

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION

DECISION OF: THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT



WITH ADVICE FROM: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, ASSETS AND HIGHWAYS SERVICES

DECISION NO: 25/26 EAT 173

SUBJECT: BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP) INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME AT MARTCOMBE ROAD AND PORTBURY HIGH STREET JUNCTION, A369

KEY DECISION: YES

REASON: The decision will result in the council incurring expenditure of over £500,000 and will be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards.

BACKGROUND:

Introduction

The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is a joint initiative between North Somerset Council (NSC), the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), the Department for Transport (DfT) and bus operators.

Our communities tell us they want more reliable, frequent and affordable bus services. That's what we're working hard to deliver through our infrastructure schemes – improving junctions to offer better flow for all traffic, resulting in quicker, more reliable, bus services, that get people where they need to be more efficiently.

We want North Somerset communities to have a modern, efficient, reliable, and affordable public transport system they can enjoy for years to come. The BSIP is working to achieve this goal by delivering packages of joined-up improvements, from more frequent bus services to more affordable fares, which work alongside our new bus service and sustainable travel infrastructure schemes, to benefit residents and communities.

Together, these changes will help make bus travel the first public transport choice, and more financially sustainable longer-term, helping to protect our vital services for the future.

Current UK Government funding for improving bus services through the Bus Service Improvement Plan is available only for a short time. But its long-term legacy will be more reliable, efficient and frequent bus services, new electric buses which are better for the environment, and more financially secure bus services, fit for our growing population, now and in the future.

Our infrastructure schemes are designed to enhance and protect residents' bus services, and promote more sustainable travel for years to come, by:

- introducing dedicated bus lanes and intelligent traffic signals to give bus users priority in key areas, and at peak times. These changes help make bus services quicker, more reliable, and more affordable for residents – and more financially viable for bus operators to keep running, requiring lower or no public subsidy

- incorporating better crossings and pavements for pedestrians, cyclists and others using lower-carbon forms of transport. This will improve the travel experience, encouraging more people to walk, wheel and cycle wherever possible, and making it easier to get to bus stops in some locations
- creating attractive new transport hubs in communities, offering a range of facilities such as secure cycle parking, real-time information displays and electric charging points, and bringing a place-making boost to town and village centres
- and replacing or improving existing stops and shelters on priority routes – making the experience of waiting for, and making, travel connections better for residents.

Our current targets across the West of England area are summarised in the following table:

Category	Target	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Target by 2025
Bus journey times	Reduce average bus journey times (minutes) on designated corridors by 2% by 2025 and by 10% by 2030	61	*63	No data	55	56	61	62
Bus punctuality	Achieve 95% of services running on time, defined as being no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late, by 2030. Target for 2024/25 is 82%	*77%	N/A	74%	71%	67%	72%	82%
Passenger growth	Return to pre-pandemic patronage levels by 2025 and grow patronage by at least 24% from that level by 2030	-	*70.2m	22.5m	46.8m	55.3m	63.7m	70m
Bus Passenger satisfaction	Increase bus passenger satisfaction to 89% for 2025 and 95% for 2030	85%	*86%	No data	No data	78%	79%	89%
Bus fleet de-carbonisation	By the end of 2023 all buses operating in the BSIP area will meet the Euro VI emission standard	No data	No data	48.2%	88.6%	96%	98%	100%
Bus fleet de-carbonisation	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).	No data	No data	0%	0%	3.6%	6.6%	N/A

These targets will be monitored using the following methodology:

Metric	Timing	Scale
Bus journey times	4-week period pre-implementation monitoring in 'neutral' month within 1 year of starting works	Between two bus stops on either side of the bus priority scheme location
General traffic journey times		Between two bus stops on either side of the bus priority scheme location
Bus punctuality	4-week period post-implementation monitoring at 6-, 12 and 24-months in neutral months	Cumulative bus punctuality at timing points for bus routes using the bus priority scheme
Bus patronage		Cumulative bus patronage for bus routes using the bus priority scheme

In order to meet these targets, the BSIP's capital-funded infrastructure schemes are designed to work hand-in-hand with initiatives to improve passenger journeys, such as fare offers and more frequent services. These initiatives are funded through a separate BSIP grant of £57 million, which was jointly awarded to NSC and the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) to deliver in partnership. The BSIP is governed by an Enhanced Partnership between North Somerset, the Combined Authority, the other Highway Authorities in the West of England area, bus operators, and other key stakeholders. It is intended that, through the EP process, capital and revenue investment from NSC and WECA is met with comparable investment in improvements to services by the bus operators.

