

## Bus Service Improvement Grant Update and In-Year Developments

### Report of the Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

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Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

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#### 1) Recommendation

That the Scrutiny Committee be asked to note the following updates with regards to the progress towards delivering our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), through Department for Transport (DFT) grant.

#### 2) Background / Introduction

In March 2021 the UK Government published its National Bus Strategy for England – [Bus back better - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/bus-back-better). This set out their vision for the future of local bus services, linked with the recovery of public transport after COVID19. They aim to increase the importance of local bus services as an integrated part of the transport network.

The national strategy aims to make buses greener, more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper and is linked with the Government's funding announcement prior to the pandemic of £3bn of new funding to improve local bus services across England.

The strategy sets out a way forward for the County Council and its local bus operators to work together and was agreed by Cabinet at their meeting on 13 July 2022. In October 2022 the County Council formed the DevonBus Enhanced Partnership (EP) with their local bus operators. The Devon BUS (Bus User and Stakeholder) Forum was also formed which has representation on the Enhanced Partnership.

A Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP) was also completed which is updated annually, most recently in June 2024, to reflect progress on the BSIP funding grant received from the DFT. Detailed in this report is the funding which has been received, as well as progress towards delivering the plan and spending the grant.

For more information on the Enhanced Partnership and our latest Bus Services Improvement Plan, please visit this web link: <https://www.traveldevon.info/bus/bsip/>

#### 3) Main Body / Proposal

##### 3.1 BSIP1 Funding: 2022 - 2025

The County Council was initially allocated £14.1 million BSIP funding by the DfT. This was split into capital (£8.8 million) and revenue (£5.3 million) funding to be spent over a three-year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25. The schemes to be funded were selected by the DfT from the original BSIP submission, and all schemes are subject to final approval by the DfT. Although funding was significantly less than DCC had bid for to deliver initial plans, the BSIP remained ambitious in the hope further funding may become available in the future.

Section 3.1 outlines the current schemes being delivered with the initial £14.1million funding. Full details of the schemes can be found in the latest BSIP: [Devon County Council's BSIP 2024 v. 3.0 June 2024](#)

**Table 1: Capital Schemes**

Scheme title or intervention	Scheme details	Delivery milestones & current status	Outcomes at scheme level
<p><b>1. Exeter Northern Corridor: New North Road to City Centre Bus Gate</b></p>	<p>Bus gate to provide more direct access to city centre for Countywide bus services approaching on 4km northern corridor between Cowley Bridge roundabout (northern edge of city) and Bus Station (city centre). Bus gate would avoid circuitous route via narrow residential streets and reduce route distance by 0.5km (12.5%) and enable stops in Sidwell Street, closer to High St.</p>	<p>Scheme was completed in July 2024 and is fully operational</p>	<p>Intervention achieves approximately 3-minute journey time saving per bus with 8 services per hour across 8 routes, which represents a 17% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor.</p> <p>Passengers can disembark the bus nearer to City Centre.</p> <p>96 buses daily would be diverted from narrow streets, improving air quality on York Road, which has a school and was near the AQ objective level in 2019. The intervention would reduce the percentage of HGVs on York Road by 29% and on Longbrook Street by 45%.</p>
<p><b>2. Exeter Central Corridor and Exeter Eastern Corridor</b></p>	<p>The BSIP proposals for the Exeter Central and Eastern corridors comprise a mixture of technological and infrastructure improvements, as well as changes to the bus lane operation times.</p> <p>These schemes also include technology upgrades to bus priority and traffic signal control, outbound bus lane priority at Barrack Rd junction, improvements to shelter and real time information provision at stops.</p>	<p>Following the consultation and stakeholder discussions, the scheme was amended to extend the times of the bus lane to morning and afternoon peaks only.</p> <p>Scheme has now received both Cabinet and TRO approval – works should be completed by March 2025.</p>	<p>Intervention achieves approximately 4 mins journey time saving per bus with almost 30 services across both corridors. This would achieve a 27% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor.</p> <p>The Heavitree Road corridor also is the only route in the city which exceeds the national air quality objective and journey-average emissions of NOx and PM will be reduced by reducing the stop-start acceleration events for buses (this will be monitored by Exeter City Council)</p>

