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 175

SUBJECT: BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP) INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME AT WORLE HIGH STREET, WESTON-SUPER-MARE

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 4-week period post-implementation monitoring at 6-, 12 and 24-months in neutral months	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		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.

Worle High Street area

Worle High Street is a significant destination within Weston-super-Mare, lying about two miles east of the town centre. Its shops, businesses and schools serve a wide area of eastern Weston-super-Mare.

The High Street was bypassed by New Bristol Road in the 1920s but continues to carry a significant volume of traffic (c. 12,000 vehicles a day). Monitoring shows that a significant proportion of this is through-traffic, accessing the Milton area and northern fringes of Weston-super-Mare. A survey in November / December 2023 showed that 78% of eastbound traffic and 58% of westbound traffic is through-traffic.

The area of Worle just to the north of the High Street is one of the oldest parts of Weston-super-Mare. This is reflected in its road layout, which in places is narrow and with poor or no pedestrian facilities. At The Scaurs and Ebdon Road, this creates a significant segregation between areas of the local community and frequently raised concerns about road safety. The High Street itself sees a larger than usual number of personal injury accidents, typically involving vulnerable road users.

The High Street is well served by public transport, being within 1.5 miles of both Worle and Milton Railway stations.

Weston-super-Mare 6 & 7 corridors

Worle High Street carries two of Weston-super-Mare's town bus routes, the 6 and 7. The X1 Weston-to-Bristol service uses New Bristol Road which is within a short walk of the High Street, and interchanges with the 6 and 7 at Worle Interchange, about a mile to east of the High Street area.

Service 6 provides a link between Weston-super-Mare town centre and Worle Interchange at Queensway. Its route uses Bristol Road Lower along the hillside area, Worle High Street, the Mead Vale area, and passes close to Worle railway station. The 6 currently carries around 13,000-14,500 passengers a month and operates at a typical frequency of one bus every 30 minutes.

The 6 was launched in September 2023, in parallel with the ending of Service 3. The southern part of the 3, on the Bournville estate, became part of an extended X1, whilst many of the northern parts of the 3, such as Mead Vale, became part of the new Service 6. The 6 also took in parts of the old supported 50 route, providing a service to communities that might otherwise be cut off. A key part of the new Service 6 route was to take in Worle High Street, which gave more local connections and also ensured 4+ trips an hour between the town centre and Worle High Street in both directions in the core of the day during the week (in combination with the Service 7). The BSIP funding also allowed for additional morning and evening services and a Sunday service.

Service 7 provides a significant bus route between Worle Interchange and Locking Parklands, both on the eastern fringe of Weston-super-Mare. The 7 provides access by bus to the North Worle, Worle High Street, Milton, Weston-super-Mare town centre, the Severn Road area, Devonshire Road, Loxton Road, Weston General Hospital, Oldmixon, Haywood Village, and Locking Parklands. The 7 currently carries around 70,000 passengers a month, and operates at a typical frequency of one bus every 30 minutes.

The 7 has existed for a number of years in various forms, but BSIP enabled it to be extended in the south from Heywood Village to as far as Locking Parklands. BSIP funding also enabled additional morning and evening journeys, and an enhanced frequency on Sundays. As mentioned above, this has ensured 4+ trips an hour between the town centre and Worle High Street in both directions in the core of the day during the week (in combination with the Service 6).

There is a future aspiration for the 7 to provide a circular route around the town, by linking Locking Parklands to Worle, likely using the proposed extension of Apprentice Way to Churchland Way.

It is important to note that Service 6 needs to see a large increase in usage to ensure its long-term viability, but Service 7 also requires further usage too. This emphasises how vital it is to encourage modal shift and that local people consider the bus as a desirable way to complete their journeys, whether it’s for travel to/from the High Street or for people travelling from the surrounding residential roads to other locations such as the town centre, seafront or the hospital. This also has a knock-on impact that people using public transport may choose to use local shops and amenities on their way to/from the stop, or whilst waiting for a bus, in contrast to car users who may bypass the high street altogether. This in turn boosts the viability of the high street as a centre of shopping, employment and other activity.

