



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PLACES

WEDNESDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2023

Report of the Executive Director - Place

Bus Service Improvement Plan update

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the implementation work undertaken on the various elements in the Bus Service Improvement Plan over the last 12 months and the plans for future works in the next phase of the programme.

2. Information and Analysis

Background

- 2.1 On 15 March 2021, Government published the first National Bus Strategy for England. The main objective of the Strategy was to reverse the long-term decline in bus use nationally, which has been exacerbated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It aimed to achieve this by making bus services more frequent, reliable, better co-ordinated and cheaper. To enable this to happen, Government wanted to see major improvements in a variety of areas including bus priority measures, vehicle emission standards, the provision of service information, simplified ticketing arrangements and the joint marketing of services.
- 2.2 All Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) in England, such as Derbyshire County Council, had to produce a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and submit this to Government as their formal response to the National Strategy by the end of October 2021. They also needed to agree to play a larger role than they had previously done in the way bus services operated in their area by entering into either an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with their operators, or by introducing bus franchising loosely based on the London model (Transport for London (TfL)).

Derbyshire, like all the other LTAs in England, apart from Greater Manchester, agreed to enter into an EP. The purpose of the EP is to create a formal, collaborative agreement between LTAs and bus operators to deliver bus improvement objectives.

- 2.3 A considerable amount of work was undertaken to develop Derbyshire's BSIP during the summer and autumn of 2021, which involved consultation with a variety of stakeholders including members of the public, bus user groups, local businesses, borough and district councils, the Peak District National Park Authority, as well as the bus operators themselves. To oversee this work, an Enhanced Partnership Board was established. This included representatives from the Council, including the Cabinet Member - Highway Assets and Transport and the Executive Director - Place, as well as senior management from six different bus companies, which run services in Derbyshire.
- 2.4 The Board is led by an independent Chair, Professor Margaret Bell, who is a prominent academic on transport matters and former resident of Derbyshire. From this process, a set of six overarching objectives for bus provision in Derbyshire were developed. These are that bus travel should be:
- The first-choice mode for existing and new customers for most journeys across Derbyshire.
 - Available for more journeys and which grows to meet customer needs.
 - Affordable to use.
 - Environmentally sustainable.
 - Welcoming and friendly for existing and new passengers.
 - A connected network that helps reduce social isolation.
- 2.5 The BSIP, submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) at the end of October 2021, set out a series of 38 ambitious measures to achieve the above objectives and improve bus travel across Derbyshire. These included a mix of capital infrastructure improvements, such as traffic signal and road changes to improve bus reliability, and a network of transport hubs to improve connectivity between different bus services and to other forms of transport. Other measures involved enhancements to bus services, such as new routes and more Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), as well as better value ticketing options.
- 2.6 In line with DfT guidance, the BSIP programme was designed to be delivered over five years, starting in April 2022, with funding of £104.9m being sought from Government in addition to local contributions from the Council and other stakeholders. A copy of the full BSIP can be seen on the Council's public transport website at [Derbyshire BSIP – Final 29-10-21.pdf \(derbysbus.info\)](https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/transport/bsip/derbyshire-bsip-final-29-10-21.pdf)

- 2.7 Following the submission of the BSIP to Government, work to formally agree the terms of the EP began. Consultation on this was undertaken with bus operators and other stakeholders in January 2022, in line with DfT guidance. Taking account of comments received in this process, a revised version of the EP Plan and EP Scheme (both legally required documents), were produced and subsequently approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 10 March 2022 (Minute No. 66/22 refers). This formally “Made” the EP between the Council and bus operators, which began on 31 March 2022.
- 2.8 In April 2022, DfT made an announcement setting out the funding that would be available nationally to LTAs for BSIPs for the next three financial years, up until March 2025 (this was a shortening of the original timescales from five years). Of the 70 LTAs that submitted BSIPs, only 31 received indicative allocations with neighbouring authorities’ areas, such as Cheshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire and South Yorkshire, receiving nothing. Derbyshire was given an initial allocation of £47m which was the second largest amount awarded to a non-urban LTA.
- 2.9 Further discussions continued with the DfT in response to a number of specific questions raised about the proposals. As a result of this, in August 2022, the DfT provided a detailed breakdown of the measures it would fund which are shown in Table 1 below and confirmed the funding settlement as £47,003,438. However, the first year’s funding was not received from the DfT until November 2022.