<p><b>3. Exeter Western Corridor: This corridor connects St Thomas with the City Centre along Cowick Street, Exe Bridges, Fore Street / Preston Street and Western Way. This connects passengers between residential areas and key employment, education and leisure opportunities in the city centre and is one of the busiest public transport corridors in the city with approximately 12 buses each hour in both directions.</b></p>	<p>Preston Street / Western Way Junction - Early bus detection installed at the junction will help reduce waiting times for buses.</p> <p>Cowick Street / Buller Road Junction - Technology upgrade to introduce bus priority on Cowick Street inbound approach during the AM &amp; PM peaks</p> <p>Intelligent Corridor Upgrade</p> <p>Cowick Street Bus Lane - proposals to extend the operation hours of the bus lane</p>	<p>Following the consultation and stakeholder discussions, the scheme was amended to extend the times of the bus lane to morning and afternoon peaks only.</p> <p>Although the scheme received Cabinet approval, the TRO required to progress the extension of bus lane times was not approved by Exeter HATOC.</p> <p>Improvements to the traffic management / intelligent corridor will be progressed. This work should be completed by March 2025.</p>	<p>Intervention achieves approximately 2 mins journey time saving per bus with 7 services per hour across 5 routes, which represents a 33% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor. <i>Note: due to the amendments to the scheme, further modelling around journey time savings has not been completed. This will be calculated with real time data when the scheme is in operation in 2025.</i></p>
<p><b>4. Newton Abbot Western Corridor:</b></p>	<p>Technological interventions at existing signalised junctions and crossings within Newton Abbot Town Centre, to improve bus priority, corridor capacity and reduce bus journey times and delay.</p> <p>A separate plan is also in place to upgrade facilities at the Sherborne Road bus interchange.</p>	<p>Technology interventions scheme has now received Cabinet approval – works should be completed by March 2025.</p> <p>The Sherborne Road scheme should be completed by summer 2025.</p>	<p>Improved access for bus services between new development on western edge of town and the town centre (estimated 10% journey time saving in peak hour), reduction of congestion in Newton Abbot and enabling stronger multi modal integration.</p> <p>Increase bus patronage into Newton Abbot by 5%</p>
<p><b>5. Barnstaple Northwest Corridor: Braunton Road Bus Lane and Bus Priority</b></p>	<p>Bus priority on northwest corridor between Chaddiford Lane junction (north western edge of town) and the town centre, with straight through priority at Pilland Way and A361, effectively removing the need for buses to stop at two sets of traffic signals</p>	<p>Project has received approval by cabinet and scheme is now on site at Braunton Road, some elements of design are still being finalised. It is anticipated the works will be complete in the early part of 2025.</p>	<p>The scheme aims to improve bus journey times for services from Braunton towards Barnstaple, therefore improving existing user experience and encouraging the further use of public transport services. It promotes priority for buses and taxis to avoid the queuing traffic. There are currently a total of 292 buses that would benefit from the bus lane per week, approximately 50 buses per day from Monday to Saturday.</p> <p>Journey time savings intervention achieves approximately 2 mins journey time saving per bus with 4 services per hour which represents a 29% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor.</p>

