

Report subject	Our Place and Environment: Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) 2026/27
Meeting date	4 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The council has been awarded £5.64m Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) by the Department for Transport (DfT) for 2026/27 to continue delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The purpose of this paper is to seek council approval to accept and invest the grant, which is a combination of both capital and revenue funding. A proportion of the revenue element of the grant has been allocated to support a revised subsidised bus service network in accordance with the 4 February 2026 Subsidised Bus Services Review Cabinet report. Note: this report should be read in conjunction with the Local Transport Consolidated Funding Programme 2026/27 Cabinet report.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: (a) Cabinet recommends to Council acceptance of the £5.64m Local Authority Bus Grant funding for 2026/27 from the Department for Transport (b) Cabinet recommends to Council to Delegate delivery of the Local Authority Bus Grant funded Bus Service Improvement Plan programme set out in Appendix 2 of this report to the Service Director for Planning and Transport in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Mitigation, Energy and Environment
Reason for recommendations	(a) To inform Cabinet of the improvements introduced for the benefit of buses and bus passengers funded by BSIP/LABG programme to date. (b) Approval is sought to accept the LABG funding to support immediate investment in bus service improvements. (c) The investment of the LABG funding is aligned with the Council's Corporate Strategy and the Climate and

	Ecological Emergency Action Plan. (d) The council is a key partner of the BCP Enhanced Bus Partnership with local bus operators. The recommended programme has been co-developed and endorsed by the partnership.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Hadley, Cabinet Member for Climate Mitigation, Energy and Environment
Corporate Director	Glynn Barton, Chief Operations Officer
Report Authors	Richard Pincroft, Head of Transport and Sustainable Travel John McVey, Sustainable Transport Manager Nick Phillips, Sustainable Transport Operations Team Leader
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information and Recommendation

Background

1. The DfT has awarded the council further Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) funding to deliver its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). The funding, comprising revenue and capital, is formula-based and now a multi-year allocation which provides certainty and assists with forward planning. LABG has replaced the previously separate Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and devolved Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) allocations.
2. The allocations from 2026/27 are as follows:

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
Revenue (RDEL)	£2,621,127	£2,621,127	£2,621,127	-
Capital (CDEL)	£3,018,821	£3,079,501	£3,140,180	£3,200,860
Total:	£5,639,948	£5,700,628	5761307	£3,200,860

3. The council has been in receipt of bus grant funding (capital and revenue) since 2022/23 and, through the Enhanced Partnership with the bus operators, has made good progress with the delivery of the BSIP. A summary of the schemes and initiatives delivered and currently underway is set out in **Appendix 1**. Cabinet is asked to note the achievements and positive outcomes from the programme to date.
4. Delivery of the BSIP programme has previously been delegated to the Service Director for Planning and Transport in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Mitigation, Energy and Environment.

5. Payment of the LABG 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 recommended Delivery Plan is set out in **Appendix 2**.
6. Cabinet will be aware that, in accordance with the Medium-Term Financial Plan, a Bus Subsidy review has been undertaken. Following the review, DfT confirmed that it would permit the council to utilise the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG) revenue allocation to subsidise services on the basis that the local network has been reviewed following consultation and performance review to demonstrate best value.

Options Appraisal

7. With regards to the Bus Grant funding, there are two possible options for Members to consider:
 - a) Accept the £5.64m 2026/27 Bus Grant funding allocation and implement the programme 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

8. The council has been awarded a funding allocation £5,639,948 (of which £3,018,821 is capital and £2,621,127 is revenue) to continue delivery of the BSIP. This covers the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 but is part of a multi-year settlement (to 2028/29 for Revenue and to 2029/30 for capital).
9. Where applicable the cost of additional support from Corporate Services will be recharged to the programme. For example, financial monitoring, procurement, communications.
10. 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 was approved to March 2026 (where schemes are committed to by March 2025), similarly an extension of the revenue spending was approved to March 2026 (for service support).
11. The LABG award terms and conditions state that the 2026/27 allocation can be carried forward into 2027/28 financial year provided the schemes/proposals within the programme are committed to before end of March 2027.

Summary of legal implications

12. 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.

Summary of human resources implications

13. 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. In-house resources will be supplemented by external specialist consultants where appropriate. 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

14. A Decision Impact Assessment DIA Proposal ID753 has been created for this decision.

Answers provided indicate that the score for the carbon footprint of the proposal is 4.5 and the carbon footprint of the proposal is **Low**.

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	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
Natural Environment	Green - Only positive impacts identified	
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: **4.5**

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 NO_x emissions to rise. Diesel cars are the single biggest contributor to NO_x 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

16. 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 applied to the 2025/26 BSIP funding and now apply to the 2026/27 funding. Individual schemes and measures will require specific EIAs as appropriate.