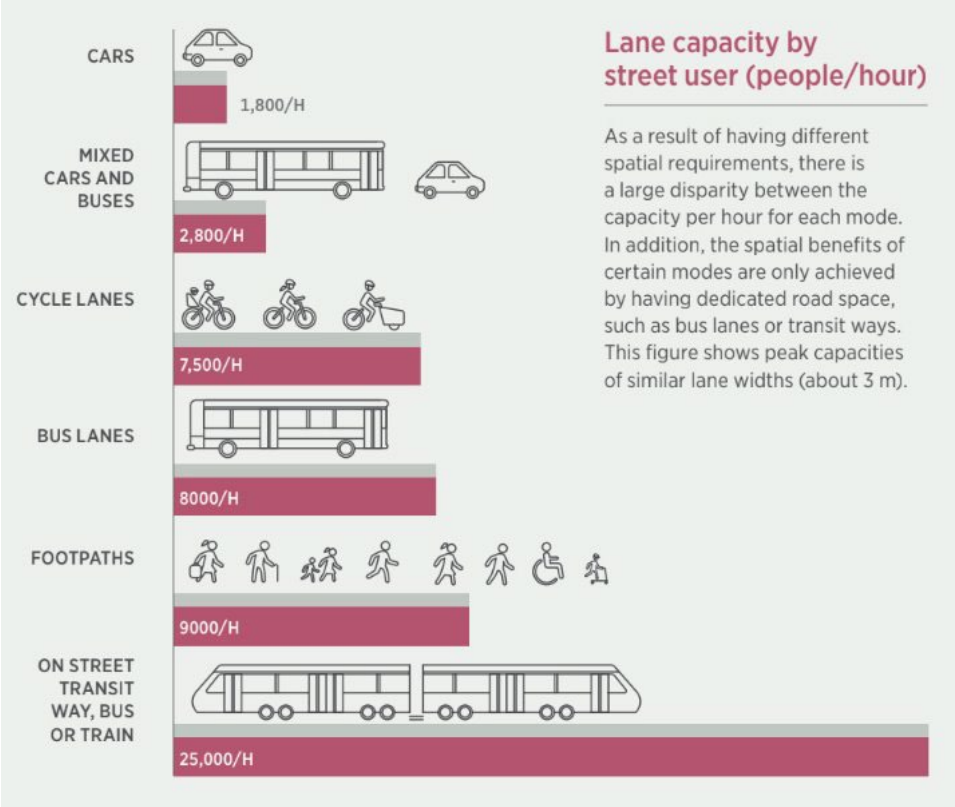
Figures for Services 6 & 7 in May 2025 show that 6,096 trips started at the stops on the high street and 1,489 started at stops near the High Street. It’s fair to assume the people got off at the same stops in the other direction at another point in the day. Adding this all together, this equates to an average of 489 journeys starting or ending each day at stops on or near Worle High Street. Whilst this is a high number, and the High Street is clearly a highly desirable destination for local travel, we want to increase this usage by improving the attractiveness of the stops and passenger facilities.

In addition to the use of stops in the immediate area, many more trips will see people on the bus whilst it travels down the High Street even if they don’t get on or off, so it is vital

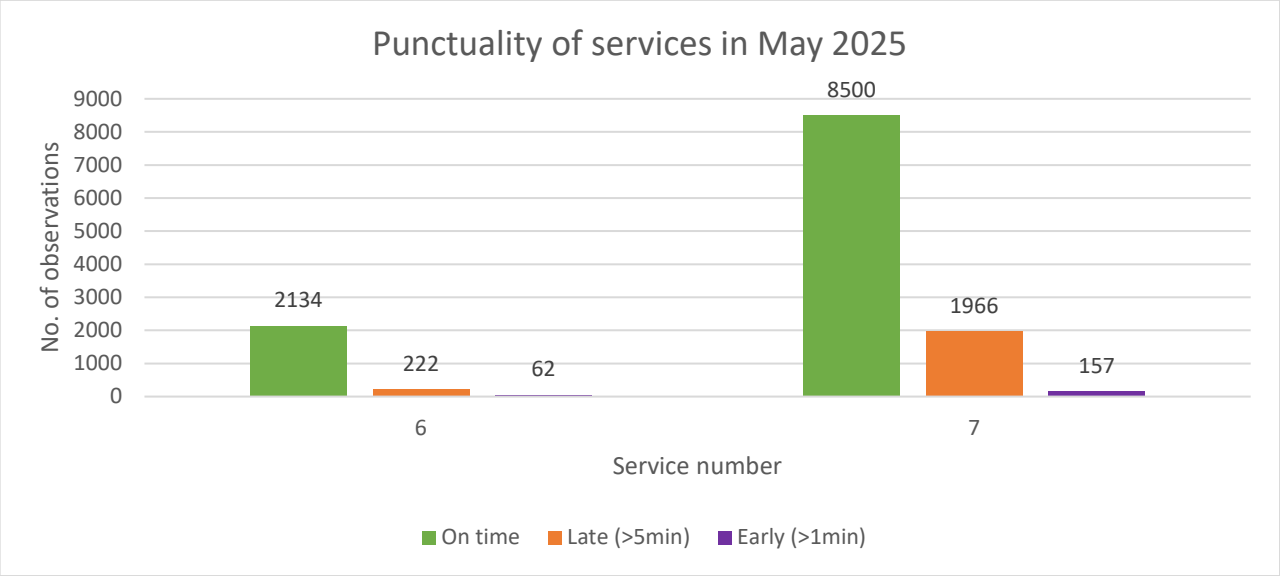
that journeys continue to move quickly, given that this is a key route for people using the bus between the Town Centre, Milton Road, Upper Bristol Road, Mead Vale, and various parts of Worle.