<p><b>6. Barnstaple Northern Corridor: North Road Bus Lanes</b></p> <p><i><b>THIS SCHEME HAS BEEN REMOVED – FUNDS WERE REALLOCATED TO SCHEME 7.</b></i></p>	<p>Creation of new bus lanes on 2.1km northern corridor between North Devon Hospital (northern edge of town) and the bus station (town centre) to provide improved public transport links to the hospital and integrated with local active travel improvements identified through LCWIP (c.0.3km of bus lane)</p>	<p>Project design completed by June 2024</p> <p>Scheme completed and operational by March 2025</p>	<p>Improved access from town centre to North Devon Hospital. Increase bus patronage by 10%</p> <p>Intervention achieves approximately 1 min journey time saving per bus with 6 services per hour, which represents a 13% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor. It will also improve cycle linkages between hospital and town centre</p>
<p><b>7. Barnstaple Railway Station – Bus/Rail integration project</b></p>	<p>Bus/rail integration project at Barnstaple Rail Station. This project will greatly increase access for buses to the station, help to integrate rail and bus journeys, and also provide a bus only priority link to reduce congestion and improve bus journey times to the town centre and beyond. Bus stops and real time provision will be improved, and the relocation of these will help to promote the bus as a first choice for passengers arriving at the station</p>	<p>Although this scheme received cabinet approval, the TRO to open up Sticklepath Terrace was not approved by the North Devon HATOC, placing the scheme’s future at risk.</p>	<p>The changes at Barnstaple Rail Station will provide a massive benefit to public transport users, promoting the bus a first choice for onward travel. There are also currently safety concerns for pedestrians arriving at the station, and moving in between modes. Changes to the road layout and improved infrastructure, including the introduction of a bus only gate for bus journeys departing from the station, will make this a safer environment for all public transport users, and improve bus journey times by allowing buses to avoid congestion.</p>
<p><b>8. Bideford/Barnstaple Western Bus Corridor</b></p>	<p>Scheme is for a new bus lane to give bus priority between Gratton Way and Roundswell roundabout. The scheme will improve bus journey times for services from Barnstaple towards Roundswell roundabout, and promotes priority for buses and taxis to avoid the queuing traffic, ensuring more reliable bus services onto the A39</p>	<p>Scheme has received Cabinet and TRO approval. Works are on site with completion by end of March 2025.</p>	<p>Intervention on Roundswell approach achieves approximately 1-minute with 2 services per hour across 4 routes, which represents a 6% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor.</p> <p>Intervention on Fremington/Bickington approach achieves potential saving of 2 mins with 4 services per hour, which represents a 13% reduction in bus journey times during the peak on this corridor.</p>
<p><b>9. Countywide Bus Pinch Point Removal Programme</b></p>	<p>Pinch Point Removals, i.e., minor civils works (kerbs / realignment) or traffic management measures (i.e., removal of on-street parking) to ease flow of buses through Market Towns, using Bus Operator data/intelligence to highlight locations where bus reliability is impacted.</p>	<p>A program of these minor schemes has been developed in conjunction with bus operators. This has been approved by cabinet. Many interventions have already been delivered, with the remainder scheduled for completion during early 2025.</p>	<p>Improve journey times and access for buses at a range of identified locations across the county</p>
<p><b>10. Bus Station Enhancements</b></p>	<p>Funding to upgrade Newton Abbot, Tavistock, Barnstaple, and Tiverton Bus Stations. To include refurbishment, provision of information, signage, seating and improve</p>	<p>Significant works have now been completed at Barnstaple, Tiverton and Tavistock to refurbish and improve facilities and information for bus passengers.</p>	<p>To increase safety, satisfaction and confidence of passengers using bus station facilities, leading to the overall growth of bus patronage across the county.</p>

	safety.	Further work is in progress at Sherborne Road in Newton Abbot and will be completed in Spring 2025.	
<b>11. Bus Stop Infrastructure &amp; Real Time Information</b>	<p>Standardisation of flags and information points with clear information to assist passengers.</p> <p>Improvements to the electronic real time information system.</p> <p>Upgrades to bus stop waiting facilities across the county.</p>	<p>By March 2025, over £2.5M of investment in replacement shelters, bus stop infrastructure and real time information units will have been delivered across Devon.</p> <p>Funding has also been offered to Parish and Town Councils to upgrade their own bus shelter infrastructure.</p>	<p>Improve offering to bus passengers, to increase confidence in information provision. We hope this will lead to an increase in patronage.</p> <p>Upgrade end of life bus stop infrastructure.</p> <p>Improve reliability of outdated real time displays</p>
<p><b>12. East Devon Business Parks and Leisure Park - Bus stop waiting facilities upgrade (Crealy, Hillbarton &amp; Greendale)</b></p> <p><b><i>THIS SCHEME IS BEING REMOVED DUE TO AN ESCALATION OF COSTS MAKING IT UNVIABLE. FUNDS WERE REALLOCATED TO SCHEME 9.</i></b></p>	<p>Bus stop facilities upgrade for major East Devon Business Park and Leisure Park, including pedestrian crossing on high-speed road and upgrade street lighting.</p>	<p>Project design completed by September 2022</p> <p>Scheme completed and operational by March 2023</p>	<p>To increase safety of passengers crossing the A3052.</p> <p>Expected to grow patronage on 9 and 52 bus services by addressing needs of vulnerable road users needing to cross a high-speed, high-volume road (particularly people with disabilities, elderly people or families with prams reliant on public transport to access leisure or jobs in the local area)</p>
<b>13. Improved Street Lighting</b>	<p>Improve and install lighting for a safer environment in and around bus waiting areas/stops.</p> <p>Upgrade lighting in existing locations to incorporate a lighting management system, to increase safety for of bus users.</p>	<p>Schemes completed and operational by March 2023</p> <p><b><i>This scheme has been delivered</i></b></p>	<p>Safer waiting environment increases confidence of a wide range of people with protected characteristics and so advances equality of opportunity to travel by bus.</p>
<b>14. Bus Stop Multi-Modal Integration Upgrades</b>	<p>Bus stop upgrades to improve multi-modal integration between cycle, rail, and access to bus services.</p> <p>Three sites identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A38 Drumbridges roundabout</li> <li>2) Tavistock Bus Station</li> <li>3) Yelverton roundabout</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Drumbridges has received Cabinet approval and will start construction in early 2025</li> <li>2) Works at Tavistock Bus Station were completed in August 2024</li> <li>3) Works at Yelverton Interchange will be completed in early 2025</li> </ol>	<p>Increased multi-modal journey options for commuters, thereby reducing journey to work times and providing a sustainable public transport option</p>
<b>15. Upgrade to ticket machines to enable all to read QR Codes</b>		<b><i>This scheme is currently on hold due an incompatibility problem between our major</i></b>	<p>Enable seamless multi-operator ticketing and acceptance on all bus services.</p>