Summary of risk assessment

17. 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 and 2025/26 Programmes

Appendix 2 – BSIP 2026/27 Capital and Revenue Programme

Appendix 1

Summary of BSIP 2022-26 Programme

Capital funded Projects

1. Bournemouth Station to Town Centre Bus Priority Route

The key corridor from Bournemouth Travel Interchange to the town centre is used by 22 buses in each direction per hour. Seasonal traffic volumes (to the beach car parks in particular) cause significant congestion and hence delay to these bus services. This results in both increased journey times and delays across the bus network. In addition, many bus stops in the area lack modern, accessible facilities and require updating.

A public engagement exercise was undertaken from 27/2/24 – 2/4/24 on proposed improvements to this key corridor and this showed widespread support for the outline proposals.

72% of respondents supported the key objectives of the scheme as follows:-

- Improve journey times and reduce delays for buses by providing two-way bus movements along Old Christchurch Rd.
- Encourage greater bus use by improving passenger waiting facilities with Real Time Information displays and CCTV.
- Reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.
- Improve access to Bournemouth Town Centre, Lansdowne and Railway Station.

This feedback enabled more detailed plans to be drawn up, and a public consultation exercise was then held from 16/4/25 to 12/5/25. This again showed support for the plans, with the summary of measures below:

Old Christchurch Road - Reconfiguration of sections of on-street parking will permit two-way bus use. New and improved bus stops and shelters will be provided.

Gervis Place, Hinton Road and Westover Road - The junction with Hinton Road and Gervis Place will be reconfigured to permit two-way bus use. The footways in Gervis Place on the Northern (shops) side will be widened, with a new crossing point provided. New bus shelters with raised accessible boarding kerbs and CCTV will be provided throughout.

Westover Road - Benefits from new bus shelters with CCTV, resurfacing, plus a better distribution of loading and disabled parking spaces.

The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation has been completed, detailed designs agreed and a contractor appointed. Construction of the scheme commenced on 12 January 2026 with the initial delivery phase being undertaken at Westover Road.

2. Provide bus priority at signalised junctions

System successfully tested in partnership with Yunex, Ticketer and Morebus. All equipment installed and working correctly, providing bus priority at 65 key junctions across the BCP area.

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

Junction phasing amendments completed to give added priority to Poole Road traffic (including high frequency bus services).

4. Westbourne Bus Priority

Junction improvement at County Gates gyratory delivered in November 2025 following successful trial period. This has resulted in reduced journey times for Westbound buses entering the gyratory.

5. Westbourne Grosvenor Road Junction

Junction improvement completed in November 2025 to aid left turning buses into Poole Road.

6. Christchurch High Street and Bargates

Significant improvements to passenger waiting facilities completed in May 2025. Three new larger fully accessible bus shelters have been installed onto widened pavements. Raised boarding kerbs permit level access onto the bus for wheelchair users and passengers with mobility impairments. Real Time Information displays and CCTV provided at all three stops. Full width shelter seating and new benches installed.

7. Southbourne & Pokesdown Bus Priority

Following consultation scheme delivered in December 2025 to reallocate parking from Seabourne Road into side roads to aid the flow of all traffic (including buses) and reduce congestion overall. Bus stop clearways also extended to permit safe access onto the bus for all users.

8. Further Bus Priority Schemes- Charminster, Purewell, Winton, Branksome Roundabout and Bournemouth Travel Interchange (Asda) Slip Rd – Station Roundabout

Schemes in preparation.

9. New Bus Shelters and Accessible Boarding kerbs

10 fully accessible bus shelters now installed. These include full width seating, wheelchair/buggy spaces and Real Time Passenger Information. Accessible boarding kerbs installed at 20 locations as part of an ongoing programme of works.

10. New Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) Displays

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

11. Poole Bus Station Improvements

Totems with RTPi and CCTV installed at 14 stands 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 and regular patrols by **Transport Safety Officers** has provided added security for passengers and staff in an area and a reduction in ASB incidents.

Further works in the Bus Station will include redecoration and improved flooring, lighting, signage and seating. The underused tarmac area at the Seldown Car Park end of the site is being transformed into a greener, more welcoming space for everyone to use. This includes new seating and planting, with works commencing in January 2026.

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

Cameras now installed into the busiest bus shelters across BCP. They have directly helped to reduce vandalism of bus shelters and have improved passenger security at the bus stop.

13. Provision of Low Emission Vehicles

Two electric single deck buses have been ordered and are due to be delivered in Summer 2026. Charging facilities will be provided in Seldown Coach Park.

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. 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 June 2024, with over 6,250 sold so far.

3. 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. Over 50 local businesses are now participating in the scheme.

4. £1 evening fare after 7pm

£1 single fare available on all buses within BCP area to encourage ridership and support the Night Time Economy. Over 212,000 tickets sold from May – December 2025.