The indicative BSIP funding was subject to a final Department for Transport (DfT) outline review of the proposed schemes, which concluded in June 2022 and resulted in the confirmation of funding being granted in November 2022. With this confirmation of funding

being later than anticipated, a change request was submitted and accepted by the DfT to extend the deadline for delivery of investment to October 2025. A subsequent change request has been accepted by DfT to extend the deadline of investment to March 2026. A further programme extension is being sought.

In order to deliver North Somerset's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) capital-funded infrastructure schemes, a variety of contractual arrangements are required. The initial schemes were delivered through the council's Term Service Contract. The remaining bus priority schemes are to be delivered through a Design and Build contract awarded to Alun Griffiths Contractors Ltd. The decision to award the contract was made by the October 2023 Executive Committee. The October 2023 decision requires a subsequent Cabinet Member decision at the design stage before commencing delivery of each scheme.

Please note: The BSIP funding from UK Government is ringfenced. This means it cannot be used to pay for any non-BSIP related council activities, such as filling potholes, or other council services.

Pause and review

In April 2024 we paused the live programme of BSIP infrastructure projects, such as junction updates, and the introduction of new bus lanes. The pause followed months of engagement with local communities on early proposals for schemes in Backwell, Clevedon, Rownham Hill, Lime Kiln, Churchill and Worle High Street –aimed at improving congestion, enhancing local travel experiences and creating infrastructure needed for now and in the future.

During this 2024 pause and review period, the only new BSIP infrastructure project being delivered was at the A370 Wood Hill junction, as part of the Congresbury congestion scheme, which was completed in December 2024.

The 2024 pause and review period was implemented in order to:

- assess completed schemes to monitor their effectiveness and learn any lessons to apply to future works
- consider any changes we needed to make to our approach as a result of then new Department for Transport guidance on bus priority (LTN1/24)
- continue to engage with communities and their representatives about the range of proposed schemes
- gather further data and undertake testing in areas where this is needed in order to make a decision
- set a new timeline for decisions for approval of remaining schemes to allow fuller consideration of each scheme and reduce scheme-related disruption to the local road network for residents.

The assessment of delivered schemes' effectiveness, the 'lessons learned' from the delivery of the Brockley Combe scheme, and our review of the DfT LTN1/24 guidance, were all considered by the council's Transport, Climate and Communities Scrutiny Panel in July 2024. This ensured the BSIP programme was able to fully benefit from the review, by enabling us to draw on the additional data, and carry learning forward into future, approved, schemes.

Changes agreed to the BSIP programme as a result of the 2024 pause and review period include:

- reducing the scope of current proposals for several schemes, including Martcombe Road near the M5 J19 junction, Southern Way in Clevedon and Rownham Hill near Bristol, and removing the Portbury Hundred scheme completely
- continuing to monitor completed infrastructure schemes to understand their impact and draw out any lessons learned for future schemes
- undertaking a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the programme delivery to identify areas of improvement for the remainder of the funding period
- developing a bus lanes policy to clarify restrictions and work towards a default position of motorcycles being allowed to use these unless a particular local issue prevents it
- continuing to develop the engagement approach to deliver improvements in the way stakeholders and the wider community are communicated with.

Both during, and since concluding, this period, we have:

- continued to engage with local communities and their representatives on the next schemes, including for transport hubs, within the programme
- developed policies against new national guidance, which were reviewed at an all-councillor session, hosted by the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel, in January 2025.