		<i>operator's ticketing system and other operators' systems.</i>	
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**Table 3: Revenue/Resource Schemes**

Scheme title or intervention	Scheme details	Delivery milestones	Outcomes at scheme level
<p>1. Fare reductions</p> <p><b><i>DUE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE DFT'S £2 FARE SCHEME PERMISSION WAS SORT TO MOVE THE MAJORITY OF THIS ALLOCATION TO 3. BUS SERVICE SUPPORT</i></b></p>	<p>Devon Day Ticket - Fare Subsidy Devon Day Ticket will initially be reduced in price to £6.60 (from £9.60) for an adult fare, allowing unlimited daily bus travel across multiple Bus Operators on the majority of bus services across the county.</p> <p>Town Fare Ticket pilot - Fare Subsidy Bideford, Newton Abbot and Exmouth - unlimited bus travel in each area for £3 per day.</p>	<p>New fares to be implemented from April 2023</p>	<p>Increased patronage as this will be the cheapest ticket for many bus users and will provide substantial savings on current fares. This will be both a paper and contact less digital ticket, readable by QR ticket machines.</p> <p>Over the 3-year period the aim would be to increase passenger growth sufficiently to achieve commercial sustainability.</p>
<p>2. Promotional events to encourage people to try the bus - for example: Fare Sale, nominated weekends or school holiday promotions offering reduced fares, child add-on fares for £1, special offer on Devon Day ticket</p>	<p>In association with our Bus Operators, we will design a calendar of events to promote ticket sales and encourage people to try the bus. Revenue costs include promotional activities and fare subsidies.</p> <p>There will also be a publicity campaign to specifically target concessionary bus users, to restore this market to pre-pandemic levels.</p>	<p>Our "Miles of Smiles" campaign has been running since January 2023 – it has included campaigns to promote £2 fare, National Bus Pass, Devon County Show and various smaller fare initiatives.</p> <p>The campaign has included radio, social media, direct mailing, outdoor displays (bus side/rears).</p> <p>We are currently planning a promotion for January 2025 for "Super Saturdays" which will offer a £1 fare for all single bus journeys.</p>	<p>Improve bus patronage and encourage people who have not tried the bus before or for a long time to give it a go.</p> <p>Delivery of key messages – i.e. £2 Fare Cap</p>

**Table 4: Bus Service Support**

In line with the aims of the BSIP, DCC and the Enhanced Partnership aspired to make significant improvements to bus services across Devon. When they received their funding allocation, plans had to be significantly reduced. However, the ambition remained to increase service provision, as ultimately it is known this is the most effective way to increase patronage.

Re-aligning funds from fares schemes has enabled DCC to achieve some of their initial proposals, as detailed below.

