities at strategic locations that serve high-frequency, cross-county and regional bus routes, as well as support the development of new housing and employment sites.</p> <p>We will ensure that bus interchange and waiting facilities are well-connected to other modes of transport, such as rail,</p>	<p>Continually review and update the list of potential bus interchanges.</p>

cycling and walking, and offer seamless and convenient transfers between them.

We will design and introduce bus interchange and waiting facilities that are user-friendly, comfortable, secure, accessible and inclusive, and that reflect the local character and identity of each area.

## Information:

### DELIVERABLE 14

#### THE SOMERSET BUS INFORMATION AND BRANDING STRATEGY

- ✓ DfT objective for clear information & a single bus system
- ✓ Our aim for An Easily Accessible & Reliable Network
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for clearer bus information & RTI
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

With over 2,500 bus stops across the Somerset bus network there is significant opportunity to make a real difference to bus travel through better information at each location – instilling confidence in the network and stimulating new bus use.

As an immediate priority, stakeholders tell us that better bus/rail integration with better information at rail stations and links between different services is critical. We have already opened detailed dialogue with train operating companies and Network rail through the BSIP process to address this priority and will work through this deliverable to standardise bus and rail information at common interchanges.

As the core bus network is revitalised through Deliverables 1 and 2 we will work in parallel to introduce a more consistent network brand at all off-bus passenger touchpoints such as bus stops, on-line information, printed material and where possible on bus information. The identity will use the ‘Bus It’ brand already being used across public transport promotion in Somerset.

Bringing all these strands together will be a public transport information strategy – this will address existing shortcomings and increase information through all channels, including a programmed roll-out of Real Time Information (RTI) across the county where appropriate/required, linking to Deliverable 16 plans to create a **Bus Stop Design Guide** and **Bus Stop Hierarchy** that will tailor infrastructure and information investment to each bus stop level.

#### What we will do.....

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
Continue the roll out of QR codes at bus stops across the County	Continued roll out of the strategy as new infrastructure is installed/becomes operational.



<p>Maintain the two main timetable change dates per year as agreed through the Enhanced Partnership</p> <p>Develop an interactive bus map for services within the County</p> <p>Develop Somerset Information and Branding Strategy linked to bus stop design and hierarchy, that can also be applied to mobility hubs.</p>	
--	--

## DELIVERABLE 15

### PROMOTION AND INCENTIVISATION OF BUS TRAVEL

- ✓ DfT objective for clear information, easier to understand
- ✓ Our aim for Improved Coordination and an Easily Accessible Network
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for clearer bus information
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

Somerset Council will continue with targeted promotion of bus travel through the 'Bus It' campaign, highlighting the benefits of choosing the bus which includes cost (bus vs car, less than a latte), environmental and convenience.

Working with the Town Councils and local businesses to offer promotions that incentivise travel, starting with the Taunton Park & Ride Perks initiative, which will see participating companies in the town centre offer a discount or benefit on production of a valid Park & Ride ticket for that day.

This will be further expanded by working with local tourist attractions to offer discounted admittance or similar, for those visitors traveling by public bus.

#### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Incentivise and promote travel by public bus through loyalty and reward schemes developed in partnership with bus operators and local businesses/tourist attractions.</p> <p>Continue with countywide 'Bus It' campaign linked to news schemes and initiatives.</p>	<p>Continued promotion and incentivisation will form part of the wider rural strategy and collaboration with operators and bus passenger groups will be instrumental to this.</p>

# Accessibility & Safety:

## DELIVERABLE 16

### STOP DESIGN & INFORMATION – INCREASED USER CONFIDENCE

- ✓ DfT objective for safety & perception of safety
- ✓ Our aim for a Comfortable Network with Improved Facilities
- ✓ Stakeholders aim for better bus stops & safety features
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

**660,000**

**Avg. Passenger journeys a month since Jan '23**

The busiest bus stop in Somerset is Castle Way in Taunton, however, a myriad of small rural and town bus stops where no formal facilities may currently exist are seen as even more important through the BSIP to ensure every resident across Somerset has access to local bus information and a welcoming, safe entry point to the network.

While 'Personal safety on buses', scored 66% and 'Personal safety at bus stops' scored 60%, through the 2023 National Highways & Transport Survey 2023, both of which are on par with the national average, there is still some room for improvement. Previous meetings with Somerset's Youth Parliament indicated young people do not always feel safe when travelling by bus, creating barriers to independence, confidence, and continued bus use beyond the legal driving age.

