

Report subject	Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)
Meeting date	5 March 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The council has been awarded a further £5.722m funding allocation by the Department for Transport (DfT) for 2025/26 to continue delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).</p> <p>The purpose of this paper is to seek council approval to accept and invest the grant, noting progress to date made with the delivery of the initial £8.9m three-year BSIP allocation.</p> <p>It is also recommending approval of a full review of the subsidised bus service network to support the withdrawal of the council's Bus Subsidy Budget in accordance with the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cabinet recommends to Council acceptance of the £5.722m Bus Service Improvement Plan funding for 2025/26 from the Department for Transport (b) Cabinet recommends to Council to Delegate delivery of the BSIP programme, developed in conjunction with the Enhanced Partnership Board, to the Service Director for Planning and Transport in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Mitigation, Energy and Environment (c) Cabinet agrees and recommends to Council a full review of all subsidised local bus service contracts ahead of the planned commencement of the withdrawal of the Bus Subsidy budget starting in 2026/27
Reason for recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To inform Cabinet of the improvements introduced for the benefit of buses and bus passengers funded by the original BSIP grant award. (b) Approval is sought to accept the BSIP funding to support immediate investment in bus service improvements. (c) The investment of the BSIP funding is aligned with the Council's Corporate Strategy and the Climate and

	Ecological Emergency Action Plan. (d) To minimise the impact on bus passengers of the withdrawal of the council's Bus Subsidy budget.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Hadley, Cabinet Member for Climate Mitigation, Energy and Environment
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	John McVey, Sustainable Transport Policy Manager Richard Pincroft, Head of Transport and Sustainable Travel Wendy Lane, Director of Planning & Transport
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information and Recommendation

Background

1. In accordance with '[Bus Back Better, a National Bus Strategy for England](#)', in 2021 the council committed to forming an [Enhanced Partnership](#) with the local bus operators and to jointly develop a BCP [Bus Service Improvement Plan \(BSIP\)](#). Following the submission of the first BCP BSIP, the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded the council **£8,858,430** (of which £6,104,639 was capital and £2,753,791 revenue), for the three-year period to 31 March 2025, to commence delivery of the BSIP.
2. Payment for the first year of the grant, 2022/2023, was received late, in February 2023 (end of Year 1). As a result, some of the schemes will not be completed until 2025/26 which is permissible under the terms of the grant. Delivery of the BSIP programme was delegated to the Service Director for Transport and Engineering (now Planning and Transport) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Transport (now Climate Mitigation, Energy and Environment).
3. A summary of the schemes and initiatives delivered and currently underway is set out in **Appendix 1**. Cabinet is asked to note the good progress and positive outcomes from the programme to date.

2025/26 BSIP allocation

4. The DfT has awarded the council further funding for financial year 2025/26 to support the continued delivery of its Bus Service Improvement Plan. The funding allocation is £5,722,067. Made up of £3,257,354 capital and £2,370,713 revenue. In addition, £94,000 BSIP capacity and capability allocation has been provided for the year.
5. This funding is in on top of Local Authority Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) which has been paid directly to Local Authorities to support tendered bus services since 2014 and amounts to £294,368 per annum. This brings the total allocation to £6,016,436 in 2025/26 and this is now known as the **Bus Grant**.

BSIP RDEL (Revenue)	£2,370,713
BSIP CDEL (Capital)	£3,257,354
BSIP Capacity and Capability (Revenue)	£94,000
LA BSOG	£294,368