Scheme title or intervention	Scheme details	Delivery milestones	Outcomes at scheme level
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<b>Service 85 improvements: Barnstaple - Tavistock</b>	Extension of service 85 beyond Holsworthy to Launceston and Tavistock.	Improved service started April 2023	Provide a direct service from Barnstaple to Tavistock. Provide improved service for villages between Holsworthy and Tavistock.
<b>Service 174 improvements: Teignmouth - Torbay Hospital</b>	Extended to Torbay Hospital (incorporating previous 184 route) and increased 2-hourly frequency across whole route	Improved service started June 2023	Improve access from Teignmouth and Newton Abbot to Torbay Hospital and The Willows retail park.
<b>Service X30: Seaton - Exeter</b>	New route linking Seaton, Colyton and Honiton with east of Exeter growth point and Exeter city centre.	Service started in April 2023	Improve journey opportunities between East Devon and Exeter. Improve access to east of Exeter growth point.
<b>Service 358: Otterton - Exeter</b>	New weekday peak-time return journey linking Otterton, Budleigh and Woodbury with Exeter.	Service started in January 2024	New direct service improves journey opportunities for students and commuters from Budleigh area into Exeter.
<b>Service A improvements: Exeter - Alphington</b>	Increased 15-minute frequency across whole route.	Service improved in September 2023	Increase patronage on key city service.
<b>Service 19 improvements: Barnstaple</b>	Improved to a half-hourly frequency Monday – Saturday.	Improved service started September 2023	Improve service to North Devon Hospital, Barnstaple Railway Station and residential areas to increase patronage.
<b>Sunday service 155: South Molton - Barnstaple</b>	Introduce Sunday service 155 between South Molton and Barnstaple	Service started in September 2023	Re-introduce popular service to increase bus patronage between two main towns in North Devon.
<b>Service 301 improvements: Barnstaple - Combe Martin</b>	Service increased to hourly and extended to Barnstaple Railway Station on all journeys	Improved service started July 2023	To improve bus-rail connectivity from Barnstaple Railway Station to Ilfracombe and Combe Martin and improve links from Combe Martin and Ilfracombe to North Devon Hospital.
<b>Service 92 improvements: Totnes - Dartmouth</b>	Service increased to hourly and connects with service 7 to/from Exeter at Totnes.	Improved service started September 2023	Improved journey opportunities to/from Totnes railway station, Newton Abbot Torbay Hospital and Exeter
<b>Service 149 improvements: Totnes - The Willows</b>	Simplified, more frequent service between Totnes, Marldon and The Willows via Torbay Hospital.	Improved service started January 2024	Improve access from Totnes and Marldon to Torbay Hospital and shopping facilities.

<b>Sunday service 15: Bideford Town</b>	Service now operates 7 days a week	Service started in September 2023	Access to services on a Sunday
<b>Service 372 and 646 improvements: Torridge</b>	Improved service 372 extending to Holsworthy with new journeys operating Monday to Friday. Additional 646 journeys between Holsworthy and Ashwater Monday to Friday.	Improved service started September 2023	Improved journey opportunities to/from Holsworthy
<b>Service 6A improvements: Exeter - Okehampton</b>	Additional journeys introduced Monday to Saturday.	Improved service started September 2023	Improve journey opportunities from Sticklepath, Whiddon Down, Crockernwell, Cheriton Cross, and Tedburn St Mary to Exeter and Okehampton
<b>Night Bus Service – Barnstaple to Ilfracombe</b>	Night bus journeys on Saturday evenings	Services starting Summer 2024	Initiative working with Devon & Cornwall Police to provide night journeys for the summer season

### 3.2 BSIP+ Funding for 23/24 and 24/25

In addition to the original BSIP allocation, and schemes mentioned above, the County Council was allocated a further £1.7 million of revenue funding per year for the financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. This funding has been used to offset the impact of high contract & tender inflation on County Council supported services, and ensure DCC are able to maintain the current network for the duration of the funding. These supported routes provide access to essential services across the County. They have struggled following the pandemic to return to pre-covid patronage levels, which coupled with rising operating costs and inflation, put them at risk. Supporting these routes in the interim will allow further time for recovery, and extensive promotion of bus travel on these routes, will enable essential links to be maintained and to better understand longer term viability.

### 3.3 Ambitions and Proposals for 2025 and beyond

The Government recently announced additional BSIP funding for local authorities. The County Council has been awarded £5,191,416 of capital funding and £5,156,302 of revenue funding, to be spent in the financial year 2025/26. At the time of writing this report DCC have not received detailed information relating to the requirements around spending this grant. DCC have been advised that a further funding settlement will follow for a three-year period from 2026 to 2029.