To level-up bus stop information and quality across the county we will develop a **bus stop design guide** and **bus stop hierarchy** -linked to the place based solutions within the LTP. This will introduce design and information standards for new bus stops, consider wider accessibility issues and the waiting environment - drawing inspiration from existing best practice in London and Cornwall.

Providing a safe and secure bus network with clear and up to date information will improve the overall perception of bus travel and stimulate growth and confidence amongst all user groups.

#### What we will do....

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
Conduct a review of all bus stops across the County to create an inventory of facilities.	Continue with a programme of refreshing the stops reviews and roll out of any associated improvements required.

<p>Establish an improvement/upgrade programme linked to the LTP.</p> <p>Work with disability groups to understand the everyday challenges faced by passengers with disabilities.</p> <p>Identify solutions to improve accessibility and remove barriers to travel.</p>	
--	--

## DELIVERABLE 17

### DEVELOP AN EDUCATIONAL TRAINING PACKAGE

- ✓ DfT objective for clear information, easier to understand
- ✓ Our aim for an Easily Accessible Network
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for clearer bus information
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

**8000**

#### School children entitled to free school transport

Working with local bus operators and educational establishments to develop a package of training material to break down barriers to travel and alleviate concerns related to catching the bus. This will include a 'How To' guide covering:

- How to 'flag down' the bus
- How to pay for the bus
- How to stop the bus once travelling

Operators are keen to engage with schools and make vehicles available for training sessions, targeting the passengers of the future and instilling travel habits at an early age. This will be of particular value to those young people who no longer qualify for free school transport beyond the age of 16 and transition to public transport for accessing Further Education.

The training package will be developed further to engage with disability groups and tailor the support for passenger with disabilities to provide reassurance.

#### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
Engage with operators, educational establishments and youth representative groups to develop an information package targeted specifically at young people to address their specific concerns/barriers to accessing transport.	Continue to refresh and develop educational material and identify new opportunities for promoting and supporting bus travel.

# Bus Passenger Charter:

## Deliverable 18

### CONTINUED PROVISION OF THE BUS PASSENGER CHARTER

- ✓ DfT objective for clear information, easier to understand
- ✓ Our aim for Improved Coordination
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for clearer bus information
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

Somerset Council will continue to work with local bus operators through the Enhanced Partnership to support and promote the bus passenger charter, which sets out what passengers can expect from the services provided within Somerset and how to take action when things go wrong. Expectations of passengers travelling are also defined to make the experience of travelling by bus safer and more enjoyable for all.

An annual review will be undertaken, taking into consideration the DfT guidance, and the updated version made publicly available on the Somerset Council webpage, as well as through local operator web pages.

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
Annual review of Bus Passenger Charter with key stakeholders  Updating and promoting as required	Develop longer term strategy for improving passenger experience and encouraging bus usage, drawing from experience from schemes and initiatives implemented since 2025.

# Improving the Bus Fleet

## DELIVERABLE 19

### SOMERSET LOCAL BUS NETWORK – DECARBONISATION PLAN

- ✓ DfT objective for decarbonisation & mode shift
- ✓ Our climate emergency aims for decarbonising public transport operations
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for clean vehicles & sustainable travel
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

Somerset plans to set minimum vehicle emission standards through its contractual level service network in-line with the vision that will be set out in the emerging LTP.

In parallel Somerset will work with local bus operators to deliver a progressive zero-emission standard to buses across the county.

We will be taking local action to accelerate the roll out of zero emission vehicles and will be reliant on centralised support through funds such as ZEBRA and any emerging funding sources.

Currently Somerset envisages an electrification of its local bus network, this is based on current technology advances and the nature of the county’s geography and topography. However, we will also be evaluating hydrogen as an option and exploring the feasibility of different zero emission technologies as they emerge.

## What we will do.....

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Set minimum vehicle emission standards on tendered contracts.</p> <p>Work with local bus operators to deliver a progressive zero-emission standard to buses across the county.</p> <p>Develop decarbonisation plan for the local bus network.</p>	<p>Continued implementation of the decarbonisation plan, reviewing and reacting to emerging technologies and best practice/lessons learnt.</p>

## DELIVERABLE 20

### ELECTRIFICATION – STRATEGY AND NEXT STEPS

- ✓ DfT objective for decarbonisation & mode shift
- ✓ Our climate emergency aims for decarbonising public transport operations
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for greener vehicles & lower fares
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

**424,000**

#### Passenger journeys on Taunton Park & Ride in 2023/24

Somerset is excited to see the introduction of the first electric buses into the public bus network. The 25 vehicles funded through a combination of ZEBRA 2 grant and operator investment will be deployed on a mixture of inter-urban and town services.