6. DfT has moved from competition to formula allocation in line with a government commitment to simplify funding. Funding is based on a methodology of population, deprivation and bus mileage (tendered bus mileage for the revenue element and total bus mileage for the capital element). It is anticipated, though not confirmed, that Bus Grant funding will be continued in future years and three-year allocations are likely.
7. Bus Grant funding is provided to support the delivery of the council's BSIP programme. Payment is conditional on the submission of a Delivery Plan by the end of March 2025 which lists the schemes to be delivered with the funding. The draft Delivery Plan covering the capital and revenue elements is set out in **Appendix 2**. The capacity and capability (revenue) element shall be utilised to fund officer time supporting delivery of the delivery plan items.
8. It is a requirement of the grant for the council to maintain a commitment in its Enhanced Partnership to overall revenue funding that it provides for buses, from all sources, in each financial year of this funding. This is to ensure that the funding provided is additional to previously planned for bus funding and therefore the base bus funding is not reduced. This means that the council bus subsidy budget will need to remain in place for 2025/26 at current levels for the council to comply with the grant terms and conditions.

Full Network Review

9. A phased removal of the Bus Subsidy budget from 2026/27 is a requirement of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
10. The BCP Council Bus Subsidy budget currently stands at approximately £850k plus £271k of the £294k BSOG allocation. There is also use of temporary BSIP+ government funding provided to assist with inflationary increases in contract costs (£345k in 2024/25) and £901k initial BSIP government funding to support the enhancement of services 18 and 13/13A.
11. There are currently 23 Local Bus Services Contracts, all operated by Go South Coast (morebus) on behalf of the council. These services operate mainly in the evenings; Sundays; and during the off-peak period (serving areas away from the main roads). There are also a small number of school services, principally carrying passengers without a statutory entitlement to free transport.
12. A full review of these services is proposed during 2025/26 with the following objectives.

To identify which services:

 - a) Are performing well and could remain without council subsidy and in what form (e.g. reduced frequency, amended route, combined with other services etc.). These routes would then be classified as commercial services and would be part of the commercial network.

- b) Are performing poorly, do not offer good value for money, and should be withdrawn. Consideration will be given to the journey purpose of passengers using the routes and whether any alternative services exist. This could include community transport (e.g. services provided by SEDCAT or Poole Dial-a-Bus).
 - c) Are not commercially viable but are still considered essential and therefore require financial support. This is unlikely to be in the same format and is expected to be at different frequencies and/or amended routes.
13. Services in category c) may continue to be supported through the BSOG element of the Bus Grant (£271k). Subject to BSIP revenue funding being continued as expected beyond 2025/26, DfT has indicated that this funding may be used to support non-commercial services following a full network review to ensure best value.
14. Proposals for major changes to supported bus services (reductions and/or withdrawals) will require consultation with stakeholders prior to final decisions being made.

Options Appraisal

15. With regards to the Bus Grant funding, there are two possible options for Members to consider:
- a) Accept the £6m Bus Grant funding and implement the facilities and measures set out in Appendix 2 developed in conjunction with the Enhanced Partnership Board. This will help attract more passengers to bus services and make service operation more viable for the bus companies which in turn will reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and contribute to the council's carbon reduction targets (**Recommended**).
 - b) Decline the funding and have a much-reduced opportunity to support buses and bus passengers. This will not find favour with the DfT and could impact on future funding awards (**Not Recommended**).

Summary of financial implications

16. The Council has been awarded a funding allocation £5,722,067 comprising £3,257,354 capital, £2,370,713 revenue plus a £94,000 BSIP capacity and capability allocation, to commence delivery of the BSIP. This funding is in on top of the expected Local Authority Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) of £294,368 per annum. This covers the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.
17. Where applicable the cost of additional support from Corporate Services will be recharged to the programme. For example, financial monitoring, procurement, communications.
18. The DfT BSIP Programme Board has agreed changes to the change control guidelines supporting an extension of the original 2022/23-2024/25 BSIP 1 award. An extension of the Capital spending has been approved to March 2026 (where schemes are committed to by March 2025), similarly an extension of the revenue spending has been approved to March 2026 (for service support).
19. The DfT BSIP 2 award terms and conditions state that the 2025/26 allocation can be carried forward into 2026/27 financial year provided the schemes/proposals within the programme are committed to before end of March 2026.