Contained within the 2024 BSIP update (see Section 4 page 67-84), are detailed plans around future ambitions to improve bus services in Devon. The DfT will expect detailed costing to deliver these plans by March 2025. To deliver the total ambition set out in the BSIP would require around £90M of funding for a four year period.



Officers are currently putting together a short-term plan to deliver schemes in 2025/2026 in line with funding allocations. Although DCC are unable to share a detailed program at this stage, improvements which are achievable, subject to detailed designs and necessary approvals, have been summarised in the table below:

Area of Improvement	Proposals
<p><b>Bus network planning and improvements to bus services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain existing bus network, including previous BSIP Enhancements</li> <li>• Develop plans to increase the frequency of services on identified priority routes with an aim to increase patronage, and encourage modal shift.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bus priority on priority routes and corridors – to deliver faster and more reliable services on identified priority routes and corridors</b></p>	<p>EXETER</p> <p>To build on the delivery of schemes we have achieved with our BSIP1 funding, DCC would aim to extend the bus priority work across Exeter, to include the following corridors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topsham Road</li> <li>• Barrack Road</li> <li>• Alphington Road (incl Exe Bridges)</li> <li>• Cowley Bridge Road</li> <li>• A30 to Honiton Road</li> </ul> <p>Schemes would potentially include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intelligent Corridor Upgrades including adaptive traffic control solutions including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV and Variable Message Signs (VMS)</li> <li>• Devon’s Urban Traffic Control (UTC) System upgraded for technology-based priority systems to function across the county</li> <li>• Delivery of new and/or extension of existing bus priority lanes</li> <li>• Upgrades to all infrastructure including bus shelters, real time and printed information displays to improve passenger experience</li> </ul> <p>Should funding allow, plans to extend this technology work on priority corridors outside of Exeter may also be included, such as the A376 serving Exmouth, and the Sidmouth and Seaton bus corridors, and the A379 (Bridge Road) serving bus routes from Exminster, Starcross, Dawlish, Teignmouth, Newton Abbot, Totnes, Bovey Tracey and Ivybridge.</p> <p>BARNSTAPLE</p> <p>Linking to the schemes already delivered in Barnstaple, DCC would extend the schemes listed below to the town centre, which would greatly improve priority for buses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intelligent Corridor Upgrades including adaptive traffic</li> </ul>

Area of Improvement	Proposals
	<p>control solutions including UTC (Urban Traffic Control), CCTV and Variable Message Signs (VMS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devon's Urban Traffic Control (UTC) System upgraded for technology-based priority systems to function across the county</li> </ul> <p>OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify locations for transport interchanges and multi-modal hub opportunities</li> <li>• Increase infrastructure at existing sites eg Exeter Science Park and Park &amp; Ride sites</li> </ul> <p>RESOURCE ALLOCATION (Devon wide)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchase tools to capture before and after traffic data on BSIP schemes. This automated data capture system would reduce manual input and therefore staff time, and aid with general traffic and event/incident management.</li> <li>• Dedicated headcount resource to manage Urban Traffic Control systems, monitor intelligent corridors and mitigate the impact of roadworks and other events to keep buses moving on priority corridors.</li> </ul>
<b>Improvements to the passenger experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the delivery of high quality bus information across the county</li> <li>• Further develop the Devon Bus brand with our bus operators</li> <li>• Continue our programme to improve infrastructure at bus stops, bus stations and key interchanges (including our bus shelter replacement program and the roll out of real time information at key locations)</li> <li>• Develop more multi-modal hubs across the county</li> <li>• Promote the Bus Passenger Charter</li> <li>• Improve accessibility, inclusiveness, personal safety and security for bus users</li> </ul>
<b>Improvements to the bus fleet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue the decarbonisation of the bus fleet in Devon</li> <li>• Support Stagecoach in their delivery of the ZEBRA2 project to bring 41 Zero Emission Battery-Electric buses to Devon County Council</li> </ul>

#### 4) Options / Alternatives

Any alternative schemes, or amendments to existing schemes, have to go through the DFT's Project Adjustment Request (PAR) process. The County Council has submitted several PARs which are set out above.

Should the County Council not deliver any individual schemes the allocated funding for will have to be repaid to the DfT.

## 5) Consultations / Representations / Technical Data

As per guidance from the DfT, a high-level stakeholder consultation took place in July and August 2021, prior to the initial BSIP submission. This was sent to over 500 individuals and organisations, including County, town and parish councillors, local authority representatives, bus, community transport and rail operators, industry recognised professional bodies, other organisations representing education, health, tourism and local businesses.