Table 1 Allocated BSIP funding from 2022-23 until 2024-25

Measures	Capital Funding	Revenue Funding
Bus priority measures including traffic signal changes, improvements to the highway to remove pinch points and roadworks management.	£19.27m	£0.79m
Better value ticketing including promotional ticketing offers and reduced values for key groups.	0	£7.05m
Better bus services including transport hubs, improved timetables on existing services and new services to key locations, more DRT services. Also includes improvements to information and marketing.	£3.65m	£16.24m

Implementation

- 2.10 Since November 2022, work to implement the various measures within the BSIP, which the DfT has agreed to fund, has been gathering pace. These include:

Bus Priority Measures

- Traffic Management System (TMS) - This monitors the highway conditions from various sources and, when required, can make requests of the Urban Traffic Control (UTC) system for interventions to take place. This can vary depending on local conditions.
 - Urban Traffic Control (UTC) is a cloud-based operating system that enables monitoring or control of multiple traffic signal-controlled sites within Derbyshire. The system provides two-way communications with the Derbyshire TMS in addition to the traffic signals across the County.
 - Split Cycle and Offset Optimisation Technique (SCOOT) is an add on module of the UTC system which enables the regional control and optimisation of traffic signals in urban locations by continuously assessing traffic flows in the area and adjusting traffic signal timings as required to better suit the changing conditions.
 - Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA) is a local form of adaptive traffic signal control, similar to SCOOT, and is installed within the local traffic signal controller and applied to isolated sites. MOVA also acts as a fallback mode at sites under SCOOT control.
 - Vehicle Actuation (VA) is a less flexible method of control than either SCOOT or MOVA. VA is used as a fallback mode when SCOOT or MOVA are not available.
 - Pre-Emptive Traffic Management System (PTMS) takes near real-time traffic data and highlights intervention areas that an operator needs to assess. It is being upgraded to allow assessment of congestion related to traffic management and provide this information to the TMS system. The TMS system will then be able to relay the information to bus operators.
 - Traffic Signal Priority (TSP) utilises the bus on-board ticket machine (OBTM) to identify the vehicle location and associated position on the route versus timetable position. Once a vehicle has been identified as running late, a digital request is made active via various systems to the Derbyshire UTC system to apply traffic signal priority at junctions on the bus route network.
- 2.11 All these systems are being developed and implemented in parallel. The software and hardware on all sites on the public transport network have been assessed to identify what is required to achieve this in terms of installation/replacement/upgrade, etc.

- 2.12 The initial 120 sites requiring a mixture of either UTC, SCOOT or MOVA and TSP control requirements have been assessed, with 24 traffic signal controllers built ready for associated software configurations to be tested and installed into them.

Transport Communications and Roadworks

- 2.13 Utilising the Pre-Emptive Traffic Management System (PTMS) and Traffic Management System (TMS), the Council is developing an automatic alert system which sends information regarding roadworks or congestion to affected bus operators to notify them of where delays might occur. The modification to the TMS has been completed to allow for automated communications to be added through the strategic management within the system. The automated SMS, email communications and social media feed have been tested and proven.

2.14 Better Value Ticketing

A variety of ticketing schemes have been introduced including:

- Improvements to the Wayfarer Day rover ticket product. This includes the introduction of a bus only version of the long standing bus/rail ticket including a seven day version on a smart card.
- Improvements to the B_line young persons' concessionary scheme with a flat £1.50 single fare being introduced for any journey starting or finishing in Derbyshire and Derby including cross boundary services into other local authority areas, such as Sheffield and Nottingham.
- Free Sunday morning travel during the school summer holidays.

2.15 Better Bus Services

A large number of improvements have been made including:

- Enhancements to 21 existing commercial bus services across the County with a mixture of improved frequencies, longer operating hours and extended routes. These routes have been chosen because it is believed that these improvements will become commercially self-sustaining by the end of the BSIP and therefore will not require ongoing Council funding support.
- The introduction of an open top bus service in Ashford/ Bakewell/ Chatsworth aimed at reducing tourist car traffic in the area.
- Improvements to the Derbyshire Connect Shopping Bus service.
- 72 additional electronic Real Time Information (RTI) screens installed at stops, taking the total to 302 across the County.
- Transport hub infrastructure with the first new shelters being installed in the Long Eaton area.

- 2.16 A variety of other work has also undertaken to support these changes including:

- A series of targeted marketing campaigns.
- The development of a “Travel Derbyshire” brand.
- Introduction of Bus Champions to promote bus travel at events and to key groups, such as businesses and students.