20. The financial implications of the Full Network Review will not impact services nor budgets during 2025/26.

Summary of legal implications

21. The BSIP Delivery Programme is developed in conjunction with the Enhanced Partnership Board. The Enhanced Partnership is a statutory arrangement created by the Bus Services Act 2017. All parties have a stronger commitment to joint working than the previous voluntary partnership arrangement.
22. Legal advice published by Campaign for Better Transport confirms that a local authority has a duty to assess the transport needs in its area and the impact of bus services being withdrawn, in particular on the elderly, disabled, and people with mobility problems. The advice also says that a council must not decide on the budget cut, and then simply find a number of bus services that if cut would save them that amount. Consultation must conform to the "[Gunning Principles](#)".

Summary of human resources implications

23. The council benefits from well experienced public transport professionals embedded within the teams with a good track record of partnership working to deliver positive outcomes for bus passengers. It is expected that in-house resources will be supplemented by external specialist consultants where appropriate. A capacity and capability allocation of £94,000 forms part of the 2025/26 grant award to support human resource requirements. In addition, where applicable the cost of additional support from Corporate Services will be recharged to the programme. For example, financial monitoring, public engagement, procurement, communications.

Summary of sustainability impact

24. A Decision Impact Assessment DIA Proposal ID 696 has been created for this decision.

NOTE: The DIA Proposal ID696 refers to the decision to accept the BSIP funding and the delivery of the programme. A further DIA will be undertaken as part of the Full Network Review when the impact of proposed changes/reductions to the subsidised bus network will be assessed.

Impact Summary



Climate Change & Energy	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Communities & Culture	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Waste & Resource Use	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Economy	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Health & Wellbeing	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Learning & Skills		
Natural Environment		
Sustainable Procurement	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Transport & Accessibility	Green - Only positive impacts identified	

Answers provided indicate that the score for the carbon footprint of the proposal is: 2

Answers provided indicate that the carbon footprint of the proposal is:	Low	
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Summary of public health implications

- Urban traffic speeds are falling by on average 2% every year, causing NOx emissions to rise. Diesel cars are the single biggest contributor to NOx levels, responsible for 41% of all NOx emissions from road transport. Buses are amongst the cleanest vehicles on our roads with many now achieving Euro VI emissions

standards. Improving local bus services contributes to the BCP Council priority of developing an eco-friendly and active transport network with positive implications for public health.

Summary of equality implications

26. An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken regarding the acceptance and delivery arrangements for the first round of BSIP funding and considered by the EIA Panel on 11 August 2022. This received an overall rating of **Green – good to go/approved, providing sufficient evidence the public sector equality duty has been met.**

The same circumstances apply to the 2025/26 BSIP funding. Individual schemes and measures will require specific EIAs as appropriate.

A further EIA will be undertaken as part of the Full Network Review when the impact of proposed changes/reductions to the subsidised bus network will be assessed.

Summary of risk assessment

27. None identified.

Background papers

1. [Bus Back Better - A National Bus Strategy for England](#)
2. [BCP Council Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme](#)
3. [BCP Council Bus Service Improvement Plan \(BSIP\)](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary of BSIP 2022/23-24/25 Programme

Appendix 2 – DRAFT BSIP 2025/26 Delivery Plan

Appendix 1

Summary of BSIP 2022/23-24/25 Programme

Capital funded Projects

1. Bournemouth Station to Town Centre Bus Priority Route

Major Consultation completed (3000 visits to webpages, 292 responses received, plus in person events held). Results showed 72% support for the scheme overall. Detailed design now being finalised. Core samples of key road structure being analysed to determine best materials for reconstruction.

Detailed design being undertaken at present. Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation being prepared. Construction timelines being determined as these are major works in Bournemouth Town Centre.

2. Provide bus priority at 65 signalised junctions

All equipment installed. Testing of Traffic Signal Priority continues with supplier Yunex, Ticketer and Morebus.