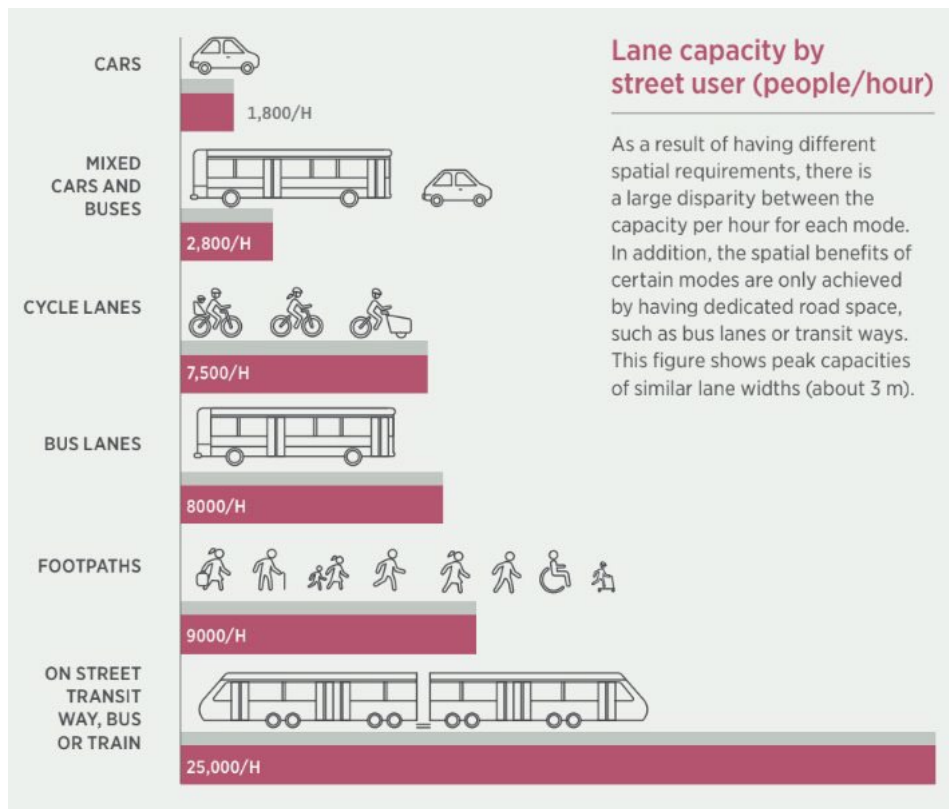
With the 2024 pause and review period complete, our BSIP infrastructure programme is now moving forward, with a Cabinet Member decision being sought on the final infrastructure schemes to be included in the programme.

A369 corridor

The A369 is a major arterial transport route running through North Somerset and connects Portishead to Bristol. The route crosses Junction 19 of the M5 and on the Bristol side of this junction (Martcombe Road) the A369 into Bristol carries approximately 20,000 vehicles into Bristol per day. On the west side of Junction 19, the Portbury Hundred into Portishead carries around 13,000 vehicles per day. The A369 commonly suffers from congestion in the morning and evening peak periods due to commuter journeys into Bristol, which is exacerbated in the summer months due to increased holiday traffic. It can also be significantly affected by displaced traffic from incidents affecting the M5 motorway or events in Bristol.

Buses have the capacity to carry a large number of passengers within existing road space. On the A369, approximately 25,000-29,000 people are transported each day by 23,000-26,000 non-bus vehicles, whereas around 2,500 to 3,000 people are transported by around 88 buses per day. This means around 10% of all people travelling along the A369 are carried by less than 1% of all traffic.

Increasing the capacity of bus services using the A369 is a key means of reducing the impact of future growth on congestion of our road network.



The A369 corridor is currently served by two scheduled bus routes during the day, a night bus at weekends, as well as community transport and school buses. There are up to 4 buses an hour in each direction – the X4, X10 and the X14.

- The X4 service between Portishead and Bristol serves the whole of the A369 corridor, and carries around 75,000 passengers per month, at a frequency of up to one bus every 20 minutes. This is the main service using Martcombe Road.
- The X10 service between Yatton and Southmead Hospital, and the X14 night bus service between Bristol and Weston-super-Mare all use the A369 corridor between Portishead and Junction 19. (Note: these services do not use Martcombe Road).
- Recently the X5 service has been diverting between Portishead and Clevedon via the M5 due to a road closure, meaning an additional bus approximately every 90 minutes in each direction. Due to the longer distance to be covered, quick journey times have been essential. This will continue to be a vital diversion route whenever road closures occur between the two towns.

As part of North Somerset's Bus Service Improvement Plan, several enhancements have been made to the commercial bus network. These improvements include increased frequency, more evening journeys, and extended days of operation. As a result, bus usage in North Somerset has grown by 29% over the past two years. To maintain this positive trend, we must continue to provide reliable and frequent services to our communities.

Service X4 has seen significant enhancements funded by BSIP. Starting in April 2023, the service frequency increased from every 30 minutes to every 20-25 minutes, Monday to Friday, along with an additional evening journey from Bristol.

Within the first seven months following the April 2023 enhancement ridership grew by over 21%. Currently the service shows a year-on-year growth of 12% (2023 & 2024). Although revenue from the X4 has increased, additional financial support is still required from the

Council to sustain the current level of service. Ongoing service efficiencies and patronage growth are needed to reduce the costs of continued support. Planned highway improvements at Beggar Bush Lane, Rownham Hill, and Martcombe Road are expected to facilitate these efficiencies.

