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West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan

Progress Report: December 2023



**WEST OF
ENGLAND**
Combined Authority

 **North
Somerset
Council**

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1 Introduction

This West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was jointly produced in October 2021 by the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council, in their role as Local Transport Authorities, to meet the objectives set out in the National Bus Strategy. It is both a strategy document and key component of our bid to Government for funding to support its delivery. More details can be found at:

www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/bus-service-improvement-plan/

n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/parking-travel-roads/transport-travel/bus-travel/bus-service-improvement-plan

In November 2022, BSIP funding to support delivery against the plan was confirmed by Government and the first year of the three-year allocation received in February 2023. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for more information on BSIP and other funding programmes contributing towards the BSIP objectives.

1.1 Purpose of report

A condition of the BSIP funding is to publish progress against BSIP Targets as well as delivery against the plan every 6 months. Following the re-published BSIP in December 2022¹, and first 6-monthly progress report in July 2023, this is now the second BSIP progress report.

1.2 Delivery highlights

Highlights from delivery against the plan across the West of England include:

- We have invested around £4m in bus fares so far, with the majority contributing to capping and simplifying fares by introducing: a standard £1 child single across the West of England region; a £2 adult single fare across the urban areas of Bristol and Bath in partnership with operators and; a 43% reduction to adult single fares outside of Bristol and Bath. Since January 2023, this offer has worked in conjunction with the national £2 adult single offer and brought the overall fare reduction in rural areas since September 2022 to around 70%.
- We have delivered free travel offers including the Birthday Bus initiative that offers residents of the West of England free travel in the month of their birthday. Around 283,728 journeys have been made to date with indications that new users are being

¹ The next refresh of the BSIP was due in December 2023, but is postponed at the request of the Department for Transport (DfT), while they prepare further guidance on these reviews going forward.

attracted to the bus. Free travel has also been offered to young people leaving the care system, with feedback that the offer will be transformative for users.

- We have invested upwards of £3m in enhanced services so far, increasing the frequency of services on the following routes: 172 (Bath - Paulton - Bristol); m2 (Long Ashton P&R - Centre); T1 (Thornbury - Bristol); X1 (Weston-super-Mare - Bristol); X4 (Portishead - Bristol); 6 (Weston-super-Mare - Milton - Worle); 9 (Worlebury to Worle); 10 (Weston-super-Mare town - Hutton via the hospital). Bus operators have invested in enhancements of their own across a number of services.
- We have invested in *WESTlink*, an innovative demand responsive transport trial designed to take passengers from areas less well served by buses and connect them to key bus corridors. Its operation is under review and will be refined to better meet objectives.
- We have delivered bus lanes on the Long Ashton Bypass, the A370 at Brockley Combe easing traffic to and from Bristol International Airport and on the A369 at Beggar Bush Lane, where smart traffic lights have also been installed to detect and prioritise buses.

2 Progress against BSIP targets

2.1 Bus Service Improvement Plan Targets

While passenger growth is the overriding objective of the Government's strategy and the resulting West of England BSIP, the plan sets out five key targets:

- **Bus journey time:** Reduce average bus journey times on designated corridors by 2% by 2025 and by 10% by 2030
- **Punctuality:** Achieve 95% of services running on time, defined as being no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late, by 2030
- **Single Passenger Journeys:** Return to pre-pandemic patronage levels by 2025 and grow patronage by at least 24% from that level by 2030
- **Passenger Satisfaction:** Increase passenger satisfaction to 89% for 2025 and 95% for 2030
- **Bus decarbonisation:** By the end of 2023 all buses operating in BSIP area will meet the Euro VI emission standard. By 2030, at least 75% of the local fleet will be either zero-emission or ultra-low emission and by 2035 all buses will be zero-emission buses (ZEBs). Subject to securing funding and working with bus operators to accelerate plans, our ambition is to bring the ZEB ambition forward to 2030.

2.2 Baseline data

The pre-pandemic situation informs the baseline in the BSIP, using data from 2019-20 as an indicator of pre-pandemic performance, where available².

Bus use in the BSIP area (see map in [Appendix B](#)) had grown consistently over the fifteen years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with bus journeys per head 18% behind the average across other metropolitan areas in 2019-20 (down from 36% in 2014-15).

The pandemic caused a large shift in bus passenger habits, with patronage dipping to 12% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2020-21 and 33% for that year overall.

² 2018-19 is used as the baseline where 2019-20 data is unavailable.

2.3 Overview of progress against targets

Table 1 - Overview of progress against BSIP Targets

	2018/2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024 (Q1/Q2)	Target 2024-2025
Journey time³ (minutes)	61	*63	No data	55	56	63	62
Reliability (% buses arriving between 1 minute early and 5 minutes late) ⁴	*77%	N/A	74%	71%	67%	71.2%	82%
Passenger numbers (single passenger trips, millions)	-	*70.2m	22.5m	46.8m	55.3m	29.1m ⁵ (6 months)	70m
Passenger satisfaction⁶ (% respondents rating their overall satisfaction with the bus service as 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied')	85%	*86%	No data	No data	78%	81%	89%
Bus fleet decarbonisation (% buses Euro VI)	No data	No data	48.2%	88.6%	96%	98% ⁷	100%
(% zero emissions buses (ZEBs) by 2035) ⁸	No data	No data	0%	0%	3.6%	4.4%	N/A

*Baseline

³ Data up to 2023-24 Q2 is April to April comparison. Q3/Q4 data (previous full years) is October to October.

⁴ Cancelled buses are recorded as not having met the punctuality performance indicator.

⁵ Data for 2023-24 is for Q1 and Q2 only. Previous figures cover four quarters. This amounts to 85% pro rata.

⁶ Data for 2022/23 consists of surveys undertaken 30 January to 26 March 2023. Data for 2023/24 consists of surveys undertaken 27 March – 13 August 2023.

⁷ Survey responses from majority of operators; returns not yet received from all operators.

⁸ Our BSIP sets an interim aim to deliver 150 ZEBs by 2025. A bid is being developed that could deliver up to 100 ZEBs if successful, adding to the 30 in circulation on one route.

Timetables are currently used to measure average **journey times** along key corridors. The April 2023 - September 2023 timetables (Q1 - Q2) gave an average of 63 minutes, while the October 2023 - March 2024 timetables (Q3 - Q4 yet to be completed), shows an average of 61 minutes.

While this shows the target has been reached, the journey time has actually increased since the previous financial year. However, this is not unexpected as travel patterns are still shifting as we continue to emerge from the pandemic.

Reliability had been on a downward trajectory but was showing signs of recovery, with 71.2% measured in the first half of 2023/24. Initial data for the third quarter shows that this has declined again to 70.3%.

Until bus corridor schemes are delivered and other factors affecting punctuality better addressed by the Enhanced Partnership, progress on journey times and reliability is expected to be slow.

Bus usage has steadily recovered since the pandemic, with **passenger numbers** returning to 85% of pre-pandemic levels in the second quarter of 2023/24. The rise is steady despite the region having lost circa 25 supported bus services and six commercial services in April 2023 and patronage figures not including journeys made through the WESTlink demand responsive service, introduced at the same time.

Passenger satisfaction levels had declined significantly since the 2019 Transport Focus survey, but have begun to recover in the first two quarters of 2023/24. At 81%, satisfaction levels in the West of England are in the middle of the worst and best performing areas nationally⁹. A rise in satisfaction with the punctuality of services can be observed since the April 2023 service changes.