3. Branksome, Poole Road/Bourne Valley Road Bus Priority

Junction amendments completed to give added priority to Poole Road traffic (including high frequency bus services). Ongoing monitoring required to determine benefits and optimise timings.

4. Westbourne Bus Priority

Trial junction improvement undertaken for three months from 24 October 2024 using temporary barriers and new signage. Following analysis of impact on traffic flows (including journey times for buses) a permanent arrangement to be considered.

5. High Street and Bargates Christchurch improvements to support buses

Detailed design undertaken following agreement with Councillors, Christchurch Business Improvement District and Chamber of Commerce. No objections to TRO advertised to swap taxi rank and bus stop. New bus shelters ordered. Construction commenced September 2024. Road space and contractor booked for delivery of Bargates improvements in Nov/Dec 2024, High Street scheme Jan/Feb/Mar 2025.

6. Southbourne Bus Priority

Consultation in progress.

7. Purewell Bus Priority

Consultation in progress.

8. 10 New Bus Shelters with Accessible Boarding

All 10 fully accessible bus shelters now installed. These include full width seating, wheelchair/buggy spaces and Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI).

9. 50 New Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) Displays

40 new RTI displays now installed. They include audible announcements for passengers who are blind/visually impaired. Bus operator has ability to directly add additional information on delays/diversions if required, ensuring passengers are kept always informed.

10. Poole Bus Station RTPI Display Totems incorporating CCTV monitoring

14 Totems with RTPI and CCTV installed in Poole Bus Station with excellent feedback received. In addition to real time information, they are updated to provide details of roadworks/diversions/delays as required. Comprehensive CCTV has provided added security for passengers and staff in an area previously troubled by many anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents.

11. Live Stream CCTV from 250 bus shelters to council control room

170 cameras now installed into the busiest bus shelters across BCP. The cameras provide on daily basis invaluable evidence for issues of serious crime, theft, ASB and assisting with missing persons, in addition to passenger security at the bus stop. Directly links to council Transport Safety Officer project with DfT.

Revenue funded Projects

1. Align morebus Ticketing Zone A with BCP Council area boundary (previously excluded Merley and Highcliffe)

Successfully delivered and now gives equitable pricing for all BCP residents.

2. Promotional £2.50 return fare on Canford Heath services

Promotional fare on Canford Heath services has been redeemed over 75,000 times so far.

3. New child/young person's 30-day and 90-day period tickets available via morebus app.

New child 30-day and 90-day period tickets available from 3 June 2024, with over 700 tickets to the value of £65,000 sold so far.

4. Commuter club £1 fare ticket bundles for participating businesses

"Commuter Club" launched to businesses in September 2024 providing multi trip bundles of 20 journeys for £20. Supports flexible working and designed to encourage

workers to try the bus for the first time. Promoted with Press Release, social media and direct marketing to employers in the area.

5. Bus Service 18 frequency enhancement

Enhanced 30-minute frequency of Service 18 has generated an impressive 265,000 additional passengers so far.

6. Bus Service 13 frequency enhancement

Enhanced 20-minute frequency of Service 13 has generated an impressive 213,616 additional passengers so far.

7. Passenger Satisfaction – Passenger Charter and Passenger Surveys

Transport Focus "Your Bus" Survey results showed BCP joint top with bus satisfaction in the country. Results being further analysed at regular meetings with operators. 2024/5 survey underway with financial contribution from Morebus.

8. Mobility as a Service (MAAS) Transport App.

Ongoing discussion with Solent Transport indicates that an extension of the existing Breeze MaaS (Mobility as a Service) App is deliverable within budget. However longer-term funding for the App overall has yet to be secured by Solent Transport. Other options are therefore also being investigated.