In March 2024, North Somerset successfully secured £2.1 million in Government funding to support the introduction of 24 electric buses. This investment has brought new buses to the X1 and X4 routes. This exciting development means that in 2025, electric buses are a common sight along the A369 corridor. The buses have delivered enhanced comfort and reliability, along with reducing carbon emissions, helping us evidence our commitment towards being a carbon neutral area by 2030.

Scheme for A369 Martcombe Road

The A369 Martcombe Road approach to M5 J19 junction at Portbury has been identified as a location where buses can experience delays due to heavy traffic and where a scheme to improve this section of Martcombe Road could reduce bus journey times both during and outside peak periods.

Scheme identification

At Martcombe Road the following options were originally considered for improvements to improve bus journey times:

1) Convert the existing High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane in the Portishead direction to a bus lane. The HOV lane is not working particularly well with a high level of abuse and limited enforcement due to Police resource constraints. The current benefit to public transport is therefore eroded. Conversion to a bus lane would be beneficial for bus services.

2) Convert the HOV to a bus lane but extend toward J19. Currently the HOV lane finishes prior to the junction with Portbury High Street. This option would extend or provide an additional bus lane between Portbury High Street and J19, providing additional benefit at the most congested part of the network in this vicinity. The short length converted to a bus lane, while providing considerable benefit to public transport should not significantly increase delays to general traffic given these are already considerable in this location and there should be some “smoothing” of the flow.

3) In conjunction with either of the above options closure of Portbury Lane/ Mill Lane to through traffic to reduce traffic demand at Portbury High Street, allowing more green time to A369 was considered. However, this has been rejected as it would likely just shift traffic to the network of lanes in this area that are less suitable and would therefore not significantly reduce demand at Portbury High Street. This was discounted.

Option 2 was initially developed further and shared with local elected representatives in 2023.

Design development

The Martcombe Road scheme has evolved significantly following design and modelling work and feedback from local communities. The proposed updated design is appended to this report.

The initial design stages reviewed the options identified above and produced an initial concept for consultation and further development. This design proposed a conversion of

the existing HOV lane to a bus lane, a further bus lane between Portbury High Street and J19, along with improvements to the pedestrian and cycle facilities and bus stops.

The preferred option detailed above was reviewed by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, and the Transport, Climate and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Panel, in July 2023.

Briefings were held with ward members and affected parish and town councils in August 2023

Following the 2024 BSIP '[pause and review](#)' period – which involved further technical analysis and monitoring at different scheme locations to inform the next steps for different schemes, the decision was made to reduce the scope of the Martcombe Road proposals.

The most significant changes have been the decision to leave the HOV lane largely unaffected, and to delete the proposed new section of bus lane between Portbury High Street and the motorway junction.

Instead, a revised scheme has been developed which focuses on the following elements:

- 1) Signal upgrade to provide bus priority – approaching buses would be detected and signal timings adjusted automatically to give extra time to allow the bus through the junction with priority over other movements.
- 2) A short (60m) westbound bus lane leading to a signalised bus gate at the Portbury High Street junction to enable buses to bypass other traffic to access and exit the Gordano Service west-bound bus stop more easily and travel through the junction more quickly.
- 3) Retention of the existing High Occupancy Vehicle lane.
- 4) Widening to the Portbury High Street exit to A369 to provide extra capacity, offsetting the effect of the bus gate.
- 5) Improvements to the car parking area adjacent to the junction of Martcombe Road and Portbury High Street.
- 6) Improvements to the westbound bus stop on Martcombe Road, adjacent to the Portbury High Street junction.

The changes are intended to reduce bus journey times while improving reliability, and minimising the impact to other traffic.

Benefits realisation

Existing traffic data and delays to bus services

Buses currently experience delays on this section of A369, particularly during peak periods and during unusual traffic conditions. An analysis of bus journey time data taken from the Analyse Open Bus Data collated by the Department for Transport from bus tracker systems shows the variability of journey times on the X4 bus route between the St Georges Hill and Gordano Services bus stops, approaching the Portbury High Street junction.

