

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: Bus Services Improvement Plan

Service: Planning, Transportation and Environment

Head of Service: Dave Black

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: 26 September 2021

Assessment carried out by (job title): Damien Jones, Head of the Transport Coordination Service

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Devon County Council's Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP). This plan is in response to the Government's National Bus Strategy – published in March 2021. [Bus back better - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/bus-back-better)

2. Reason for change / review

This BSIP is something new. The Government has set out that we must publish this plan by the end of October 2021 to access funding being provided through the National Bus Strategy. It will remain a living document with regular review and form part of a new "Enhanced Partnership" with our local bus companies. An Enhanced Partnership will be as set out in the 2017

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

The aim is to improve bus services and attract more people on to them. How much we are able to improve the services will depend on how much money we get from Government. Through the Department for Transport, they will decide on how much money to give us when they have read our BSIP.

4. People affected and their diversity profile

Everyone in Devon, especially people who currently use buses or may begin using buses as a result of measures in BSIP, e.g., enhanced bus services to certain settlements.

Devon’s population is older than the national average, with 23% of Devon’s population being aged 65+ at the 2011 Census, compared to just 16% for England overall. The proportion of people describing themselves as limited in their day-to-day activities is approximately in line with England overall (19% for Devon, 18% for England overall), but ethnic diversity is significantly lower in Devon than England overall, with 98% of Devon’s population identifying as ‘White’, compared to 85% in England as a whole.

As shown in the table below, bus use is highest among those aged 17-20, both in terms of the absolute number of bus trips made and the proportion of trips made by bus. Those aged 70+ also make a significantly higher proportion of trips by bus (6%) than the general population (3%), with bus use being lowest amongst those aged 30-59.

		Trips per person per year (National Travel Survey 2019)								
Mode		All ages	0-16	17-20	21-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70+
Local bus outside London	No.	32	37	73	33	20	18	21	31	46
	%	3%	4%	9%	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	6%
All modes	No.	953	863	824	860	1,073	1,121	1,037	995	800

The proportion and number of trips made by bus tends to decrease with increasing income (i.e. bus services are an ‘inferior good’), primarily due to those with higher incomes typically having greater access to alternative transport modes, e.g. the private car. This is illustrated in the table below; among those in the 1st (lowest) income quintile, 6% of trips are made by bus, compared to just 2% among those in the 5th (highest) income quintile.

		Trips per person per year (National Travel Survey 2019)					
Mode		All income quintiles	1 st income quintile	2 nd income quintile	3 rd income quintile	4 th income quintile	5 th income quintile
Local bus outside London	No.	32	53	39	27	25	15
	%	3%	6%	4%	3%	2%	2%
All modes	No.	953	859	921	969	1,017	995

Additionally, according to National Travel Survey data:

- Females make a slightly greater proportion (4%) of trips by bus than males (3%).
- Although people with a mobility difficulty make a slightly smaller number of bus trips on average than those with no mobility difficulty, the *proportion* of trips made by bus is higher among those with a mobility difficulty, due to this group making fewer trips in total.
- Bus use is highest among those identifying as 'Black' or of mixed ethnicities, and lowest among those identifying as 'Asian'.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

The following have been identified:

- The local bus companies who run services who have agreed to work with the County Council as part of the new Enhanced Partnership. With improved services this should have a positive impact on their business
- Employers whose workers travel by bus (**24% of bus journeys in Devon are to and from work (Transport Focus Survey 2019)**). Improvements will improve access to work.
- Educational establishments including schools, colleges and universities whose students travel by bus (**12% of bus journeys in Devon are to and from education (Transport Focus Survey 2019)**). Improvements will improve access to Education
- Patients, carers and health and social care settings across the County. Improvements to will improve access to health.
- Neighbouring local authorities in whose areas Devon bus services run. We are working with these councils on a joined-up approach in many areas, for example a Passengers' Charter
- Devon County Councillors whose constituencies are served by buses.
- Businesses which bus services provide access to including access for shopping, leisure (for example access to Dartmoor national Park by bus)
- Community organisations, e.g., bus user groups and environmental pressure groups, who may advocate for bus service enhancements.
- Devon County Council, for whom bus enhancements will support strategic objectives, e.g. addressing the Climate Emergency.

6. Research used to inform this assessment

- Stakeholder consultation.
- Public consultation.
- Focus groups.
- Transport Focus survey.
- National Travel Survey data.
- Census data.