The first **decarbonisation** target set in the BSIP, whereby all buses meet the Euro VI emissions standard by the end of 2023, has almost been reached. There is still a way to go to meet the 100% ultra-low and zero emission bus target for 2035.

Please refer to [Appendix C](#) for data sources and measurement approach.

⁹ Your Bus Journey, Interim Report (Transport Focus, September 2023)

2.4 External factors affecting targets

Progress against the targets is, in part, influenced by initiatives delivered through the BSIP and other funding programmes designed to deliver better bus outcomes. Delivery against the initiatives in the BSIP is reported in [Section 3](#). External factors also influencing progress against the targets are summarised below.

Since the pandemic, a key factor affecting the ability of bus operators to deliver reliable services that encourage higher passenger numbers has been a chronic **shortage of bus drivers**. Significant progress has been made towards recruiting, training and retaining drivers with over 100 drivers in training and turnover stabilising at 10% this summer. The transport authorities have supported this with BSIP funding.

High streets and tourist attractions in the West of England are now showing relatively strong signs of recovery despite store closures in city centres. While parking prices have generally risen in central shopping areas, helping to encourage travel by other means, some outer shopping districts continue to offer low or free parking.

The West of England's **population** is growing faster than the national average and has a relatively high proportion of people aged 15-40. This age group may be more likely to transition to digital shopping than other age groups, but is also more likely to travel for leisure. While the overall population in the region is ageing, the population of Bristol is not: the city retains many young people leaving higher education, while this is not the case in Bath.

Research by Transport Focus into concessionary bus pass holders shows that the **legacy of the pandemic** has left a lasting impact on bus usage among older people across the UK¹⁰. It is not clear how long these impacts will persist. In a survey undertaken in May/June 2023 11% agreed that, due to coronavirus, they will never again feel comfortable using buses. This has reduced from 18% in May/June 2022. Sixty-six percent said they had reduced their bus usage compared to before the pandemic, and this was for a variety of reasons.

Of those reducing trips, 69% said they made fewer journeys for days out or for leisure trips, 56% said that they are now getting shopping delivered or shopping online, 49% said they felt less safe using bus than using other forms of transport, while 44% made fewer shopping trips. Other reasons included having less money to spend, shops they want to visit being closed, and reduced service levels/reliability of the bus services.

Unemployment in the West of England is at 2.3%, significantly lower than the national average, but there had been a **general decline in commuting trips** by all modes between Census 2011 and Census 2021, with working from home becoming more prevalent. 35% of people in the whole region worked from home in 2021, with a slightly lower proportion in North Somerset of 31%. Commuting is expected to increase, even if

¹⁰ [Getting free pass holders back on buses - Transport Focus \(July 2023\)](#)

not to pre-pandemic levels.

Rising costs nationally have created a cost-of-living crisis for citizens but also put businesses and publicly funded services under pressure, with 2022-23 levels of revenue support from constituent Local Authorities for non-commercial bus services able to support a fraction of the services previously run. As a result, 25 supported bus services were lost across the West of England Combined Authority area from April 2023 as well as six commercial services. Losses to supported services were felt in North Somerset in late 2022.

The principal **bus operator** in the BSIP and EP Area is First Bus, which operates around 90% of total bus service mileage. As of September 2023, 15 other bus operators were operating services open to the public locally alongside four operators servicing schools and events only and three long-distance coach operators, some of whose services are partly registered as local bus services.

3 Progress against BSIP Delivery Plans

The BSIP included 10 Delivery Plans, A-J, with initiatives under each. The corresponding tables below summarise progress against these initiatives. **Those funded, or part-funded, through the BSIP award from Government are marked with an asterisk*¹¹.** Please refer to footnotes for details of other funding sources, where applicable.

Key

Green	Delivery
Amber	Planning
Red	Not started

A - Intensive Services

BSIP Initiative	Measure	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
A1 - Ambitions to deliver a high frequency, accessible bus network	*Enhanced Services	April 2023 September 2023	March 2025 ¹²	Delivery
	Please refer to Appendix E for the full list of enhancements to existing bus services.			

B - Bus priority

BSIP Initiative	Scheme	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
B1 - High priority corridors where significant separation / priority can be delivered	Portway Strategic Corridor	October 2025	February 2027	Planning
	Bristol City Centre Project (Now incl. A370 Long Ashton)	September 2024	March 2027 ¹³	Planning
	M32	September 2025	June 2027	Planning

¹¹ See [Appendix A](#) for a summary of the currently agreed funding allocations per BSIP Delivery Plan.

¹² Possibility of extension to March 2026.

¹³ Some facilities delivered earlier.

	Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor (BBSC): Keynsham to Bath	October 2025	March 2027	Planning
	BBSC Emery Road to Keynsham (Incl. Mobility Hub)	October 2025	March 2027	Planning
	Bath City Centre	November 2025	December 2026	Planning
B2: High priority investment corridors	*A370 - Weston-super-Mare (WsM) to Long Ashton Park and Ride (P&R)	March 2023	March 2025	Delivery
	*A38S - WsM to Bristol via Bristol International Airport (BIA)	April 2023	September 2025	Delivery
	*A369 - Portishead to Bristol	July 2023	September 2025	Delivery
	*WsM - centre of town flow	January 2024	September 2025	Planning
	*Clevedon	July 2024	March 2025	Planning
	Stockwood to Cribbs Causeway	October 2024	March 2027	Delivery / Planning
	BBSC Bristol - Emery Road ¹⁴	December 2025	March 2027	Planning
	A38S Bristol to Hengrove Metrobus extension / Bedminster Green Highway Improvements	November 2022	December 2025	Planning
	A38N Thornbury to North Bristol Sustainable Transport Corridor	November 2024	December 2026	Planning
	A432 Chipping Sodbury to Hambrook Sustainable Transport Corridor	January 2025	March 2027	Planning

¹⁴ Package A to be delivered within CRSTS timeframes (by March 2027). This excludes the originally proposed segregated route. Public engagement/consultation will inform delivery of a future phase – subject to funding and decision.

	A37 / A367 Somer Valley to Bath Sustainable Transport Corridor	September 2025	November 2026	Planning
B3: Medium to longer-term priority investment corridors	*Wsm centre and links	January 2024	September 2025	Planning
	*Portishead centre and links	January 2024	September 2025	Planning
	*Clevedon and surroundings	January 2024	September 2025	Planning
	*Yatton centre and links	January 2024	September 2025	Planning
	*Nailsea and Backwell centre and links	January 2024	September 2025	Planning
	*Other suburban and rural areas	January 2024	September 2025	Planning
B4: Rural and suburban route investment	*Worle centre	January 2025	September 2025	Planning

Public consultations for West of England Combined Authority corridor schemes can be accessed here <https://haveyoursaywest.co.uk/> and here for North Somerset Council schemes: <https://n-somerset.inconsult.uk/>

C - Fares

BSIP Initiative	Measure	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
C1-C2 - Fares reductions, discounts and simplification package	*Fares Package 1 (£2 fares)	September 2022	March 2025	Delivery
	£2 single and 2-trip fares cap (delivered before national scheme).			
	*Fares Package 2 (free travel): Birthday month	July 2023	July 2024	Delivery
	One month free travel on your Birthday - new initiative to encourage more people onto the bus.			
	*Fares Package	October 2023	March 2025	Delivery