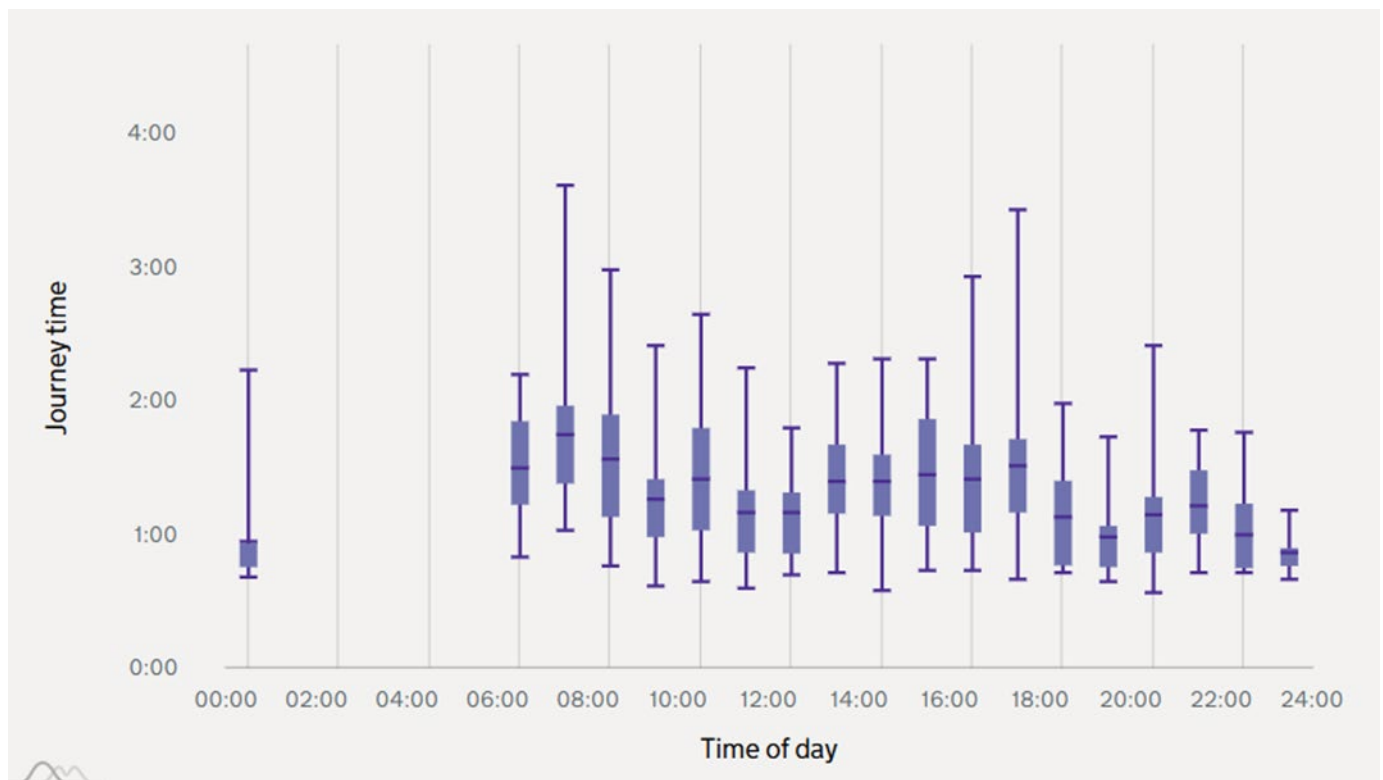


Figure 1: X4 bus journey time data between the St Georges Hill and Gordano Services bus stops in the first two weeks of July 2025 (source: Analyse Open Bus Data)

The ABOD data shows that in free-flowing traffic, a journey time of around 40 seconds can be achieved. However, delays caused by congestion and traffic signal sequences mean that typical off-peak journey times can be doubled, with typical peak period journey times of between two and three minutes.

The variability in journey times means that operators need to build flexibility into their timetables, which means that the benefits of faster than usual journeys are not realised.

Queue length monitoring

To understand the length of queues on Martcombe Road at busy times, a CCTV survey was undertaken in August and September 2023. The survey showed that westbound queues from the Portbury High Street signals commonly reach 100m from the junction during each cycle of the traffic signals at busy periods.

Expected benefits to bus journey times

The proposed improvements will help buses achieve faster and more reliable journey times in several ways.

The traffic signals at Portbury High Street and at St George's Hill junctions will be configured to detect and respond to approaching buses. This will be achieved using data from the GPS trackers carried by all scheduled bus services, to enable the traffic signals to pre-empt the arrival of a bus. The signals will be able to skip or shorten phases of the signals cycle, to allow buses through the junction ahead of other traffic when possible.

The proposed bus lane on Martcombe Road approaching the Portbury High Street junction will enable most buses in typical peak period traffic conditions to gain a maximum advantage at the traffic signals by bypassing traffic queues on the approach.