Increasing the use of bus services through Worle High Street is a key means of reducing the impact of future growth on congestion of our road network.

Buses have the capacity to carry a large number of passengers within existing road space. On Worle High Street, approximately 12,000 people are transported each day by 11,000 non-bus vehicles, whereas around 1,400 people are transported by around 100 buses per day. This means around 10% of all people travelling along Worle High Street are carried by less than 1% of all traffic.



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.



To ensure a stable commercial future to enable capital investments from First such as electric buses, a combination of service efficiencies and patronage growth is needed to reduce ongoing support. Planned highway improvements at Worle High Street, Weston-super-Mare interchange, Worle interchange, and at Queensway are expected to facilitate these efficiencies in Weston-super-Mare.

Scheme for Worle High Street

Worle High Street has been identified as a location where buses can be delayed due to congestion and the poor design of the existing road layout, and where passenger numbers are suppressed by poor passenger infrastructure and pedestrian accessibility.

Scheme identification

The following options were originally considered for improvements to bus journey times and patronage at Worle High Street:

1) An enforced bus gate to restrict general traffic using the High Street in one or both directions. This would displace through-traffic onto potentially more suitable routes (e.g. New Bristol Road), providing an environmental benefit to the High Street area for vulnerable road users while providing a bus journey time improvement through the reduction in congestion on the High Street itself.

2) Changes to the High Street's junction with Milton Road and New Bristol Road to reduce the congestion that affects bus journey times and reliability.

3) Public realm improvements to the central area of Worle High Street aimed at improving waiting facilities for bus passengers while creating a nicer area to dwell and interchange between services. This option could include elements of a transport hub, e.g. cycle infrastructure and wayfinding improvements.

4) Associated improvements to The Scaurs and Ebdon Road to improve accessibility and reduce segregation by improving pedestrian routes to and from the High Street. This is likely to increase bus patronage by removing barriers that local people face when trying to access the bus services on the High Street.

Option 1 was discounted due to a disproportionate impact that this would have to local traffic. The remaining options were developed further during concept and preliminary design and through public and stakeholder engagement.

Design development

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

Several options were considered for improvements to the High Street's junction with Milton Road and New Bristol Road, however the constrained nature of the available land meant that benefits were smaller while costs were greater than expected. It was therefore decided not to proceed with changes at this location.

Three workshops were held with the community between October 2023 and February 2024 to help understand local issues and to identify appropriate solutions for the High Street, The Scaurs and Ebdon Road. A separate online event was held in December 2023 for local businesses to have their say.

Briefings with elected representatives have been held at various stages of the design process.

Based on this input, a proposed design has been developed which focuses on the following elements:

1) Enhanced bus waiting areas along the High Street.

2) A Transport hub at The Maltings.

3) 20mph zone on the High Street and surrounding roads with gateway features.

4) Improved pedestrian facilities along the High Street to include continuous crossings and raised pedestrian crossings where possible.

5) Additional disabled parking and a loading bay along the High Street.

6) One-way sections on The Scaurs and Ebdon Road to reduce conflict and to enable new pedestrian footways

Fig 1: A visualisation showing the changes proposed between The Maltings and Station Road

The changes are intended to improve pedestrian and bus passenger facilities along the High Street and improve pedestrian access to the High Street, while the traffic calming effect of the proposed measures and reduced speed limits will improve safety by encouraging through-traffic to use more appropriate routes. A reduction in traffic will reduce the impact of congestion on bus journey times and reliability.