	2 (free travel): Care leavers			
	Free travel to young people leaving the care system.			
	Fares package 3 (TBC)	TBC	March 2025	Planning
C3 - Review of discounts for jobseekers', apprentice, free travel before 0900 for disabled people	*Investigate jobseekers' / apprentice discounts	October 2023	December 2023	Planning
	*Free travel before 0900 for disabled people (TBC)	TBC	March 2025	Planning

D - Integrated ticketing

BSIP Initiative	Scheme	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
D1 - Supporting the transition to digital ticketing	*PAYG - individual operator adult tickets ¹⁵ (Phase 1)	January 2022	March 2024	Delivery
	Installation of tap out readers on all buses to enable single operator tap-on-tap-off capping. Ongoing requirement written into Enhanced Partnership Scheme.			
	Single mobile platform ¹⁶	April 2022	August 2024	Delivery
	Future Transport Zone (FTZ) Mobility as a Service (MaaS) project to integrate the ticketing of various modes of transport into a single platform.			
D2 - Supporting multi-operator ticketing as the norm	*New / expanded range of multi-operator tickets	September 2022	November 2022	Delivered
	Rider tickets for West of England area (AvonRider), Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare areas. ¹⁷			
	*Multi-operator	September	March 2024	Delivery

¹⁵ BSIP funded in North Somerset area and CRSTS funded in Combined Authority area.

¹⁶ Mobility as a Service (MaaS) project under the Future Transport Zone (FTZ) Programme led by the West of England Combined Authority.

¹⁷ Agreed through the West of England Bus Operators' Association (WEBOA) and written into the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.

	tickets on smartphone and smartcard/ fulfil tickets on smartphone and scan tickets on bus	2022		
	Multi-operator ticketing available on mobile devices and actively promoted by operators.			
	*PAYG - multi-operator adult tickets ¹⁸ (Phase 2)	April 2024	March 2025	Not started
	Expansion of D1 initiative to include multi-operator fare capping. ¹⁹			
	*PAYG - multi operator youth/discounted (Phase 3)	August 2024	March 2025	Not started
	Development of approach delivered through BSIP in conjunction with tap-on-tap-off functionality and the FTZ Mobility as a Service (MaaS) project.			
D3 - Supporting multi-modal ticketing integration	Multi-modal Pay-As-You-Go and mobile/smartphone ²⁰	July 2023	August 2024	Delivery
	FTZ Mobility as a Service (MaaS) project to integrate the ticketing of various modes into a single platform.			
	*Support to integrate bus and rail platforms to deliver multi-modal contactless capping	August 2024	March 2025	Not started
	Work with Mobility as a Service (MaaS) project to integrate the ticketing of various modes into a single platform working with different mode providers.			

¹⁸ BSIP funded in North Somerset area and CRSTS funded in Combined Authority area.

¹⁹ Dependent on Transport for West Midlands / Project Coral delivery and CRSTS funding. Not reliant on MaaS project.

²⁰ Funded under the Future Transport Zone Programme, led by the West of England Combined Authority

E - Integrated services

BSIP Initiative	Scheme	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
E1 - Transport Hubs and Wider Environment	*Transport hubs / Multi Modal hubs and interchanges (NSC - BSIP)	September 2023	September 2025	Planning
	New mobility hubs planned for Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead with upgrades to Worle hub. Smaller hubs under consideration for select villages.			
	Transport Mobility Hubs (Future Transport Zone) ²¹	May 2021	Summer 2024 (construction) September 2025 (Evaluation)	Planning
	Delivery of 11 trial Mobility Hubs in North Bristol and southern areas of South Gloucestershire, including UWE, Southmead Hospital, Portway P&R, and Lyde Green P&R, as well as Filton Avenue, Rodingleaze and Gainsborough Square.			
	Transport Mobility Hubs (CRSTS Corridors)	September 2025 (earliest construction)	March 2027 ²²	Planning
	Mobility Hubs being considered on the Bristol to Bath Strategic Corridor at sites in Keynsham and Hicks Gate as well as on the Somer Valley Links corridor. ²³			
E2 - Enhancement of bus stops	*Info displays at bus stops (where none) ²⁴	TBC	August 2024	Planning
	Information displays or means to link to online information at all bus stops except alighting points.			
	Bus stop guidance	October 2022	July 2023 ²⁵	Finalisation
Establish guidance on standards for bus stops to be implemented,				

²¹ Funded under the Future Transport Zone Programme, led by the West of England Combined Authority

²² Somer Valley Mobility Hubs expected to complete by November 2026.

²³ Potential hub locations include Pensford, Temple Clous, Farrington Gurney, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Peasedown St John, Odd Down Park & Ride Bath Bear Flat.

²⁴ BSIP funded under the Delivery Plan F allocation – Single Integrated System.

²⁵ To be updated with agreed Transport brand

	where practical, as part of planned corridor improvements.			
E3 - Roadworks co-ordination	Process for informing operators	April 2020	April 2021 ²⁶ September 2023	Delivered / BAU
	Implement disruptions management tool, refine processes and write into the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.			
E4 - Interaction between bus services and other modes	MetroWest Stations	July 2022	March 2028	Delivery/ Planning
	The West of England Combined Authority are delivering seven new rail stations across the West of England. Integration with bus infrastructure is being considered within the design phase, including wayfinding and introduction of bus stops where none. ³¹ One new station is operational, and was built at the Portway Park & Ride Bus site.			
	Transport Mobility Hubs	As above	As above	Planning
	Mobility Hubs are located along key bus stops, at key bus interchanges or on high streets, supporting multimodal, sustainable journeys to these destinations, as well as interchange at them. Wayfinding to encourage multimodal trips.			

F - Single integrated system

BSIP Initiative	Scheme	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
F1: Brand identity ²⁷	*Develop brand	July 2023	November 2023 ²⁸	Finalisation
	Develop a common brand for the West of England public transport network in line with Initiative F1 in the BSIP.			
	Brand roll-out	January 2024	March 2025	Planning
	Roll out brand on bus infrastructure and buses in line with commitments in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.			
F2: Marketing, promotion, and communications	*Marketing campaign to encourage bus travel	January 2024	March 2025	Planning
	Communications/marketing for existing, new or enhanced			

²⁶ One-Network management tool implemented.

²⁷ Funded from multiple funding streams: BSIP, CRSTS and Future Transport Zone programmes.