It is expected that bus priority measures would achieve consistently shorter journey times, allowing timetabling to be tightened, and overall journey time and reliability benefits to be realised.

Other benefits

The proposed scheme will provide an opportunity to undertake maintenance of carriageways and traffic signals, as well as providing improvements to the car parking area adjacent to the junction and pedestrian and cycle facilities.

Impact to general traffic

A LinSig model of the proposed changes has been developed to help understand the effect of widening the exit from Portbury High Street to Martcombe Road, and the impact of the proposed bus gate.

The modelling assumed that a bus would use the bus gate every 6 minutes, and that the pedestrian crossing at Martcombe Road would be used during every cycle of the traffic signals.

The model shows an insignificant increase in eastbound queuing (approximately half a car length) while the westbound direction continues to work well within capacity. Overall, relative to the existing junction model, the proposed scheme results in a better junction capacity for all modes.

Delivery programme

The next steps are the continuation of preliminary and detailed design processes, before reviewing the contractor's target cost in Spring 2026. Statutory consultation to make the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) will take place in Winter 2025 into 2026 with works planned to start on site in Summer 2026

The works at Martcombe Road will take approximately four months. This is a key commuter and bus corridor between Portishead and Bristol. The risk of disruption during construction works will be managed by careful planning during the pre-construction phase and mitigated during the construction of the works. Where temporary road closures are needed (such as for resurfacing), this will be undertaken at night, to minimise disruption as far as possible. However, other traffic management will be in place throughout the works.

DECISION:

- To approve the revised design for the BSIP junction improvement scheme at Martcombe Road.
- To authorise officers to proceed with implementing the BSIP infrastructure scheme at Martcombe Road.

REASONS:

To help realise the journey time, reliability improvements and increased patronage necessary to ensure the commercial sustainability of local bus routes.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

- 1) A discussion around the alternative options considered for improvements at this location is provided in this report (see Scheme Identification).
- 2) Doing nothing is not considered a practical alternative due to existing congestion and delays to bus services at this location, combined with the likelihood of future growth exacerbating those issues if not dealt with using this funding opportunity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The October 2023 Executive Committee decision has authorised the award of the design and delivery phases of the BSIP projects to Alun Griffiths, to a total value of £15.4 million. Therefore, no financial decision is required at this stage.

Costs

Scheme costs are estimated to be £1,171,292, including a risk/contingency budget, which is within the overall available budget for the BSIP schemes. This includes all design work and surveys required for various aspects of the scheme such as drainage, Statutory Undertakers apparatus and environmental mitigations.

Costs will be charged to KDT150 project code BSIP016 which currently has an approved budget of £1,171,292.

These costs will be coded to Asset Register Infrastructure Asset A6031-01 which is the council's reference for capital works relating to A-roads as part of the BSIP scheme.

Funding

In May 2022 the Department for Transport (DfT) awarded North Somerset Council (NSC) an indicative £47.8 million in capital funding to spend wholly on bus infrastructure schemes within North Somerset.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

The Highways Act 1980 provides the council with the necessary powers to make changes to the public highway.

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 provides the council with the necessary powers to implement bus lanes and other traffic restrictions on the public highway. This is achieved by making Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), for which there is a defined statutory process.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 provides the council with the powers to enforce bus lanes and related restrictions.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The wider BSIP programme, including the infrastructure scheme discussed in this report, will contribute to enhancing the reliability and attractiveness of the public transport network, with the aim of enabling more people to choose bus travel, thereby reducing the number of car journeys that need to be taken within North Somerset and beyond.

The BSIP has ambitious targets to:

- reduce bus journey times by 2 per cent by 2025 and by 10 per cent by 2030

- achieve 95 per cent of services running on time, defined as being no more than one minute early or five minutes late, by 2030
- return to pre-pandemic patronage levels by 2025 and grow patronage by at least 24 per cent from that level by 2030
- increase passenger satisfaction to 89 per cent for 2025 and 95 per cent for 2030
- aim for all buses to be zero emission by 2030.

The proposed scheme for Martcombe Road will contribute towards achieving these targets, supporting a sustainable bus network, and encouraging modal shift from private cars to public transport, which will contribute towards the council's climate change and environmental objectives.

CONSULTATION

There have been various points of consultation and engagement on the BSIP programme and its specific schemes. For the A369 Martcombe Road scheme, consultation and engagement has been undertaken with stakeholders for two years. This includes discussions with ward members, Cabinet Members, town and parish councils, and bus operators.