Workshops for elected County Councillors were held, and through the EP there is regular ongoing discussions and representation from our bus companies.

The results from the consultation and these workshops helped officers to identify priorities when writing the BSIP.

In February 2023 the Devon BUS (Bus User and Stakeholder) Forum was launched. The Forum acts as an informal body to consider current issues and opportunities relating to all aspects of bus services across the County Council administrative area. The Forum represents the views of bus users and stakeholder across the county and provides a united voice through the invited representatives. Each of the County Council's Highways and Traffic Orders Committees (HATOC) have a representative to feed any bus related issues to and from the Forum.

All capital schemes involving work on the highways are subject to approval from local HATOC committees, and also cabinet approval following public consultation. So far four schemes have gone out to public consultation, via DCC's "Have your say" website. Links below:

[Pinhoe Rd & Honiton Road Bus Corridor Improvements](#)  
[Bus Service Improvement Plan in North Devon](#)  
[New North Road, Exeter](#)  
[New Bus Lane, Roundswell, Barnstaple](#)

## 6) Strategic Plan

The delivery of the BSIP is aligned with a range of the Strategic Plan priorities. Improving bus services across Devon provides opportunities to create a more sustainable future and improving individual's lives in Devon.

The table below summarises how the proposals would impact achievement of relevant Strategic Plan actions according to a seven-point scale, whereby -3 represents a large negative impact and +3 represents a large positive impact.

<b>Strategic Plan Priority</b>	<b>Strategic Plan Action (&amp; Alignment)</b>
Responding to the climate emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support a green recovery from COVID-19 (+2)</li><li>• Prioritise sustainable travel and transport (+3)</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage sustainable lifestyles (+3)</li> </ul>
Investing in Devon's economic recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secure investment in transport infrastructure (+2)</li> <li>Improve our highway network and improve sustainable transport options (+2)</li> <li>Deliver capital investment programs (+2)</li> </ul>
Tackle poverty and inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote services that increase resilience, self-reliance and independence (<i>our local bus network</i> +2)</li> </ul>
Help communities be safe, connected and resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable a range of transport options, including public transport (+3)</li> <li>Tackle social isolation, particularly among older, younger and disabled people, and those with a long-term illness (+1)</li> <li>Engage directly with people in meaningful ways and encourage participation in decisions that affect them (+2)</li> </ul>

## 7) Financial Considerations

DCC has received the following grants from the DFT to deliver the BSIP Schemes. Some capital schemes have also received a funding contribution from the Local Transport Plan.

Financial Year	REVENUE£	CAPITAL £	TOTAL £
2022/2023	1,279,565	1,906,000	<b>3,185,565</b>
2023/2024	2,197,573	2,840,000	<b>5,037,573</b>
2024/2025	1,769,132	4,065,000	<b>5,834,132</b>
<b>TOTAL BSIP GRANT £</b>			<b>14,057,270</b>

In addition to this, DCC has received a further amount of money for BSIP+ funding, this is revenue monies and spend is detailed in table 2 above.

Financial Year	REVENUE £	CAPITAL £	TOTAL £
2023/2024	1,677,393	0	1,677,393
2024/2025	1,677,393	0	1,677,393
<b>TOTAL BSIP+ GRANT £</b>			<b>3,354,786</b>

DCC has received notification of further BSIP funding for 2025/2026 as detailed below. However, it should be noted that we are still awaiting Terms of Reference regarding spending of these funds.

Financial Year	REVENUE £	CAPITAL £	TOTAL £
2025/2026	5,156,302	5,191,416	10,347,718
<b>TOTAL 25/26 BSIP GRANT £</b>			<b>10,347,718</b>

## 8) Legal Considerations

Subsidised local bus services in Devon are secured within the terms of Sections 89 to 92 of the Transport Act 1985 with reference to tendering, together with the Service Subsidy Agreements (Tendering) (England) Regulations 2002 which allow de minimis exemptions from tendering.

The development of the Bus Service Improvement Plan and the forming of an Enhanced Partnership is set out in the Bus Services Act 2017 plus associated guidance.

A condition of receiving the BSIP funding is that Local Authorities must not cut the levels of its own funding for subsidised local bus services.