Work Planned for the Next 12 Months

- 2.17 Projects which require physical works to be undertaken have a longer lead time than the service improvements and ticketing initiatives. As a result, the implementation of the planned bus priority measures will continue into 2024. Much of the work linked to the transport hubs scheme is also only now beginning to be delivered. A total of 18 hub sites are being delivered across the County from Hayfield in the north to Swadlincote in the south. Many of these are linked to other improvement schemes already underway, such as the Heanor Market Place Future High Street project and the Staveley and Clay Cross Town Deals. By combining BSIP money with these other sources of funding, it is anticipated that the hub programme will be able to deliver a more rounded and integrated solution at a number of locations.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Detailed consultation took place during the development of the BSIP and the EP Plan and EP Scheme. The EP Board continues to meet on a monthly basis to agree the implementation process for the BSIP and other issues. A wider BSIP Stakeholder Group has also been established which includes passenger users’ groups, other transport operators, the borough and district councils and business organisations. This group is chaired by Scott Knowles, the Chief Executive of the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce. Ongoing and ad hoc meetings are also held at the request of local interest groups, such as the Hope Valley Climate Change Group and Chesterfield and North East Bus Users Forums.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Not to implement the BSIP programme DfT has agreed to fund - the BSIP set out a programme of measures to improve bus services across Derbyshire. From these the DfT made a decision which elements it was willing to fund. Failure to implement this revised programme would mean that bus services were not improved across Derbyshire. It would also impact the Council’s ability to get funding from the DfT for future schemes including non-bus transport projects. This option was therefore not considered appropriate.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Copies of the BSIP and EP plan and scheme can be seen on the Councils website [Derbyshire BSIP – Final 29-10-21.pdf \(derbysbus.info\)](#) [Derbyshire EPP 29.03.22 - final.pdf \(derbysbus.info\)](#) and [Derbyshire EPS 29.03.22 - final.pdf \(derbysbus.info\)](#)

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- a) Notes the work undertaken to implement the various elements in the Bus Service Improvement Plan over the last 12 months.
- b) Notes the work proposed for the coming year.

9. Reasons for Recommendations

- 9.1 A considerable amount of work has been undertaken over the last 12 months to implement a variety of BSIP schemes. While there have been challenges in certain projects, particularly in relation to wider staffing and material shortages linked to the bus priority project, progress has been made in all areas of the programme.
- 9.2 Projects which require physical works do often require longer lead in times than more service related improvements. The BSIP programme has recognised this with much of the physical work on schemes such as the transport hubs being undertaken in the second year of the project.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 Derbyshire has been awarded £47m over three years through the BSIP process. Of this, £22.92m is capital funding to be spent on physical infrastructure and £24.08m is revenue funding for measures such as better value ticketing and improved bus services.
- 1.2 The Council has a total of around £38m committed revenue expenditure per annum across all transport services, such as statutory Home to School (HTS), Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND), and Adult Social Care Transport. This also includes around £10m of concessionary fare payments which is a statutory duty and £7m for local supported bus services. As part of the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme, the Council has committed to continue to provide this funding. In 2023-24, the Council is also committing £1.4m from its capital programme on public transport infrastructure schemes.

Legal

- 2.1 Section 63(1) of the Transport Act 1985 places a duty on Derbyshire Council to secure the provision of '*such passenger transport services as the Council considers appropriate to meet any public transport requirement within Derbyshire which would not, in its view, be met, apart from any action taken by them for that purpose*'.

Human Resources

- 3.1 To support the implementation of the BSIP and EP, extra staffing resources from external consultancies have been employed using funding from the programme. The implementation of the various measures in the BSIP are being overseen by a Programme Manager with various Project Managers taking the lead on the many work streams.

Information Technology

- 4.1 There are no direct information technology implications to this report.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Bus services are particularly important to a variety of disadvantaged groups, such as young people, older people, women, and those from economically deprived communities, all of which make a higher proportion of journeys by bus than the population as a whole. The

introduction of the measures associated with the BSIP will not only enhance the quality of bus services available but will support the Council's wider 'levelling up' agenda across all communities and ambitions for driving 'good growth'. It will particularly improve the opportunity for these people to access a variety of key opportunities, such as education, employment and health care provision.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 This proposal is helping deliver the following Council Plan priorities: Resilient, Healthy and Safe Communities; High Performing, Value for Money and Resident-Focused Services; A Prosperous and Green Derbyshire. Specifically, creation of an EP and the associated BSIP will also enable the delivery of Place Directorate priorities around sustainable transport and travel.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 7.1 None.