This project will provide an ideal test bed for electrification of bus services in a rural county and will enable lessons learnt to be developed and applied to future electrification of the wider bus fleet, through a progressive roll-out of the technology.

Future electric bus routes will likely focus initially on Somerset’s flagship Taunton Park & Ride service and then transition to the other key town bus networks in the County.

### ... What we will do

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
Electrification of Taunton’s Park & Ride Decarbonisation of other Somerset Key Towns	Review existing electrification projects and continue with decarbonisation of the wider network.

### Local Best Practice.....

Through £2.2m of ZEBRA 2 funding, coupled with £13m of investment from First South West Ltd, this will provide us with local intelligence in relation to operating electric vehicles and the practicalities which can be applied to the future roll out of electric vehicles.



## **DELIVERABLE 21**

### **SOMERSET LOCAL BUS NETWORK – VEHICLE STANDARDS**

- ✓ DfT objective for modern buses
- ✓ Our aim for a Comfortable Network with Improved Facilities
- ✓ Stakeholders aims for better accessibility & information
- ✓ Our decarbonisation aims for growing public transport mode share

#### **Add stats on no. of buses in fleet and vehicle age across the fleet Euro VI etc**

We have listened to stakeholder, public and local bus operator views around a range of issues affecting vehicles and standards of operation.

The Enhanced Partnership approach provides the best opportunity to work collaboratively with local bus operators and stakeholders to achieve a higher common standard for buses across Somerset. The Enhanced Partnership will be able to strongly influence operator vehicle choices and mandate minimum vehicle standards regarding facilities, comfort, safety, accessibility, ease of use, and technology.

We will align future tender specifications for contracted services with the aims and objectives of the LTP and the Council's Climate Emergency strategy to ensure that requirements meet and support the wider vision for Somerset.

#### **... Policy Check List**

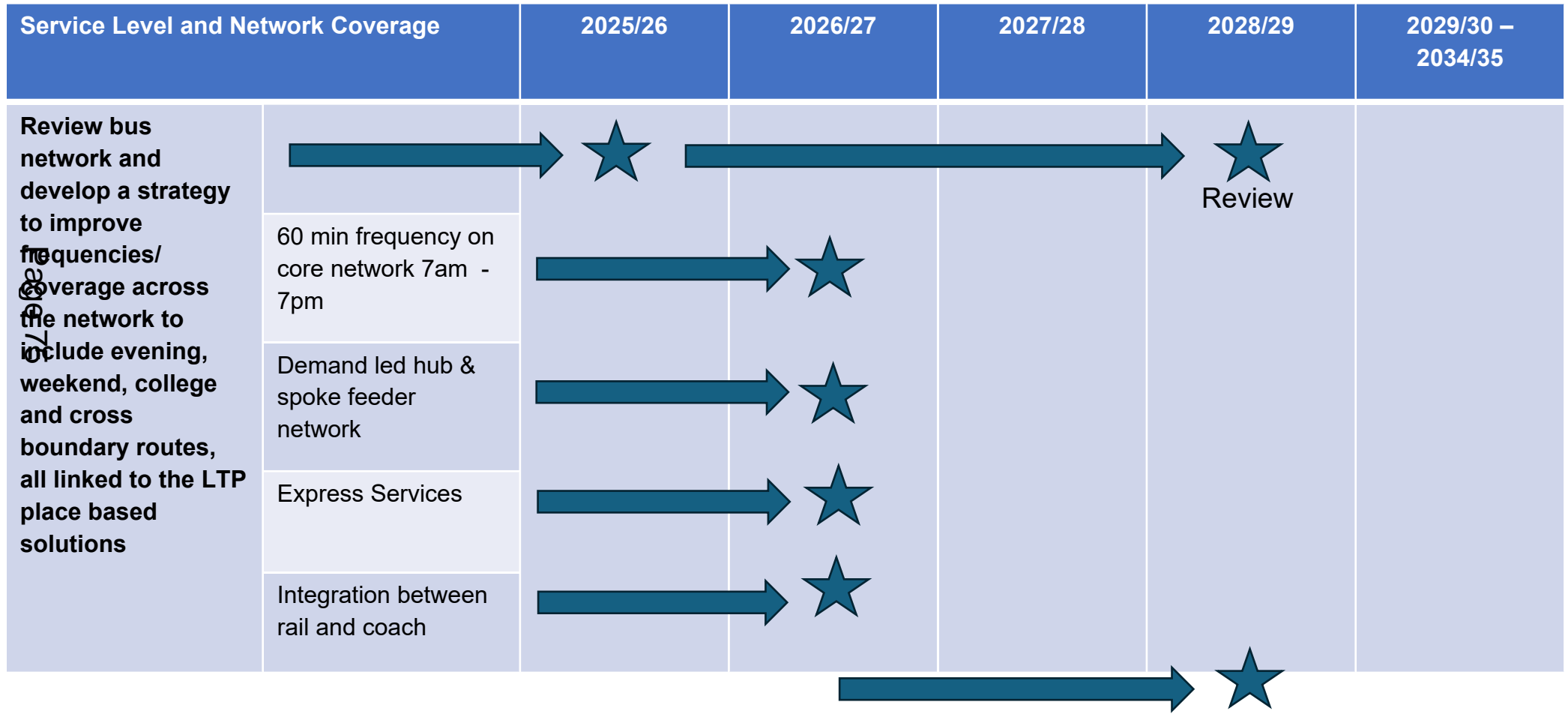
- Minimum standards for vehicle systems, will be created by the Enhanced Partnership over time.
- Critical systems including next-stop announcements and app-based tracking will be part of a rolling plan for vehicles used in Somerset.
- Configuration of vehicles in terms of layout, specification and comfort will be geared more closely to a hierarchy of route types across Somerset.