²⁸ Enhanced Partnership commits to agreeing the brand by 31 October 2023.

	services; addressing underperforming routes/corridors; aiming to increase passengers on enhanced services so they can run commercially in the long term; promotion to specific user groups.			
	*Promote travel to key destinations	April 2023	March 2025	Planning
	Working with key health providers and tourist attractions to increase bus travel to those destinations.			
	*Enhanced social media	September 2023	March 2025	Planning
	Targeted social media activity to promote fares offers and bus travel in general.			
	*Promote fares packages	September 2022	March 2025	Delivery / planning
	Promotion of fares initiatives including £2 single, Birthday Bus Pass, free travel for care leavers aged 18-21, and future fares packages.			
F3: Travel guides and journey planning	*Public transport guides	2021	March 2025 / ongoing	Delivered ²⁹ / Planning
	Develop, deliver and maintain a series of public transport guides covering the EP Area, in both digital and paper formats, including a series of local area timetable books.			
	*Develop Travelwest website further	July 2023	March 2025	Delivery / Planning ³⁰
	Enhance website in line with section F3 in the BSIP. Subject to change to align with the new transport brand and other projects such as Mobility as a Service (MaaS).			
F4: Within journey information	*Assist Bus Operators to transition to electronic TransXChange files for bus registrations	September 2022	May 2023	Delivered / BAU
	West of England Bus Registrations Authority (WEBRA) support to use the new system / create the files for the smallest operators.			
	*Support operators to	September 2023	March 2025	Planning / Delivery

²⁹ Materials upgraded September 2023

³⁰ Delivered several usability improvements, with major improvements in development and to be released in the coming months.

	participate in Real Time Information (RTI) system			
	Provision of training.			
	*Enhancements to RTI	September 2023	March 2025	Delivery
	Improve the functioning of RTI in line with section F4 of the BSIP. More reliable info through better integration with operator IT systems. Dedicated customer agent function to improve live updates on issues affecting travel.			
F5: Providing network stability ³¹	*Change dates	September 2022	September 2023	Delivered
	Enshrine two service change dates per year into the Enhanced Partnership Scheme (April and late August/early September) for major changes.			
	*Local Bus Service Registrations	September 2022	May 2023	Delivered ³²
	Bring registrations of bus services into the remit of the West of England Combined Authority, with a view to actively managing punctuality and delivering process efficiencies.			

G - Modern buses

BSIP Initiative	Scheme	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
G1: Investment in Zero Emission Buses (ZEBs)	Develop fleet decarbonisation plan	February 2023	October 2023 ³³	Planning
	Work with operators to develop a plan to decarbonise buses by 2035, including consideration of depot infrastructure.			
	Deliver 150 ZEBs by 2027 ³⁴	February 2023	March 2027	Planning
	Work with operators to apply for funding to support roll-out of ZEBs.			

³¹ Part BSIP-funded through allocations for staffing, consultancy and the general F-Integrated System allocation.

³² West of England Bus Registrations Authority (WEBRA) and associated registrations software and process now live.

³³ New date TBC

³⁴ Subject to funding. Bid for ZEBRA funding underway, with the potential to convert circa 100 West of England buses

G2: Retrofitting vehicles to a minimum level	Euro VI standard	February 2023	December 2023	Delivery
	Get all local buses up to Euro VI or equivalent emission standard by retrofitting or retiring/replacing the most polluting vehicles. Operator commitment included in Enhanced Partnership Scheme.			
G3: Enhanced passenger environment	Audio and visual announcements	February 2023	Phased: April 2025 to October 2026	Delivery
	Operators to deliver audio visual announcements on all buses as committed in the Enhanced Partnership Scheme - now reflecting timelines in UK legislation ³⁵ .			
	AVL, heating and cooling	February 2023	December 2023	Delivery
	All buses equipped with AVL equipment to support RTI, as well as heating and cooling for customer comfort.			
	Enhanced bus features	February 2023	TBC	Not started ³⁶
	Equip buses with CCTV (internal and external), WiFi, USB charging (including at wheelchair spaces), display of onward connection details, leaflet holders.			

H - Passenger voice

BSIP Initiative	Scheme	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
H1: Bus Passenger Charter	*Adopt Bus Passenger Charter	October 2022	September 2023	Delivered
	Adopt a charter setting out commitments by the local authorities bus operators, and expectations of bus users.			
	*Implement Bus Passenger Charter	October 2023	March 2025	Planning
	Promote the charter, review and update commitments annually, informed by workstreams on areas for improvement.			
H2: Improving bus passenger safety	*Bus Passenger Safety Audit	October 2023	January 2024	Planning
	Undertake a Bus Passenger Safety Audit, establishing a template			

³⁵ Reflecting The Public Service Vehicles (Accessible Information) Regulations 2023, in force from October 2023, except in the case of supported bus services, where implementation is required earlier (April 2025).

³⁶ Provided on some buses. Enhanced Partnership Scheme commits operators to 'consider' the provision of these features.

	for conducting future audits. The audit will be conducted in consultation with the police / relevant stakeholders.			
	*Implement safety approach	January 2024	March 2025	Many/TBC ³⁷
	Deliver key safety recommendations outlined in the Bus Passenger Safety Audit report and outlined in Initiative H2 in the BSIP, subject to funding where none.			
Public engagement (NEW)	*Public engagement mechanism	May 2023	March 2025	Planning
	Develop and implement approach to capturing public views on local bus issues to feed into the EP process, as well as back to citizens. Complementary to existing Bus User Forum, managed by political leaders at the LTAs, and other statutory consultation processes.			

I - Non-intensive services

BSIP Initiative	Scheme	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
I1: Community and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Strategy	*Develop DRT service	January 2023	March 2023	Delivered
	Develop and innovative DRT service to take passengers from areas served less well by buses and connect them to key bus corridors. <i>WESTlink</i> service live.			
	*Operate and refine DRT service	April 2023	March 2025 ³⁸	Delivery
	Review and refine the DRT service while in operation. ³⁹			
	*Support new community bus services	April 2023	March 2025	Planning
	Develop and deliver a community bus scheme, <i>WESTLocal</i> , allowing for service gaps to be filled by the local community.			
I2: Dynamic Demand Responsive	Future Transport Zone	April 2023	April 2024	Delivery

³⁷ Some activities delivered through other BSIP initiatives, others are not currently funded or actioned.

³⁸ Possibility of extension to March 2026.

³⁹ *WESTlink* is facing a number of operational issues and is being reviewed and refined to better serve the needs of residents and the objective of feeding passengers into bus corridors.

Transport (DDRT) trial	DDRT Trial ⁴⁰			
	Trial DDRT as an alternative public transport, particularly where traditional modes do not offer a viable option or service.			
I3: Supported services and COVID recovery	*Supported services	April 2023 September 2023	March 2025 ⁴¹	Delivery
	Fund non-commercial services to run more regularly or widen hours of operations, with an aim to shift these services to a commercial basis. Please see Appendix F for BSIP-supported services.			
	*AssessWEST	December 2023	May 2024	Planning
	Transport planning project designed to optimise the future bus network, including connections to other modes of transport - informing future decision making on bus services and infrastructure.			

J - Longer-term

BSIP Initiative	Scheme	Start date	End date (subject to revision)	Status
J1: Joint Local Transport Plan (JLTP4)	JLTP4 Update	Nov 2023	Summer 2024 ⁴²	Planning
	Update or replace JLTP4 to take account of the carbon emergency declarations made by local councils to deliver a carbon neutral transport network by 2030.			
J2: West of England (WofE) Bus Strategy	WofE Bus Strategy	June 2020	October 2021	Delivered
	Follow strategy. Now being delivered through BSIP.			
J3: Planning policy	Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)	TBC	2022	Paused ⁴³
	Develop an SDS to consider how to accommodate housing and employment growth over the next years across the region.			
J4: Future Transport Zone	FTZ Programme	July 2020	December 2025 ⁴⁴	Delivery
	Deliver and evaluate an innovative programme of projects that			

⁴⁰ Future Transport Zone (FTZ) project led by the West of England Combined Authority and integrated into the WESTlink service.

⁴¹ Possibility of extension to March 2026.