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

A Stakeholder consultation has been carried out which went to the following:

- Local County Councillors
- Parish, Town and District Councils
- Health sector and group representatives
- Youth Parliament and other representative groups
- Transport campaign groups
- Exeter Airport
- National Parks and other associated sectors (for example National Trust)
- Other transport providers and sectors, for example rail
- Disability and other contact groups (working with Adult Social Care for appropriate contacts)
- Chamber of Commerce

175 responses were received, and the results will be included in the BSIP and has impacted on the improvements set out.

A public consultation will take place after the publication of the BSIP. Focus groups will also be held. This will include with current bus users, lapsed bus users and those who have never used a bus. It will also consider others, for example access for young people and those with a disability or additional need.

8. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary
 - Reasonable, and
 - Those affected have been adequately consulted.

[insert any cross-cutting or general responses to equality and diversity here, and delete this note...]

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	<p>In what way will you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
All residents (include generic equality provisions)	Everyone may at some time need or wish to use a local bus service.	We encourage bus services which are for everyone to use.
Age	People with mobility difficulties may have difficulty getting to the bus stop and getting on and off buses.	<p>All but a few buses have level entrances to make it easier for everyone to get on and off.</p> <p>The BSIP includes an aim to make improvements at bus stops to make them easier to get to and for people to get on and off buses.</p> <p>Improved local bus services will result in greater opportunity for those eligible for a National Bus Pass to travel for free off-peak.</p> <p>For those who still cannot use local conventional local bus services support through community transport groups will remain.</p>

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	<p>In what way will you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people	People with mobility difficulties may have difficulty getting to the bus stop and getting on and off buses. Some people find it difficult to obtain information in the correct format.	<p>All but a few buses meet accessibility regulations to make it easier for everyone to get on and off.</p> <p>The BSIP includes an aim to make improvements at bus stops to make them easier to get to and for people to get on and off buses.</p> <p>Improved local bus services will result in greater opportunity for those eligible for a National Bus Pass to travel for free off-peak. This includes those with certain disabilities.</p> <p>We arrange one-to-one independent travel training for those with special educational needs to enable them to gain confidence in using local bus services. Improved services will open up more opportunities for this.</p> <p>For those who still cannot use local buses, we support community transport groups who provide transport for individuals in need.</p> <p>We support every kind of information service – on-line, printed and at the bus stop. Officers are available to advise and assist anyone who requires information in another format.</p>

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	<p>In what way will you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief	Everyone may at some time need or wish to use a local bus service.	<p>We encourage bus services which are for everyone to use.</p> <p>As detailed above, those identifying as 'Black' or mixed ethnicities make a greater proportion of trips by bus than the general population, hence enhancing bus services may particularly advance access to employment, services etc. for people in these ethnic groups.</p>
Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)	Everyone may at some time need or wish to use a local bus service.	<p>We encourage bus services which are for everyone to use.</p> <p>As detailed above, females make a slightly greater proportion of trips by bus than males, hence enhancing bus services may particularly advance access to employment, services etc. for females.</p>
Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership	Everyone may at some time need or wish to use a local bus service.	We encourage bus services which are for everyone to use.

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>In what way will you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
<p>Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban</p>	<p>Those on limited incomes may find bus fares expensive.</p>	<p>The BSIP includes proposals to introduce area tickets at more affordable prices.</p> <p>Independent research for Devon County Council (spring 2014) showed that 51% of supported service users have an income below £10,000 a year. A further 32% have an income of between £10,000 and £20,000. This is in line with National Travel Survey data, which shows bus use as being higher among lower income groups (see above). Therefore, enhancing bus services may particularly advance access to employment, services etc. for those in lower income groups.</p>

9. Human rights considerations:

No direct implications, however, enhancements to bus services may enable individuals to exercise certain human rights more easily, such as the right to employment or the right to education (both enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) by improving access to employment/education. Bus services are open to everyone (“omnibus” from Latin “for all”).

10. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

In what way can you support and create opportunities for people and communities (of place and interest) to be independent, empowered and resourceful?

Bus services offer opportunities for independence and dignity in daily living, enabling people to travel for work, shopping, education, social contact and leisure. Elderly people can retain independence in their own homes. Young people can gain confidence and social skills. People with disabilities have more opportunity to access the same life chances as everyone else.