#### **... What we will do**

2025 - 2029	2030 and beyond
<p>Through the Enhanced Partnership process, we will create a minimum standard for buses across the local bus network. These buses will be accessible, smart, safe, and clean. We will set dates for roll-out of next-stop announcements, CCTV, USB and app-based tracking, and levels of comfort for each type.</p>	




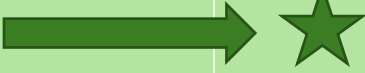
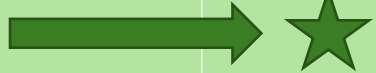



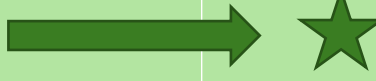
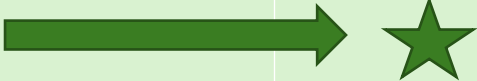


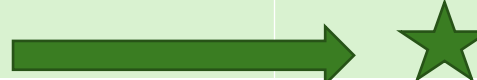
## BSIP Ambition for 2025 and beyond



The plan below illustrates Somerset’s ambition for public transport, as set out in each deliverable, **subject to securing additional funding to deliver each scheme**. This provides an indicative timeline for delivering the ambition, if funding streams are identified and secured.

















	Develop rural strategy					
	Whole county sustainable network model development					★
<b>Digital Demand Responsive Transport</b>	Review Somerton trial and plan future roll out	★				
	Deliver phased roll out	→	★	★	★	
	Review and develop as required to meet future need.					→ ★

Bus Priority		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 – 2034/35
Key towns	Taunton					
	Yeovil					
	Wellington					
	Minehead					
County Wide	Parking affecting bus reliability					

Fares & Ticketing		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 – 2034/35
Develop a strategy and process for implementing a youth concessionary fare aimed at 16-25 year olds						
	Phased approach to implementation					
	Review outcome/impact to inform the longer-term strategy					
	Develop a longer-term strategy for youth fares to support young people					
Lower flat fares in Towns	Develop strategy and pricing point					
	Phased roll out across key towns					
	Review outcome to inform longer term strategy					
Introduce new ticket schemes	Integrated ticketing with DDRT – phased roll out alongside DDRT roll out					
	All operator family and group tickets					

	Multi-operator ticket (linked to DfT system)					
	Review and develop as required to meet future needs					

Bus Passenger Experience		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30 – 2034/35
Somerset Bus interchange and waiting facility strategy 99 79	Bridgwater Transport Hub					
	Yeovil Transport Hub					
	Wells Transport Hub					
	Taunton Train Station					
	Bridgwater Train Station					
	Wellington Train Station					
	Taunton Long-distance Coach Interchange					
Passenger Information	Finalise Somerset Bus Information and Branding Strategy					