⁴² Spring 2024 indicated in BSIP likely to be deferred as DfT guidance is still outstanding. Dialogue underway with DfT to clarify deliverable required for Summer 2024 and relationship with CRSTS2 (provisional allocation since announced).

⁴³ More info here: <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-housing/spatial-development-strategy/>

⁴⁴ Extended from March 2024.

(FTZ)	support BSIP objectives and are referenced throughout the Delivery Plans ⁴⁵ with the addition of a Transport Data Hub to support efficient and effective transport operations.			
J5: Key Route Network (KRN)	Define Key Route Network	2018	Until replaced	Delivered
	Use KRN when developing future network approaches and considering investment in infrastructure. Awaiting confirmation of Power of Direction for Metro Mayors on KRN routes.			

⁴⁵ Mobility Hubs (E1); Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) (D1, D3); Dynamic Demand-Responsive Transport (I2)

Appendix A - Funding

BSIP funding

The proposed programme of works outlined in the BSIP was costed at more than £1bn.

In November 2022, the Department for Transport confirmed it would provide a total of £105m for the delivery of the West of England BSIP. This is broken down into £57.5m of revenue for both transport authorities, equivalent of 38% of the revenue bid, and £48m capital funding for North Somerset Council. This was the second highest award in the country.

The BSIP funding covers the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25 and required the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme to be made for the release of Year 1 BSIP funding. The first year's allocation (2022-23) was received in late February 2023.

Table 2 - BSIP funding allocations per Delivery Plan

Delivery Plan	Total BSIP Revenue to 2025 (joint)	Total BSIP Capital to 2025 (NSC)
Delivery Plan A - A1: Ambitions to deliver a high frequency, accessible bus network	£10,918,000	£0
Delivery Plan B - Bus priority	£0	£35,160,000
Delivery Plan C - C1-C3 (Fares)	£21,986,857	£0
Delivery Plan D - D1, D2, D3 (Integrated Ticketing)	£110,000	£70,000
Delivery Plan E - E1: Integrated Services (Mobility Hubs)	£0	£12,753,000
Delivery Plan F - F1-F4 (Single Integrated System)	£6,402,312	£0
Delivery Plan G - Modern Buses	£0	£0
Delivery Plan H - H1-H2 (Passenger Voice)	£80,000	£0
Delivery Plan I - I1, I3: Non-intensive services (DRT, Supported Services)	£13,783,397	£0
Delivery Plan J (Longer-term)	£0	£0
Delivery (including EP & consultancy)	£3,769,932	£0
Skills training for drivers and engineers	£155,000	£0
Monitoring and evaluation	300,000	
TOTAL	£57,505,498	£47,983,000

The allocations in Table 2 were amended with the support of the DfT in response to factors such as the condensed delivery timeframe as well as market limitations.

These financial allocations are subject to further change in response to the delivery and performance of initiatives over the course of the programme and outcomes of a recent value for money evaluation of the BSIP funding allocations.

Value for money evaluation

In September 2023, KPMG finalised a report assessing the relative value for money of the BSIP Programme's main initiatives (Fares; Enhanced Services; Demand Responsive Transport; Passenger Experience; New supported services) for consideration by the West of England Combined Authority Committee in October 2023.

This report includes an assessment of the performance of these initiatives where data is already available and can be assessed here:

[BSIP Prioritisation: Final Report \(23 September 2023\)](#)

Other funding

A programme of improvements to key bus corridors in the West of England Combined Authority area is summarised in the BSIP but funded under the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme.

Innovative bus infrastructure and services are also being delivered through the Future Transport Zone allocation from Government to the Combined Authority.

BSIP initiatives such as the modernisation of buses are not currently funded, with Bus Operators investing in their fleet to meet standards set through the Enhanced Partnership for buses.

BSIP Timeframes

The West of England BSIP covers the period up to 2030, with delivery in two phases:

- Phase 1: up to 2027 (funded)⁴⁶
- Phase 2: from 2027 onwards (dependent on future funding).

Delivery of Phase 2 will depend on the availability of future streams of funding and further commitment to invest from bus operators.

⁴⁶ Delivery of the first phase relies on the release of BSIP funding on an annual basis up to March 2025, as well as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) - for capital expenditure in the West of England Combined Authority area. CRSTS funding covers the period from 2022-23 to 2026-27.

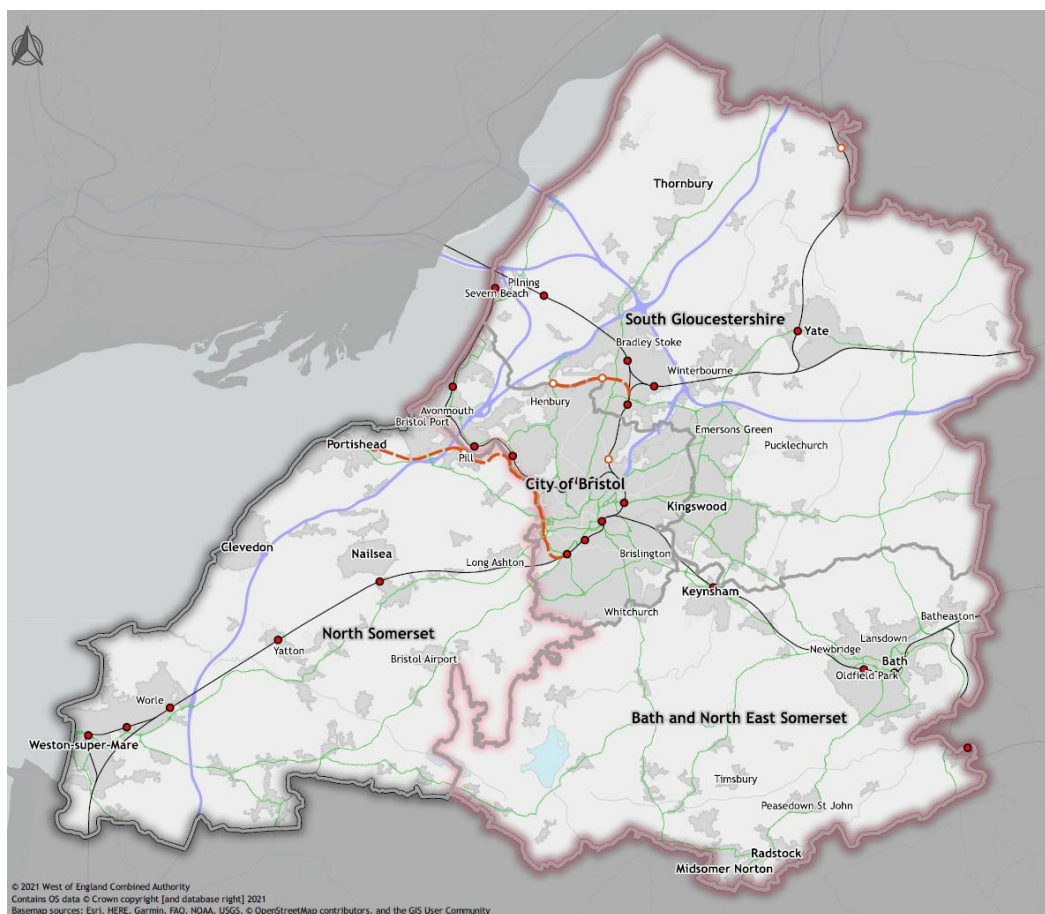
Delivery of both phases will also depend on organic growth as the local bus market recovers from the pandemic, adjusts to changes in lifestyles and takes advantage of new funding opportunities to meet the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy.