Appendix 2

DRAFT BSIP 2025/26 Delivery Plan - Capital

National Bus Strategy Objective	Title of scheme or proposal	Description	Estimated cost [£]
Bus fleet	Bus fleet to be Zero Emission	New chargers and purchase of 2 x e-buses for Route ONE	950,000
Bus Priority	Bournemouth Travel Interchange to Station Roundabout bus priority on slip road	Dedicated bus/coach slip road exiting from Bournemouth Travel Interchange onto St Pauls Road	780,000
Bus Priority	Bournemouth Travel Interchange to Gervis Place	Public realm and safer streets scheme proposals at/adjacent to bus stops/waiting areas e.g., Westover Road	375,000
Waiting and interchange facilities	Shelter upgrade programme, 30 sites	Upgrade of 30 bus stops with new bus shelters, with Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) and live-stream CCTV	350,000
Accessibility and inclusion	Raised kerbing and extended bus stop clearways at 35 stops	Provision of raised kerbs and 27m bus stop clearways at 35 stops in area to improve boarding for disabled users.	350,000
Bus Priority	Poole Bus Station Refurbishment	Low-cost refurbishment: flooring, barriers, lighting, new seating/signage	200,000
Waiting and interchange facilities	Bournemouth Travel Interchange Refurbishment	Wayfinding, lighting, passenger information.	112,000
Bus Priority	Ashley Road/Poole Road	Bus priority from Alder Road to Bourne Valley Road including Pottery Junction to improve bus journey times and reliability along Poole Road	50,000
Bus Priority	Ashley Road - Upper Parkstone	Review of existing parking arrangements to improve bus movements through area	30,000
Bus Priority	Charminster Road – Charminster	Review of existing parking arrangements at central commercial area of Charminster Road (including introducing inset parking/loading) to improve bus movements through area	30,000
Bus Priority	Wimborne Road - Winton parking review	Review of existing parking arrangements at central commercial area of Wimborne Road, Winton to improve bus movements through area	30,000
		Total Capital [£]	3,257,000

DRAFT BSIP 2025/26 Delivery Plan – Revenue

National Bus Strategy Objective	Title of scheme or proposal	Description	Estimated cost [£]
Service level and network coverage	Frequency enhancement	Introduction of new Route 11 and accompanying changes to routes 5/5A and 6/6A to support new housing developments Canford Paddock	504,167
Service level and network coverage	Frequency enhancement	Introduction of new Route 21 to serve Ringwood Retail Park (Ringwood Road)	297,917
Service level and network coverage	Frequency enhancement	Introduction of night bus service on routes N1, N2 and N5 on all nights of the week	100,000
Service level and network coverage	Alum Chine year-round extension to route 33 to replace winter 70	Extend 33 to Alum Chine year-round to replace winter Route 70	51,333
Service level and network coverage	Frequency enhancement	Extension of the full Monday to Saturday evening service on route 14 from Kinson through to Royal Bournemouth Hospital	45,833
Service level and network coverage	Frequency enhancement	General support for commercial service 24 (Castlepoint – Christchurch)	23,000
Lower and simpler fares	Evening single fare (after 6pm) for £1	Flat fare providing journey in Zone A after 6pm for £1	661,750
Lower and simpler fares	Discounted weekend young person Day Rider for £2	Unlimited journeys for a day (Saturday or Sunday) for young people under 19 for £2	250,000
Lower and simpler fares	Commuter Club	Employees of businesses signed up to Commuter Club can purchase bundle of 20 journeys for £20 (up to 5 times) = £1 per journey	150,000
Lower and simpler fares	£2 single fare; bundle of 10 journeys for £20 when purchased via App	Bundle of 10 journeys for £20 when purchased via App = £2 per journey	100,000
Bus information and network identity	Enhanced bus timetable map and booklet	Additional information provided in bus operator timetable booklet and map including key tourism and destination information	50,000
Bus passenger experience	Transport Safety Officers	Continuation of Transport Safety Officers programme beyond current 2024/25 Department for Transport (DfT) pilot	136,000
		Total Revenue [£]	2,370,000