	Review County bus stops – creating an inventory	★				
	Develop and roll out a bus stop improvement/upgrade programme	→	★	★	★	
	Review to shape longer term strategy				→	★
<b>Promotion, Education and incentivisation</b>	Continued 'Bus It' campaign	★	★	★	★	
	Loyalty and reward schemes – phased roll out	→	★	★	★	
	Develop Education/Training package and roll out	→	★	★	★	
	Bus Passenger Charter annual review/update	★	★	★	★	
	Review outcomes to develop longer term promotional strategy				→	★



Implementation of ZEBRA 2		→ ★				
	Review ZEBRA 2 progress	→ ★				
	Develop decarbonisation plan for the local network		→ ★			
Fleet Decarbonisation	Set vehicle standards for contracted services	→ ★				
	P&R Electrification	→ ★				
	Electrification of key town bus networks	→ ★				
	Review existing electrification projects and decarbonisation of the wider network				→ ★	

## SECTION FIVE:

### Targets, Performance Monitoring and Reporting

The 2021 BSIP set out performance targets for Somerset, these were set at the beginning of the BSIP process and reflected our ambition subject to securing the required funding to deliver the entire BSIP 2021 ambition.

The final BSIP funding allocation did not enable Somerset to realise the full ambition within the BSIP so some of these targets need to be revised to reflect this. The DfT are currently designing a new monitoring and evaluation process in-line with Bus Connectivity Assessments (BCAs) and as such Local Transport Authorities are not required to review and define new targets at this stage. This will follow at a later stage, with targets being set to align with the emerging LTP vision and the BSIP will be updated in subsequent reviews to reflect this.

A summary of the monitoring and evaluation activity to date is provided in the table below. As many of the schemes were either not funded through BSIP or are still in the implementation stage, the related targets are either not achievable at this stage or monitoring is yet to be begin.

**Table 1: Somerset Council BSIP Targets (set in 2021 subject to funding)**

KPI	Target Description	2018/19 (Baseline)	By 2025	By 2030	Monitoring to date
<b>T1</b>	<b>Average Journey Time</b> (Minutes one-way)	<b>Route Dependent</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>-5%</b>	Baseline data on average journey times has been collated for Q3 to Q4 on the greenwaves corridors but monitoring will need to commence once the bus priority measures are installed and operational to understand the impact.
		Based on a comparison of timetabled and AVL performance data across the network.	Focused on specific corridors / routes with target applied to actual average journey times. Influenced by contactless payment, hub and spoke network system, and peak period limited stop service overlays.		
<b>T2</b>	<b>Network Punctuality</b> (%age of buses within the -1/+5 DfT punctuality window)	<b>80%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>90%</b>	Total Network punctuality has been gathered as a baseline from the Analyse Bus open Data Service (ABODS) - monitoring will be conducted using data from ABODS.
		Based on DfT performance data for pre-Covid-19 traffic levels (2018/19)	+5% by 2025 as pax re-build to pre-Covid-19 levels. +7% by 2030 taking Somerset to 2006/07 levels. Aim to be best in region using a mix of network review / reconfiguration and priority interventions.		

<b>T3</b>	<b>Network Passenger Growth</b>	<b>6.3m</b>	<b>7.0m</b>	<b>8.9m</b>	Patronage is collated on a monthly basis from all operators providing routes within Somerset. This is submitted to the DfT as part of their monitoring process. The total patronage for 2023/24 is <b>XXXXXX</b>
	(Single passenger journeys per annum)	Passenger growth back to pre-Covid-19 levels by 2023/24 (April 2022 forecast to be 5.9m passengers at best). April 2023 6.3m (+7% growth and return to pre-pandemic levels), April 2025 7m (+11% growth), April 2030 8.9m (+5% year on year growth)			
<b>T4</b>	<b>Customer Satisfaction Level</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>80%</b>	The National Highways and Transport survey is reviewed annually. Overall satisfaction fell to 42% in 2022 but increased slightly to 44% in 2023. In contrast the Somerset Council commissioned, on- bus survey conducted during 2023, had a total satisfaction rate of 76%. This on-bus survey will be conducted annually to enable future comparisons to be drawn.
	(Percentage of satisfied / very satisfied cohort to NHTS survey)	National Highways and Transport Survey will provide annual figures for customer satisfaction and progress will be reported and measured annually as a result.			
<b>T5</b>	<b>Decarbonising the local bus fleet – ZEV roll-out.</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>100%</b>	Funding was not secured through the BSIP for the delivery of zero emission vehicles, so it will not be possible to meet the targets set in 2021. Through the Enhanced Partnership (EP) we have benchmarked the operators' fleets from 2023 and will compare against subsequent years.
	(Percentage of LTA fleet being ZEV)	Based on meeting SC's aim for a fully decarbonised fleet by 2030 in line with wider targets and climate strategies set by the LTA. This target will progressively remove older diesel buses from the Somerset fleet while allowing newer buses to be used for the majority of their standard lifespan.			