Appendix B - Geographical area covered by the BSIP

The area covered by the West of England BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership Scheme consists of the combined areas of the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council.

Over 1 million people live in the region, including Bath, Bristol, Chipping Sodbury, Clevedon, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Nailsea, Portishead, Radstock, Thornbury, Weston-super-Mare, Yate and the surrounding rural areas. A map of the geographical area is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1- Geographical area covered by the BSIP



Travel patterns in the region are based predominantly around the wider Bristol Travel-to-Work area and this aligns well with the two partner authorities' outer boundaries. The principal local bus operator - First West of England Ltd (trading as First Bus) - covers the whole of this area, with some overlap into Somerset and Wiltshire. Apart from the Weston-super-Mare town network, most bus services from North Somerset run into the West of England Combined Authority area.

Appendix C - Data sources and approach

Journey times

A representative sample of bus journey times for journeys on key corridors is sourced from registered timetables, and the average journey time calculated across the region. April and October timetables are monitored to calculate the average.

Punctuality / Reliability

Punctuality is measured using schedule adherence reports from our real-time information system (RTI).

- The data covers non-frequent⁴⁷ services as these are the majority of services (e.g. 100% of services are non-frequent in Bristol)
- From April 2022 intermediate timing points⁴⁸ are measured in addition to key timing points. This covers roughly 90% of bus operating mileage in the area and will be expanded to cover 100% of mileage
- This punctuality data includes services that are cancelled on the day as well as buses that are early or late. This data is sometimes referred to as ‘reliability’ data
- Analyse Bus Open Data (ABODS)⁴⁹ will be reviewed and considered in future evaluations. Currently it covers approximately 60% of services, while the RTI data covers approximately 85% of services.

Passenger numbers

Patronage data is recorded as individual journeys by electronic ticket machines (ETMs) and supplied by bus operators to the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council.

Historic patronage figures in the BSIP itself differ to those included in this report. This is because data reported in the BSIP came from DfT’s annual reporting, which includes adjustment and weighting. We now use the data we collect directly from operators in the BSIP Progress Reports as DfT expects reporting every 6-months.

⁴⁷ Frequent services are those where the service interval is 10 minutes or less i.e. on at least 95% of occasions: Six or more buses will depart within any period of 60 minutes; and the interval between consecutive buses will not exceed 15 minutes. Non-frequent services are any services that do not meet these criteria.

⁴⁸ A timing point is a designated stop where the bus has been registered with the relevant Traffic Commissioner to depart from at a specific time. Intermediate timing points are bus stops between these timing points which do not have a specific time registered, but where passengers may expect buses to arrive at a certain time.

⁴⁹ ABODS data is collected from ticket machines and analysed by DfT.

Patronage figures for *WESTlink* are not included in the overall patronage data recorded for this report as it is not a scheduled service.

Passenger satisfaction

The annual Your Bus Journey survey carried out by Transport Focus is used to measure passenger satisfaction in the West of England and nationally.

Surveys were paused after 2019 due to the pandemic and were restarted on 30 January 2023.

In this report, we use interim data as it becomes available through the survey portal. This data will be reviewed and cleansed by Transport Focus ahead of publishing its final yearly report. As such, the figures in this report should only be considered an early indicator.

Bus fleet decarbonisation

A Vehicle Standards Fleet Survey was carried out annually between 2021, when preparing the BSIP, until June 2023. These surveys are now carried out circa every six months.

Appendix D - Breakdown of BSIP Target data

Journey Times

Target 1: Reduce average bus journey times on designated corridors by 2% by 2025 and by 10% by 2030

Table 3 - Journey times
(Source: Timetable sample)

Area	Journey times (minutes)							Target for 2024-25
	2018-19	2019-20 (baseline)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24		
	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Apr	Oct	
West of England Combined Authority + North Somerset	61	63	No data	55	56	63	61	62

Improved journey times in 2022/23 are likely to have been influenced by ongoing reduced traffic volumes as we exited the pandemic as well as the effect of reduced levels of bus services on the sample size.

Data for 2023/24 so far shows journey times have increased in Bristol, likely due to increased roadworks and dwell time at stops as more passengers use the bus following lockdown. Journey times reduced in Bath and North East Somerset, although the average across the BSIP area amounts to an overall increase.

Punctuality

Target 2: Achieve 95% of services running on time, defined as being no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late, by 2030

In 2018/19, 77% of non-frequent bus services ran on time across the BSIP area, with non-frequent services in Bristol the fourth worst in England. Over the course of the pandemic, and since, bus punctuality has declined further as shown in Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4 - Annual Bus Punctuality at principle timing points
(Source: Real Time Information system)

Area	% of services running on time (at principle timing points)						Target for 2024-25
	2018-19 (baseline)	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
West of England Combined Authority +	77%	N/A	74%	71%	67%	71%	82%

North Somerset							
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Table 5 - Annual Bus Punctuality at all timing points

(Source: Real Time Information system)

Area	% of services running on time (all timing points)					Target for 2024-25
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
West of England Combined Authority + North Somerset	Comparable data unavailable				63%	82%

Initial data from October and November 2023 show that 70.3% of services were ‘on time’ - a slight drop from the previous six months. 17.3% of journeys are ‘late’ (over 5 mins) while 13.6% are ‘early’ (over 1 min).

Other than the effect of the driver shortage on the number of cancelled services, inadequate recovery time built into timetables since traffic volumes have increased is a likely factor affecting reliability. The large number of road works on main bus corridors is another factor, which is set to increase as planned bus priority schemes are rolled out until March 2027.

First Bus has worked on reliability by using prospective scheduling software to reconfigure timetables to improve punctuality from April 2023, following up with investment in additional driver hours to meet the new running times.

Patronage

Target 3: Return to pre-pandemic patronage levels by 2025 and grow patronage by 24% by 2030.

Total bus trips in each area are shown in Table 6, with total trips per person in Table 7.

Table 6 - Bus Patronage

(source: ticket systems)

Area	Bus passenger trips (millions)						
	2018-19*	2019-20 (baseline)	2020-21	2021-22	2022/23	2023/24 Q1 & Q2 (6 months)	Target for 2024-25
Bath and North East Somerset	No data	14.6	3.7	9.5	11.3	5.6	14.6+
Bristol	No data	40.4	13.9	28.4	32.7	17.2	40.4+

North Somerset	No data	5.0	1.5	3.0	3.8	2.3	5+
South Gloucestershire	No data	10.1	3.5	6.0	7.4	4.1	10.1+
West of England Combined Authority	No data	65.2	21.0	43.9	51.5	26.9	65.2+
West of England Combined Authority + North Somerset	No data	70.2	22.5	46.8	55.3	29.2	70.1+

*Not available

Table 7 - Bus Patronage per head

(source: ticket systems; ONS mid-year population estimates)

Area	Bus passenger trips per head				
	2018-19**	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022/23
Bath and North East Somerset	No data	75.8	18.9	48.9	58.6*
Bristol	No data	87.3	29.7	60.1	69.2*
North Somerset	No data	23.3	6.8	13.7	17.7*
South Gloucestershire	No data	35.4	12.0	20.7	25.6*
West of England	No data	69.2	22.1	45.9	53.8*
West of England Combined Authority + North Somerset	No data	60.7	19.3	39.9	47.1*

*Using 2021 Census population data as population estimate for 2022 not yet available

** Not available

Despite the loss of services in April 2023, patronage has continued to increase, with significant growth observed on particular routes.