In October 2023, a press release was shared on the council's website and social media channels, announcing Martcombe Road as one of ten different locations being considered for a bus priority infrastructure scheme.

The decision to reduce the scope of the proposed changes at Martcombe Road was also mentioned in a news release announcing the end of the BSIP [‘pause and review’ process](#) in September 2024.

Meetings with Portbury Parish Council, Pill & Easton-in-Gordano Parish Council and Portishead Town Council took place regarding the original proposal in April and August 2023, a revised proposal in November and December 2024, and regarding the final proposal in July 2025.

For the Martcombe Road scheme, a decision was made not to undertake an informal public consultation regarding the proposals (which would have been an additional process to the required statutory TRO process) due to the minimal impact to the road layout for other traffic, and because the proposed design is considered to be the only viable option at this time,

The revised approach has been shared with First Bus in June 2025. First have stated their support for the scheme. The proposals have also been shared with the Enhanced Partnership Independent Advisory Group (Infrastructure Working Group) which includes representatives of passenger representatives, key employers and bus operators. Passenger representatives have stated their support for the scheme.

Below is a summary of comments raised and key themes from briefings with elected representatives, and how these have been considered by the project team. Due to the changing scope of the scheme (i.e. the removal of the majority of the proposed bus lanes) many of the comments received during the engagement period are not relevant to the latest, proposed design.

Common or significant feedback raised and officer responses (most prevalent first)

Source	Detail	Action taken
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Elected representatives	Converting HOV lane to a bus lane will affect general traffic and hinder bus journey times in periods of unusually heavy traffic.	Following further traffic modelling and design, the proposal to convert the HOV lane to a bus lane has been removed from these proposals.
Elected representatives	Cost outweighs the benefits.	The benefits described in this report are considered to offer good value for money, by helping to reduce the ongoing financial support required to maintain bus service frequencies and operational hours.
Elected representatives	The proposed bus lane between Portbury High Street and J19 will impact general traffic to an unacceptable degree.	Following further traffic modelling and design, the proposal to provide a bus lane between Portbury High Street and J19 has been removed from these proposals.
Elected representatives	The proposals are unnecessary – buses are not delayed at this location.	The ABOD data shown in the report evidences that bus journey times are quite variable on this section of the A369. The proposals will make bus journeys faster and more consistent, allowing operators to improve timetabling.
Elected representatives	Cyclist movements need to be considered.	The detailed design of the scheme will consider cycle movements.
Elected representatives	Can a link be made to the public right of way accessed from the eastern end of Portbury High Street?	The detailed design of the scheme will consider whether this can be accommodated.
Elected representatives	Happy with changes made to the new plans.	Continue with proposed plans to create final designs.
Elected representatives	Keen to go to the public on future usage of nearby car park.	NSC Officers to work with Portbury Parish to go out to the public with a snap survey.

Summary of future/remaining engagement

Officers will continue to work with Portbury Parish Council to develop a proposal for the parking area adjacent to the Portbury High Street. A focussed public consultation regarding this element only may be undertaken at an appropriate time.

A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be published publicly on the council's website, giving a further, formal opportunity for the public to engage on the evolved concept designs.

Updates will be shared through the council's online newsletter to local representatives.

RISK MANAGEMENT

There is effective project and programme management led by officers with support by an external consultancy to aid in both design and contract management.

There is an agreed internal governance function to oversee decision making which includes regular reporting through appropriate boards.

A Quantified Risk Assessment (QRA) has been prepared for the scheme which will be reviewed at key milestones throughout both the design and build process. The QRA will be reviewed and updated on completion of the preliminary design. The risk register is a live document for the duration of the programme.

Key risks

The following risks are identified as the key risks affecting this project:

- **Statutory Undertakers Apparatus (SUs)** – As with all construction projects, the location of buried services and the potential need to divert or protect those during works present a key risk during the initial stages. This risk is being managed as far as possible by engaging with the SUs at an early stage, and, where possible, designing out any significant works.
- **Environmental constraints** – The works is in very close proximity to the Local Nature Reserve and Flower Bank. Extra care and appropriately qualified staff will be on site duration works at the eastern part of the scheme.
- **Journey time delays, complaints, disruption during works** – The works at Martcombe Road will take approximately four months. This is a key commuter and bus corridor between Portishead and Bristol. This risk will be managed by careful planning during the pre-construction phase and mitigated during the construction of the works. Where temporary road closures are needed (such as for resurfacing), this will be undertaken at night, to minimise disruption as far as possible. However, other traffic management will be in place throughout the works.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes.