Greener Journeys research (July 2013) recorded 56% of jobseekers are reliant on the bus for employment, 6.5% of respondents had left a job due to inadequate bus services, 11.6% had turned down a job and 18% had been deterred from applying for a job. Same research indicated a statistically significant link between local employment levels and transport provision. The link between local employment levels and transport provision has a more concentrated effect on younger age groups.

In what way can you help people to be safe, protected from harm, and with good health and wellbeing?

Public transport is an enabler, facilitating healthy mobility for all. This includes mental well-being – 10% of Devon bus journeys are for visiting friends and relatives, 16% are for leisure (Transport Focus survey 2019). Furthermore, a survey of approximately 90 Devon bus users, conducted as part of research for an MSc in Transportation Planning and Engineering, found that nearly 50% of respondents agreed that bus use was beneficial to their physical health, and 60% agreed bus use benefitted their mental health. These beneficial impacts were particularly pronounced among older age groups and lower income groups. Therefore, improvements to bus services through the BSIP could deliver physical and mental health benefits.

The Plan includes consideration of passenger safety on the journey itself, both at the bus stop and on board the bus. Whilst incidents are rare (Transport Focus survey 2019), they are of real concern when they occur.

In what way can you help people to be connected, and involved in community activities?

As well as offering opportunities to gain access to jobs, education and services, the bus journey itself is a social experience, encouraging communities to meet and mix. Good bus links enable people to join in with a range of social activities – leisure, volunteering, visiting friends and relatives. Age UK estimates the prevalence of loneliness in older people at around 30%.

Bus services enable us to be social beings. This has been expressed as a 'right to travel.' 44% of Devon bus users have no other option for getting around (Transport Focus survey, 2019). The BSIP contributes towards tackling the deep-rooted problems of inequality and social mobility which reflect Devon's demography and rurality.

11. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:	No negative consequences.	No direct outcomes.
Conserve and enhance wildlife:	No negative consequences.	Increased bus use and less use of cars leads of less risk of roadkill. It also enables a more environmentally friendly way to access the countryside
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:	No negative consequences.	Increased bus use and less use of cars leads to less pressure for new roadbuilding.
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:	No negative consequences.	Increased access to leisure activities by bus contributed to more sustainable
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:	No net negative consequences.	Increased bus use and less use of cars leads to less emissions. Development of alternative fuels for buses improves situation further.
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):	No negative consequences.	The BSIP meets the objectives of DCC's deceleration of a Climate Emergency. For example, increased bus use and less use of cars leads to less traffic noise and greenhouse gases.
Contribute to reducing water consumption:	No negative consequences.	No direct outcomes.

Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):	No net negative consequences.	The BSIP meets the objectives of DCC's deceleration of a Climate Emergency. For example, increased bus use and less use of cars leads to less traffic noise and greenhouse gases.
Other (please state below):		

12. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:	No negative consequences.	Bus services enable people to access education and training opportunities.
Impact on employment levels:	No negative consequences.	Bus services enable people to access employment opportunities.
Impact on local business:	No negative consequences.	Bus services enable people to access their local shops and businesses, whilst affording reasonable choice. Bus services are particularly good for traditional town centres.

13. Describe and linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

Improved public transport works with the prevention agenda, which aims to increase independence and employment amongst those people in society who have a greater dependence on benefits and care through a lack of independence.

Public health improvement policies, through increased ability to travel to health appointments and through making active lifestyles more feasible for those who rely on the bus.

The local economy, through the connections that buses provide for rural workers and in providing connectivity between the skills of the rural workforce and the needs of Devon businesses which are often rural based SMEs (Small and Medium sized Enterprises)

Youth opportunities, by affording the ability to access opportunities for young people in rural areas

Sustainable Communities, a community where a significant proportion of residents are unable to travel freely, where they need bus services to do so, will be able to be more "sustainable"

Improved air quality, reduced congestion, and less car dependence.

14. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

Improved access for everyone to work, shopping, leisure, and tourism opportunities, bringing more revenue to local businesses and aiding the Devon economy.

Financially supported bus services are secured through a procurement process laid down by the Transport Act 1985. All interested bus operators may join a dynamic purchasing system and compete for contracts. In practice these companies are all based locally in Devon or neighbouring authority areas. New contracts will thereby increase mostly local employment opportunities and strengthen locally based businesses.

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

The implementation of the BSIP will be managed through the Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators. In line with Government requirements to periodically review and update the BSIP, there will be future consultations, including work with stakeholder groups and organizations and other outside bodies, including passenger representative bodies.