Where a combination of capped fares, higher frequencies and speed/reliability improvements from the new Long Ashton Bypass bus lane have been delivered, patronage increases of 37% have been observed.

Customer satisfaction

Target 4: Increase passenger satisfaction to 89% for 2025 and 95% for 2030

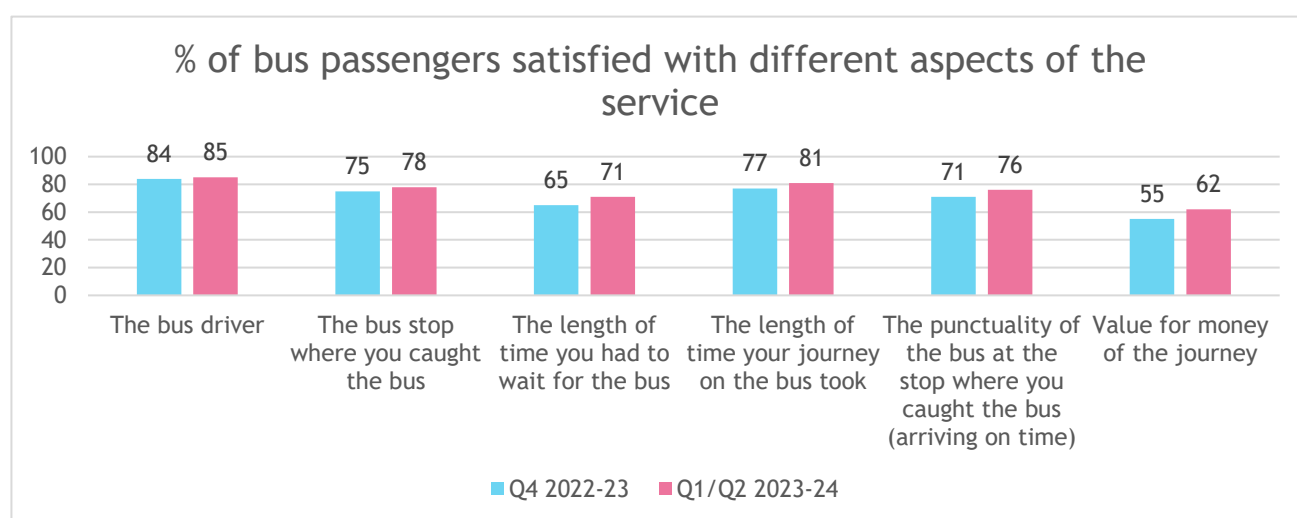
Table 8 - Bus passenger satisfaction by local authority

(source: Transport Focus)⁵⁰

Area	% of passengers who are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'						Target for 2024-25
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 Q1/Q2	
West of England Combined Authority + North Somerset	85%	86%	No data	No data	Q4 78%	Q1/Q2 81%	89%

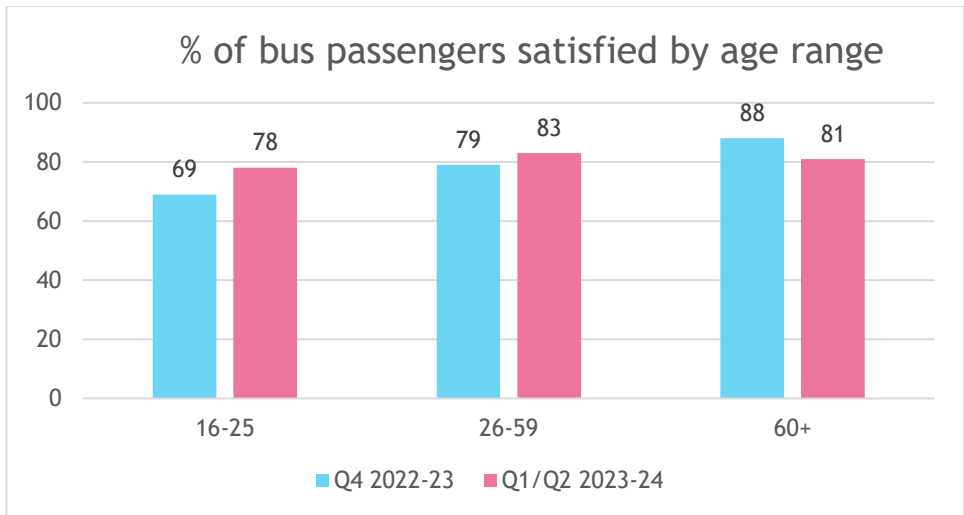
Survey responses from 2023/24 indicate that passengers were most satisfied with their bus driver (85%) and the length of time the bus journey took (81%) and least satisfied with the length of time they had to wait for the bus (71%).

The largest increase in satisfaction between January - March 2023 and April - August 2024 was with the length of time they had to wait for the bus (up six percentage points).



Satisfaction recorded among age groups appears to show that 16-25 year olds are least satisfied, with those aged 26-59 most satisfied.

⁵⁰ Data for 2022/23 consists of surveys undertaken 30 January 2023 to 26 March. Data for 2023/24 consists of surveys undertaken 27 March – 13 August 2023.

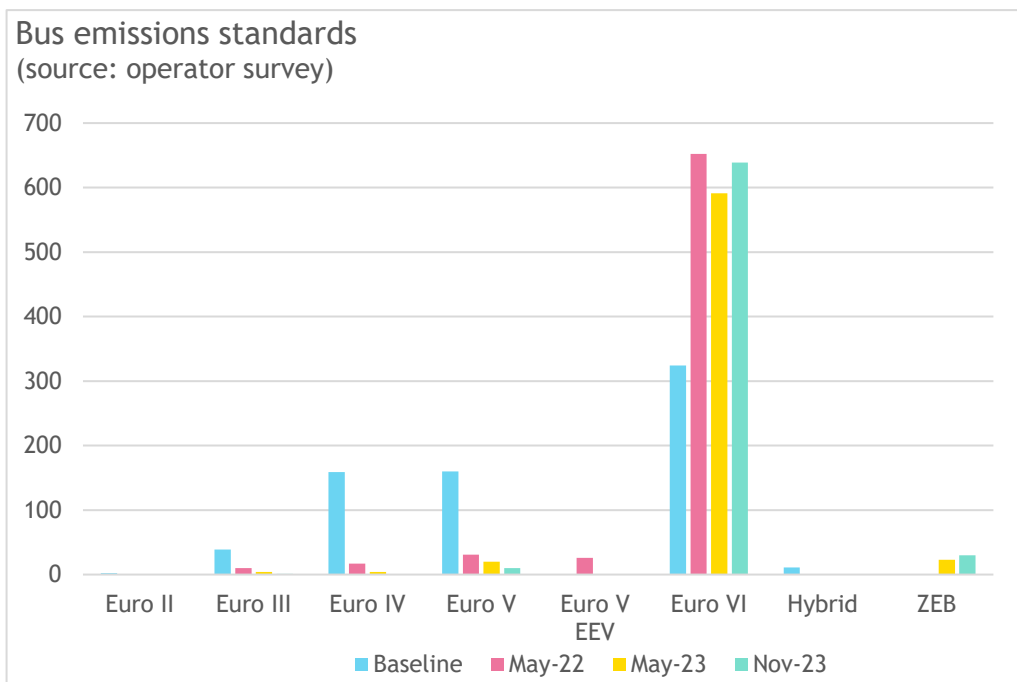


Decarbonisation of the bus fleet

Target 5: By 2023 all buses operating in the BSIP area will meet the Euro VI emission standard and by 2035 all buses will be zero emission - with the ambition to bring this forward to 2030.