The DfT previously mandated that Local Authorities updated their BSIPs annually. The DfT have now stated that the update for June 2025 will be deferred, pending new guidance.

## **9) Environmental Impact Considerations (Including Climate Change, Sustainability and Socio-economic)**

Reducing the need to travel is the first priority for transport in the Interim Devon Carbon Plan. The second priority is to provide access to sustainable travel and transport options for when we want and need to go further afield.

Personal travel accounts for around two thirds of all transport emissions. By improving the choices around sustainable travel, the County Council will create positive impacts to the health, resilience, safety, economics and social enjoyment of our local communities.

This BSIP provides the opportunity to shift to towards sustainable travel options such as Public Transport. The BSIP aims to make Public Transport an attractive choice while balancing the different travel requirements of our urban and deeply rural areas.

## **10) Equality Considerations**

Where relevant, in coming to a decision the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding

in relation to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).

A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

An Impact Assessment was prepared and circulated to Councillors prior to the Council's approval of the BSIP. This can be viewed on the Council's website at: [Bus Services Improvement Plan - Impact Assessment \(devon.gov.uk\)](https://www.devon.gov.uk/Bus-Services-Improvement-Plan-Impact-Assessment).

## 11) Risk Management Considerations

The following risks have been identified, along with accompanying mitigations.

**Table 3: Risk Management Considerations**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Congestion on Road Network & Increase in Road closures	HIGH	Unprecedented level of road closures and disruption of the network due to increased congestion	Lack of confidence in bus services – negative media/social media attention. Schemes are seen as not beneficial, and bus travel not a viable alternative to other forms of travel	Formation of the Bus Punctuality Group with bus operators/highways colleagues to mitigate issues. Better systems in place to manage road closures and disruption. BSIP officer role created in the Network Operations Centre
Bus network stability	MEDIUM	Withdrawal of commercial services, reduced service frequencies, more lost mileage due to driver shortages	Lack of confidence in bus services/drop in patronage figures - could result in negative media/social media attention to capital and revenue schemes	Whilst this previously was considered high risk, the network stability has increased due to a management restructure at Stagecoach SW and prudent use of the Local Transport Fund. BSIP+ is being used as a levelling up opportunity with bus services across the authority area, where there were previous commercial surrenders.
Consultation	HIGH	Objections to scheme proposals during consultation process, and through the approval of Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) approval process.	Delivery delays, further increases in design costs. Failure to deliver schemes.	Stakeholder management plan co-ordinated by area to include engagement with wider business, health and education stakeholders, including communities located outside of Exeter who are expected to benefit from the proposals,.
Resources	MEDIUM	Design resource not available to deliver capital works as per programme requirements	Increased design costs to resource external capability, delayed delivery	Pooling of resources/knowledge between DCC functions and external professional services contracts
Design	HIGH	Convergence of BSIP and LCWIP (Local Cycling & Walking Improvement Plan)	Reduced journey time/reliability benefits, loss of support from bus operators.	Sharing of LCWIP briefs with BSIP design teams from outset. LCWIP design team to liaise with BSIP design team when

		programme objectives	Potential abortive design work.	appointed. Regular engagement with EP Board/operators on design progress.
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## 12) Summary / Conclusions / Reasons for Recommendations

The County Council has made positive progress as they come towards the end of the delivery period of our initial 3-year Bus Service Improvement Plan. Focus will now switch towards future funding streams, and putting together a plan to maintain and strengthen our bus network in Devon. DCC also await announcements from Government around the new Buses Bill, including changes to the franchising process for local transport authorities. The County Council is keen to understand these opportunities, however they remain practical around the timescales and resources required to deliver franchising, and remain focused on providing the best possible outcomes for bus passengers in Devon.

Partnership work with bus operators and other key stakeholders has continued through the well-established Enhanced Partnership, and the BUS Forum provides a useful engagement platform to listen to passengers.

The County Council's continued support for the network, together with Government funding allocations and the national fare initiative, means the existing network has been largely maintained. Improvements have been introduced wherever possible. Challenges do remain, in particular the impact of high inflation, lower passenger numbers since the pandemic and congestion in urban areas. A corner has been turned, and the County Council can now continue to ensure local bus services play an important part of the transport network in Devon.

### Name

Meg Booth, Director of Climate Change, Environment and Transport

### Electoral Divisions: All

Andrea Davis, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment & Transport

## Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Background Paper

Date

File Reference

Nil

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