Benefits realisation

Benefits for bus passengers and pedestrians

The changes are intended to create a sustainable travel network within the local community where bus travel is at the fore with good pedestrian links to the wider area and cycle facilities available for onward journeys.

The existing older bus shelters along the High Street will be replaced with new shelters with modern and effective electronic information displays. A new shelter will be provided at the eastbound stop by Mendip Avenue. At The Maltings, there will other facilities intended to encourage integrating walking and cycling into bus journeys, and to encourage interchanging between the 6 and 7 services.

Improving pedestrian links to the areas north-east of the High Street by creating footways on The Scaurs and Ebdon Road will improve the accessibility to the bus stops on the High Street.

The changes are expected to provide a visual uplift to the High Street as well as providing seating facilities and planting, which will make a more attractive area to visit and dwell.

Overall, it is expected that these changes will increase patronage of the local bus services.

Existing traffic data and delays to bus services

Buses currently experience delays on the High Street, 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 6 and 7 bus routes between bus stops at either end of Worle High Street.

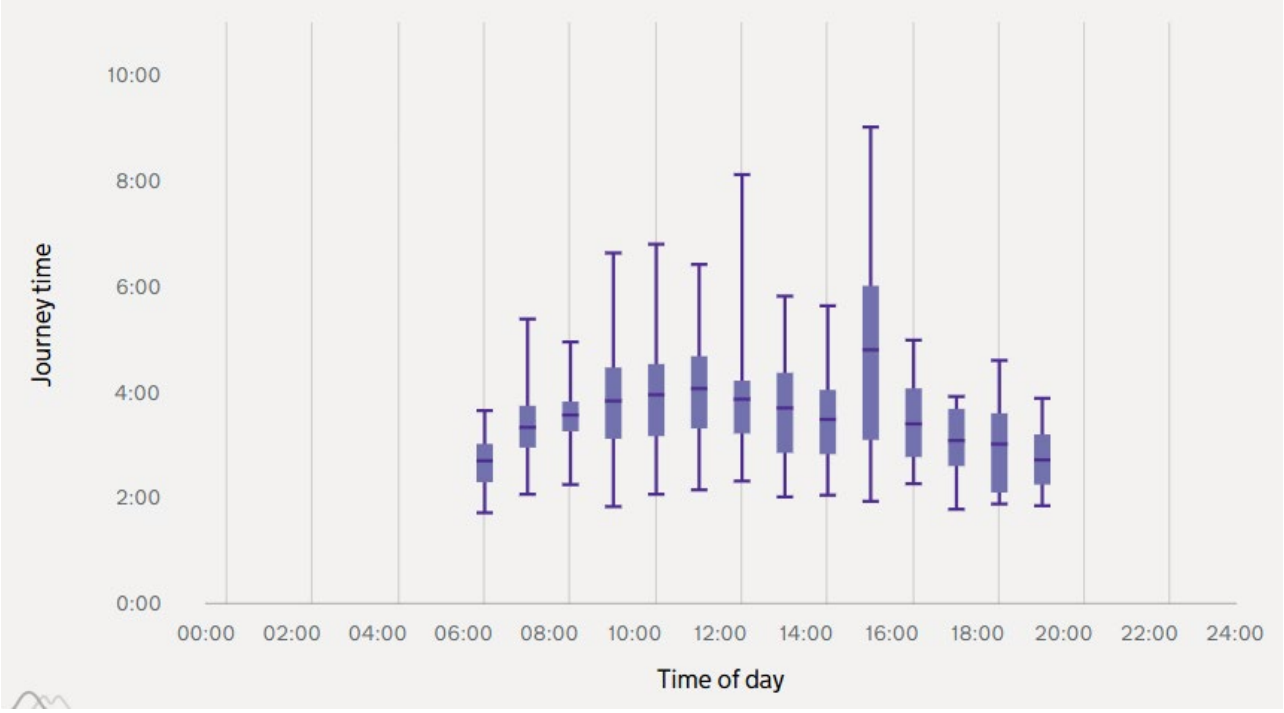


Fig 2: Service 6 westbound journey times between the Oakdale Gardens and Spring Hill Drive bus stops in May 2025 (source: Analyse Open Bus Data)