<b>T6</b>	<b>Bus Stop Information and Facility Improvements</b>  (Percentage of bus stops improved based on their tier within the new bus stop hierarchy)	<b>0%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>100%</b>	Funding was not secured through the BSIP for the delivery of this scheme, so it will not be possible to meet the targets set in 2021. We will need to review and set a revised target for completing an audit of bus stops and updating information where required, including the roll-out of QR codes.
<b>T7</b>	<b>Youth Fare (16-25 years discount)</b>  (Percentage volume of all ticket sales)	<b>15%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>50%</b>	Funding was not secured through the BSIP for the delivery of this scheme, so it will not be possible to meet the targets set in 2021.
<b>T8</b>	<b>Accessibility to the network – within 400m of a</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>80%</b>	Funding was not secured through the BSIP for delivery of the higher frequency core network from 7 am to 7pm, so it will not be possible to meet the targets set in 2021.

	<p><b>frequent bus service</b></p> <p>(Percentage of overall population)</p>	<p>This target focuses on the population's access to frequent bus services following the introduction of a higher frequency core local bus network operating 0700-1900 daily. The current baseline is based on existing access to bus stops serviced by routes on the core corridors.</p>			
<b>T9</b>	<p><b>Timetable / Service Integration with Rail</b></p> <p>(Number of timetabled connections with the rail network followed by percentage increases)</p>	<b>60 journeys</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<p>Funding was not secured through the BSIP for delivery of the higher frequency core network from 7 am to 7pm, which would have facilitated this integration so it will not be possible to meet the targets set in 2021.</p> <p>Network reviews will include consideration of bus/rail integration and facilitate this where possible within existing resources.</p>
<b>T10</b>	<p><b>Mode Shift from car to bus for</b></p>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>3%-5%</b>	<b>7%-10%</b>	<p>The targets set were dependent on delivering the full complement of BSIP ambition, to make the bus a more attractive option.</p>

**commuter trips  
across Somerset**

(Percentage of trips  
made by bus to work)

Initially using baseline data taken as a proxy from Census 2011 information, the baseline will be updated following release of Census 2021 data. These challenging targets are designed to focus efforts on mode shift and in particular reflecting the efforts made across the bus network to make buses more attractive, reliable, and comprehensive to allow travel to work and multiple life patterns. Mode shift will be strongly affected by national policy and action in relation to the cost of travel by car. NB. These are initial targets which will be subject to review in light of further analysis and funding.

Current data has been collated from the 2021 census data which will have been skewed by the covid-19 pandemic and the change in travel patterns due to more homeworking. This target needs to be reviewed and re-set to align with the ambition from the emerging LTP.

**SECTION SIX:**

**BSIP Overview table**

Name of Local Authority or Authorities	Somerset Council
Enhanced Partnership(s) and/or Franchising Scheme(s) covered by the BSIP	Somerset Enhanced Partnership (EP)
Date of publication	June 2024
Web address (URL) of the published BSIP	<a href="https://www.somerset.gov.uk/the-national-bus-strategy-bus-back-better">The National Bus Strategy – Bus Back Better (somerset.gov.uk)</a>

<b>Improvements programme to 2025</b>	<b>List of named schemes and measures</b> Where appropriate provide location and cost	<b>Budget/est. cost (£k)</b>
Bus priority infrastructure	<p>Taunton North Greenwaves:</p> <p>Bus Priority Infrastructure (Bus Lane north-bound) from Junction of Staplegrove Road / Station Road along Station Road (A3038) to Junction of Station Road / Whitehall of up to 450m (0.45km).</p> <p>Enhancements to AVL/MOVA controlled traffic signals on junctions at:                      Bridge Street / Tangier Way                      Bridge Street / Station Road                      Station Road / Priory Bridge</p>	<p>Revenue: £10,000                      Capital: £1,010,750</p>
	<p>Taunton East Greenwaves:</p> <p>Bus Priority Infrastructure (Bus Lane both directions) along East Reach between Wordsworth Drive and Market House of up to 755m (0.76km) each way (total of up to 1,510m (1.5km)).</p> <p>Enhancements to AVL/MOVA controlled traffic signals on junctions along East Reach.</p>	<p>Revenue: £15,000                      Capital: £1,837,550</p>