The assessment shows there are positive or neutral outcomes for this scheme for all users, albeit with low or negligible levels of impact across the various groups. Mostly it will aid disabled people, people on low incomes, and younger and older age groups, by helping to improve public transport viability.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The North Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2024-28 includes key commitments to:

- deliver the Climate Emergency Strategy and action plan and progress towards net zero by 2030

- deliver large-scale projects that improve the infrastructure and sustainability of North Somerset
- continue to invest in our highways and transport network to connect places and communities
- deliver on public transport improvements and support more cycling and walking across North Somerset to help decarbonise travel and promote preventative public health and encourage healthy lifestyles.

This includes *'offering transport choices that make the most of our infrastructure and provide opportunities for better use of public transport'*.

Regionally, the council is a member authority of the Western Gateway Sub-national Transport Body (STB) and has recently adopted our Strategic Transport Plan 2024-2050. This firmly sets out the wider region's commitment to act on the essential decarbonisation of our transport networks with one of the five overarching principles being 'Decarbonisation and Air Quality' and sets the target to achieve a shift of 17% of current vehicle kilometres to sustainable modes.

Sub-regionally, as part of the West of England region, the Council's overarching transport strategy is the Joint Local Transport Plan 4 (JLTP4), that clearly states the direction of travel for decarbonising our transport network. This includes:

- that 'to transform our region, we will need to be flexible, agile and brave in our approach to the climate emergency'
- 'taking action against climate change and address poor air quality', as one of the five key objectives
- recognising the need to 'provide transformational alternatives' to car driving
- 'considering ways to manage demand possibly through congestion charging, emissions charging and workplace parking levy-type schemes', as a sub-region.

More specifically for public transport, the plan commits to:

- reinventing public transport through mass transit, smart ticketing and making it more user friendly, convenient, safe, direct and attractive linking key destinations to enable everyone to use it
- rethinking how we use our existing transport corridors including reallocating more road space to buses, pedestrians and cyclists
- demand management measures to influence travel choice and raise revenue to reinvest in alternatives
- first and last mile-type solutions to provide a linked-up transport network.

The emerging North Somerset Local Plan continues the strong 'predict and provide' approach to transport decarbonisation through its sustainable transport strategy, by proposing development in locations where sites will be required to reduce the need to travel and reduce car dependency, by being located close to existing facilities and connecting into existing and improved sustainable transport networks – providing more options to get around.

In December 2024, central government updated the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with the aim of enabling local planning authorities and the development industry to deliver more homes to reduce the national shortage. This has meant a return to mandatory housing targets and has resulted in North Somerset Council needing to identify a minimum of 8,620 additional homes on top of the approximately 15,000 homes already identified in the Reg 19 Plan consulted on in Mar-Apr 24. This NPPF update includes the

need to identify residential development within Green Belt land if no other appropriate locations can be identified.

The additional sites allocations are still being finalised and preferred sites are currently due to be considered for approval by cabinet 15 October 2025. These include the following allocations within close proximity to Martcombe Rd.

- Land east of Gordano Services: 200 dwellings
- Land at Lodway Farm: 160 dwellings
- Pill Green: 600 dwellings
- Land at Pill Road: 100 dwellings
- Land at Ham Green: 40 dwellings

These sites are well placed to benefit from enhanced bus priority and therefore better overall bus services as a result of the proposed A369 Martcombe Rd BSIP bus priority scheme.

Once the additional sites have been finalised for inclusion in the emerging Local Plan, strategic transport modelling will be updated. This will enable the Council to understand the impacts from the full scale of proposed Local Plan development (including the additional sites) and allow for the further refinement of transport mitigation schemes. These schemes will enable the developments to be delivered consistent with the objectives of the Local Plan and its Spatial Strategy for sustainable developments.

APPENDICES

Scheme concept plan.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

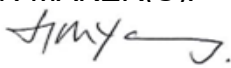
[Report to The Executive – 20th October 2021 - Update on the Development of a Joint Bus Service Improvement Plan \(BSIP\) with the West of England Combined Authority and Bus Operators](#)

[Report to The Executive – 22nd June 2022 – North Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan](#)

[Executive Committee – 18th October 2023 - Bus Service Improvement Plan \(BSIP\) - Contract Award of Design and Build Contractor](#)


SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed:  Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Date: 26 September 2025

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:  Director of Environment, Assets and
Transport Services

Date: 26 September 2025.....

Appendix – Proposed design