The number of vehicles per emissions standard is shown in Figure 2 and the percentage of the total fleet per emissions standard in Figure 3. The survey sample includes buses used in the region as well as vehicles based in depots in and outside of the region, but that may operate in the region.

Figure 2 - Number of vehicles by vehicle emission standard



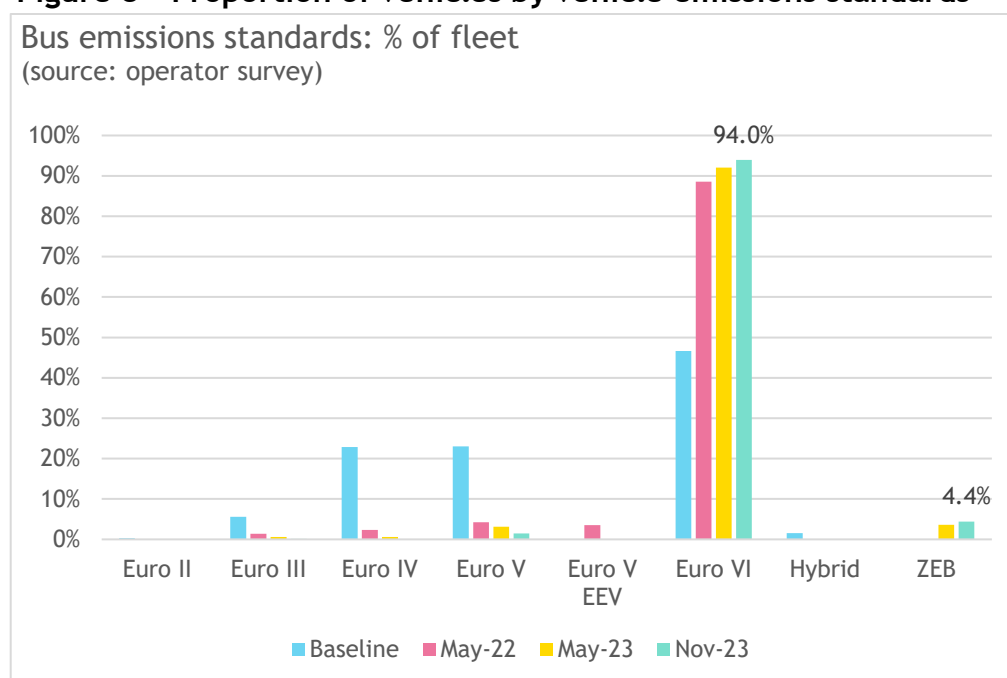
In November 2023, 98.4% of the fleet operate in the West of England area is Euro VI standard or higher. This indicates that we are close to our target of 100% Euro VI or higher by the end of 2023.

It is important to note that some buses included may operate principally outside of the EP Area. The 4.4% zero emissions buses (ZEB) are based at a Newport depot (circa 30 buses), but are used interchangeably to run one service into the West of England EP Area.

Significant progress will be needed to meet the target of 100% ZEBs by 2035.

Other than the EP Scheme requirement on operators to meet the Euro IV target by the end of 2023, also incentivising the change are the Clean Air Zones. The Bath Clean Air Zone applies charges to diesel buses that meet Euro V or lower standards (or Euro III or lower for petrol). The Bristol Clean Air Zone applies charges to diesel buses that meet Euro VI pre-2015 or lower standards (and Euro III petrol or lower for petrol buses).

Figure 3 - Proportion of vehicles by vehicle emissions standards



The average age of the fleet was 9.5 years in the baseline survey (2021), 8.2 years in 2022, 10.3 years in June 2023 and 9.4 years in November 2023. This compares to the average age of 9.5 years for buses in England outside London in 2020-21⁵¹.

⁵¹ DfT [Bus 0605](#): data discontinued after 2020/21.

Appendix E - Enhancements to existing services under Initiative A1

The West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset, in partnership with First West of England, committed to promoting patronage growth through increased frequencies on the following services across the region from April 2023, as noted in Table 9 below.

Enhancements delivered with BSIP funded are highlighted in blue.

Table 9 - Joint BSIP-funded and First Bus enhancements since April 2023

Service	Route	Enhancement
1	Southdown - Central Bath	4-5 buses per hour Mon-Fri, up from 3-4, and additional Sunday journeys
5	Whiteway - Central Bath	5 buses per hour Mon-Fri, up from 4, and additional Sunday journeys
43	Cadbury Heath - Central Bristol	8 buses per hour at peak times Mon-Fri from/to Kingswood, up from 6
48/49	Emersons Green - Central Bristol	8 buses per hour Mon-Sat, up from 6, from Fishponds to central Bristol
74	UWE Frenchay - Central Bristol	3 buses per hour Mon-Fri, up from 2 (now a total of 6 per hour combined across 74 and 70 services)
172	Bath - Paulton - Bristol	12 min frequency Mon-Fri between Midsomer Norton and Bath, up from every 15 mins. Half hourly service between Paulton and Bristol, up from every hour
349	Keynsham - Central Bristol	Timetable changes to provide combined 4 buses per hour with newly supported 522 (replacing 178), up from 3
m2	Long Ashton P&R - Centre	Every 15 mins, up from 20 mins
T1	Thornbury - Bristol	Every 20 mins, up from 30 mins
3/6 ⁵²	Worle - Weston-super-Mare Asda	Additional evening service.
7	Haywood Village - Worle	Additional evening service
X1	Weston-super-Mare - Bristol	Up to every 15 mins, up from 20 mins

⁵² Funding transferred to new W6 route from September 2023.

X4	Portishead - Bristol	Up to every 20 mins, up from 30 mins
X5	Portishead - Weston-super-Mare	Introduction of Sat & Sun service ⁵³
X6	Clevedon - Bristol	Additional early and late journeys
X7	Clevedon - Bristol	Additional early and late journeys
X8	Nailsea - Bristol	Hourly Mon - Sat service between Nailsea, Backwell and Bristol.
X39	Bath - Bristol	4 buses per hour Mon-Fri, up from 4 buses only at peak times, and enhanced weekend service

Table 10 - Joint BSIP-funded and First Bus enhancements since September 2023

Service	Route	Enhancement
6	New route partially replacing 3	Support for evening element of service
9	Worlebury to Worle town service	New route to start April 2024
10	New route linking Weston-super-Mare town, Hospital and Hutton	Support to establish route ⁵⁴

⁵³ Extended to Yatton from September 2023

⁵⁴ May transfer to 126 route from January 2023

Appendix F - BSIP-supported Bus Services Under Initiative I3

Table 11 - BSIP-supported services from April 2023

Service	Route	Type
522	Bath to Bristol via Keynsham	New service
525	Yate - Emersons Green	New service

Table 12 - BSIP-supported services from September 2023

Service	Route	Type
X10	Cribbs Causeway - Portishead - Clevedon	New Service from Portishead to Cribbs x3 return journeys of peak