	<p>Taunton West Greenwaves:</p> <p>Bus Priority Infrastructure (East-Bound only) along A38 between Rumwell (Park &amp; Bus) and Tangier of up to 800m (0.8km).</p> <p>Bus Priority Infrastructure (Bus Gate) from Junction of Corporation Street / Park Street.</p> <p>Enhancements of various AVL/MOVA controlled traffic signal junctions along Wellington Road.</p> <p>Additional Bus Priority Infrastructure measures: Turn 150m of existing shared mode carriageway to a bus only road around the proposed Taunton Mobility Hub (save for all-vehicle access to Mobility Hub).</p>	<p>Revenue: £10,000 Capital: £1,847,040</p>
Other bus infrastructure	<p>Taunton Urban Hub: The creation of a Taunton Mobility Hub will be developed to support mode/mode and multimode transfer in the town centre.</p> <p>The site will incorporate a multi-bay bus interchange and will bring all inter-city coach services into one place at coach stops adjacent to the Mobility Hub.</p> <p>The Mobility Hub will feature bus EV charging points, waiting spaces for public transport customers, bike storage and repair facilities, e-scooter facilities, other concessions as required following user consultation, travel information (including access points to Somerset's Think Travel Portal), Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), and taxi / private car drop off facilities.</p> <p>The local bus network will be redefined to see all local and intra-urban services operate through the Mobility Hub, providing direct links from the hub to Musgrove Park Hospital, Taunton Railway Station, local enterprise zones and business parks, and the Taunton Park &amp; Ride sites</p>	<p>Capital: £2,715,050</p>
	Somerton Rural Hub:	<p>Revenue: £10,000</p>

	<p>The development of a rural town Mobility Hub to facilitate interchange between Somerset's reviewed and modified bus network and plans for a new Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) service operating to the south of Taunton in the Somerton / rural Yeovil area.</p> <p>The mobility hub will allow sheltered interchange between scheduled bus services, connection to/from DDRT services, printed and electronic information access (to Somerset's Think Travel Portal), Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI), cycle storage, and an EV charging point.</p>	Capital: £500,000
Bus service support	Taunton Bus Town – Additional Services – Support for additional evening journeys in Taunton Town on 5 bus routes, operating up until 11pm Monday to Friday.	£1,350,000
	Taunton Bus Town – Somerton DDRT – Trial of Digital DRT, acting as a feeder service into the bus network and serving Somerton Mobility Hub once operational.	£250,449 capital £817,340 revenue
Fares support	Taunton Town Fare Cap – subsidy for lower fares in Taunton Town Zone.	£933,000
	Taunton Park & Ride Fare Reduction – subsidy for £1 fare on the Taunton Park & Ride Service.	£189,325
Other schemes & measures	Marketing Support across a range of mediums – funding to support marketing of BSIP specific schemes	£80,000
	BSIP Programme delivery manager – support to deliver and manage the Capital BSIP Programme	£100,000

<b>Ambitions and proposals for 2025 and beyond</b>	<b>Description (60 words max)</b> Description of proposals listing named schemes/measures with location, where appropriate	<b>Estimated cost/order of cost (£k)</b>
	<b>7am – 7pm Core Network</b> – improving minimum frequency to at least hourly across the county's core network of services. Aiming to provide a more comprehensive network to improve frequency, accessibility, co-ordination/integration and ultimately increasing patronage.	£5,000,000 per annum