5. Bus Service 13 frequency enhancement

Daytime frequency enhanced from half hourly to every 20 minutes, with joint funding provided by Dorset Council.

6. Bus Service 18 frequency enhancement

Daytime frequency enhanced from hourly to every 30 minutes on Mondays- Saturdays. Sunday service introduced.

7. Night Bus Service frequency enhancement

N1, N2 and N5 services now operating daily from May 25.

8. Trial of New Services 11 and 21

Service 11 Bournemouth to Canford Paddock and Service 21 Bournemouth to Turbary Retail Park introduced in May 25.

9. Extension of Service 33

Service now extended from Bournemouth- Alum Chine.

10. Mobility as a Service (MAAS) Transport App

Morebus App to have enhanced multi- modal content including real time information on train, bike share and car share options.

11. Passenger Satisfaction – Passenger Charter and Passenger Surveys

Passenger Charter introduced. Transport Focus "Your Bus" Survey results showed BCP third in the country with 91% overall satisfaction with bus services. Results being further analysed at regular meetings with operators.

Appendix 2 - BSIP 2026/27 Programme – Capital			
National Bus Strategy objective	Title of scheme or proposal	Description	Estimated cost [£]
Bus Priority	Bournemouth Travel Interchange to Town Centre	Passenger accessibility improvements	£458,821
Bus Priority	Poole Civic Centre Gyratory	Bus lane for Eastbound Services from Clock Tower to Willow Park	£350,000
Bus Priority	Winton High St (Banks - Ensbury Park Rd)	Delivery of bus improvements including extending bus stops clearways, raised kerbs, new shelters	£300,000
Bus Priority	Bus Priority- Red Routes	Red Routes - Development and delivery of phased programme of prioritised sections	£300,000
Bus Priority	Minor Traffic Regulation Order amendments to speed up bus journeys	Review existing laybys, parking arrangements and bus lane times along bus routes	£60,000
Bus Priority	Bus Priority Ashley Road (Pottery Junction) to County Gates	Feasibility Study for delivery in 2027/8 capital programme including Pottery Junction, Pedestrian Crossings, St. Aldhem's Road and Bourne Valley Junction	£50,000
Bus Priority	Alma Road - Winton	Review of existing parking arrangements to improve bus journey times and reliability	£50,000
Accessibility and inclusion	Raised kerbing and extended bus stop clearways at 50 stops	Provision of raised kerbs and 27m bus stop clearways at 50 stops in area to improve boarding for disabled users	£350,000
Waiting and interchange facilities	Shelter upgrade programme	Upgrade of 20 bus stops with new bus shelters, Real Time Passenger Information and live-stream CCTV	£600,000
Waiting and interchange facilities	Poole Bus Station	Refurbishment including redecoration, CCTV and potential reopening of toilets	£250,000
Waiting and interchange facilities	Bournemouth Travel Interchange	Refurbishment including lighting, CCTV, redecoration	£200,000
Waiting and interchange facilities	Boscombe Bus Station	Detailed design for provision of bus priority bypass around Centenary Way Roundabout for Westbound buses. Reconfigure exit from Bus Station	£50,000
Total Capital [£]			£3,018,821

Appendix 2 - BSIP 2026/27 Programme – Revenue

National Bus Strategy objective	Title of scheme or proposal	Description	Estimated cost [£]
Service level and network coverage	Socially necessary bus services	Support new subsidised bus service network following comprehensive review	£1,003,818
Service level and network coverage	Frequency enhancement	Service enhancements (13, 14, 18, 20, 24, 33, N1, N2 and N5) to promote increased patronage	£942,000
Bus passenger experience	Transport Safety Officers	2 x Trained Security Officers to patrol travel interchanges and journeys to help prevent anti-social behaviour	£140,000
Bus passenger experience	Poole Bus Station enhancements	Improved cleanliness of Poole Bus Station including potential to re-open and staff/maintain toilet facilities	£110,000
Bus passenger experience	Transport Focus Survey	Participation in Transport Focus 'Your Bus Journey' Passenger Satisfaction Survey	£55,000
Lower and simpler fares	Discounted weekend young person's Day Rider - £2	Reduced price day rider ticket for unlimited travel in the BCP area for young people at weekends	£180,000
Lower and simpler fares	Commuter Club	£20 for bundle of 20 journeys for employees of businesses that sign up to the club (£1 per journey) up to 5 x bundles available per employee.	£88,309
Lower and simpler fares	£2 multi-trip bundle - app only	£20 for bundle of 10 journeys open to all when purchased via the morebus app	£52,000
Lower and simpler fares	Concessionary fares travel during peak times for job holders	Trial to enable disabled passengers with concessionary fares entitlement to travel before 9:30am for a £1 single fare. This will enable them to access employment/education/volunteering opportunities	£50,000
Total Revenue [£]			£2,621,127