		(£20,000,000 over a 4-year period)
<b>Service level and network coverage</b>	<b>Evening Buses and Express Services</b> Evening, weekend and express services – continuation of evening services with Taunton and then wider roll out to other key towns in the County, with journeys being provided where appropriate up until 11pm, increased weekend services and more direct routes to key destinations. Aiming to improve accessibility, co-ordination/integration and ultimately increasing patronage.	£1,000,000 per annum  (£4,000,000 over a 4-year period)
	<b>Digital DRT</b> – wider roll out of Digital DRT across the whole county, to the existing DRT provision and expansion of operating hours to meet the Core Network and act as a feeder service. Aiming to improve accessibility, co-ordination/integration and ultimately increasing patronage.	£442,500 per annum  (£1,770,000 over a 4-year period)
	<b>Taunton Bus Town – Phase 2</b> A collection of feasibility studies, bus priority measures, and parking restrictions around Taunton to help improve bus journey times and reliability.	£5,232,500
<b>Bus priority</b>	<b>Wellington Bus Town</b> A collection of bus priority measures throughout Wellington to help improve bus journey times and reliability.	£3,965,600
	<b>Yeovil Bus Town</b> A collection of feasibility studies, parking restrictions/re-allocations and bus priority measures to improve bus journey times around Yeovil.	£6,236,000
	<b>Minehead Bus Town</b> A collection of bus priority measures, additional bus stops and junction redesigns to aid bus journey times across Minehead.	£333,700
	<b>Reduced flat fares in Towns</b> – roll out of discounted fares within the towns of Yeovil, Bridgwater and Frome. Continuation of lower fares scheme in Taunton.	£1,680,000 per annum
<b>Lower and simpler fares</b>		

	Aims to make bus travel cheaper and more accessible, increasing patronage in the network.	(£6,720,000 over a 4-year period)
	<b>Countywide youth fare 16-25</b> – roll out of concessionary youth scheme across Somerset providing discounted fares for young people aged 16-25 years. Aims to make bus travel cheaper and more accessible, ultimately increasing patronage.	£7,500,000 per annum (£30,000,000 over a 4-year period)
<b>Ticketing</b>	<b>No fuss multi-operator ticket</b> Delivery of a county wide scheme to include daily fares caps and trial of integrated ticketing for bus and long distance coach services. This will link with the DfT's Project Coral for developing the back-office system to manage multi-operator tickets. Aims to improve co-ordination, provide cheaper fares and make it easier to understand, ultimately increasing patronage.	£200,000 over a 4 year period)  Plus Technology costs associated with this depending on outcome of Project Coral – difficult to predict at this stage.
<b>Waiting and interchange facilities</b>	<b>Bridgwater Transport Hub:</b> Transform the Bridgwater bus station into a Transport Hub.	£686,000
	<b>Yeovil Transport Hub:</b> Transform the Yeovil bus station into a Transport Hub.	£4,300,000
	<b>Wells Transport Hub:</b> Transform the Wells bus station into a Transport Hub.	£686,000
	<b>Taunton Train Station:</b> Enhance the train station interchange and provide more of the hub facilities.	£544,000
	<b>Bridgwater Train Station:</b>	£650,000

	Redesign and redevelop the Bridgwater Train Station so that buses can stop there. Provide more of the transport hub facilities.	
	<b>Wellington Train Station:</b>	£544,000
	Develop a transport hub at the new Wellington Train Station.	
	<b>Taunton Long-distance Coach Interchange:</b>	£362,000
	Some of the long-distance express services do not come into Taunton. Instead they pick up/drop off just off the motorway junction. We wish to put a transport hub here to support and facilitate the interchange of passengers from local services, active travel and the long-distance coaches.	
<b>Bus Information and Network Identity</b>	<p><b>Bus Travel - Information, Education and Incentivisation</b></p> <p>Development of a bus information strategy and resource to provide capacity for the application of the strategy across information, marketing and promotion.</p> <p>This will include development and delivery of a tailored educational training package for bus users.</p> <p>Aims to make buses accessible, easy to understand and to overall increase patronage.</p>	£350,000 over a 4 year period
<b>Bus Passenger Experience</b>	See Bus Information & Network Identity and Accessibility & Inclusion sections	
<b>Bus fleet</b>	<p><b>Taunton Park &amp; Ride Electrification</b></p> <p>Introduction of four electric vehicles for use on Taunton's Park &amp; Ride service and associated infrastructure to support the move to electric. Aims to make public transport greener and better to ride in, with the overall aim of increasing patronage.</p>	£2,700,000 - capital

	<b>Wider decarbonisation of the fleet</b> - to roll out decarbonisation of the bus fleet and associated charging infrastructure. Based on ZEBRA 2 principles for match-funding.	£60,000,000 - capital
<b>Accessibility &amp; Inclusion</b>	<b>Stop Design &amp; Improvement Programme</b> Roll out of the bus stop improvement programme across the County. This follows an extensive review of stops and engagement with disability representative groups. Aims to improve accessibility, creating safe environments, that are easy to use and understand. Ultimate aim of increasing patronage.	£10,000,000
<b>Longer term transformation of the network</b>		