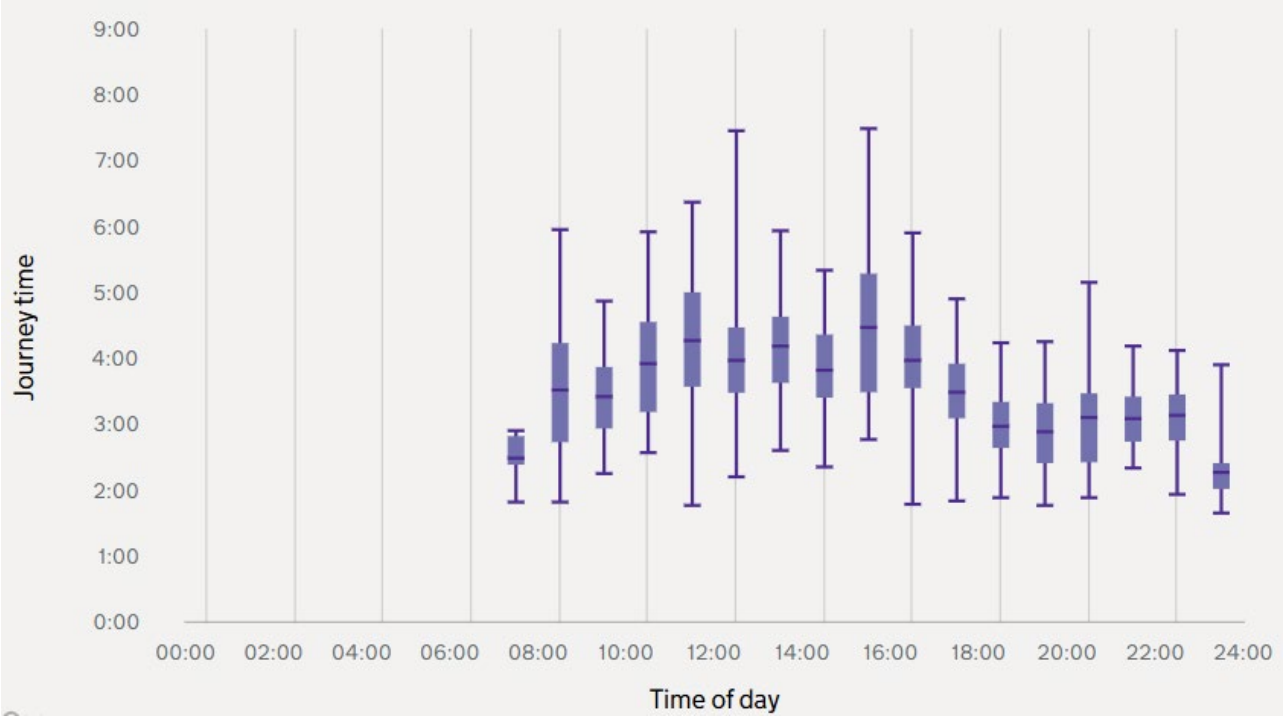


Fig 3: Service 7 eastbound journey times between the Spring Hill Drive and Bideford Road bus stops in May 2025 (source: Analyse Open Bus Data)

The ABOD data shows significant journey time variability through the day, though particularly in the afternoon around school closing times. The variability in journey times means that operators need to build flexibility into their timetables, which means that the benefits of faster journeys are not realised.

Expected benefits to bus journey times

It is expected that the proposed changes to the High Street will displace some through traffic onto other more suitable routes. Improving pedestrian links to the High Street is likely to reduce the number of car trips to the High Street by encouraging walking and wheeling. Improving facilities for bus passengers will encourage mode shift from private cars to bus.

Parking will be more formalised to include disabled and loading bays which should help relieve parking issues and enable traffic to flow more easily.

The cumulative effect of the changes will be a reduced volume of traffic using the High Street, which will reduce congestion, particularly at the Milton Road junction and in the area around the Station Road and Scaurs mini-roundabout. This will benefit buses by reducing journey times and improving service reliability.

Other benefits

The changes to the High Street will change the street scene and introduce elements of traffic calming as well as a 20mph zone across the High Street area. Revisions to footways and crossing points on the High Street will aid pedestrian movements. It is expected that these measures will improve road safety, reducing the number of injuries seen in this area. The new footways on The Scaurs and Ebdon Road will further improve road safety for vulnerable users.

Encouraging more people to walk to and use the High Street to access public transport, and by making the High Street a nicer place to spend time, will also encourage people to make greater use of the local businesses and amenities.

We expect that the changes to the High Street will displace some through-traffic that does not utilise the local facilities. The reduction of through-traffic will further improve the local environment, reduce the prevalence of injuries, and make the High Street a more attractive place to spend time. We do not anticipate that this will reduce the number of vehicles accessing local businesses.

The proposed scheme will provide an opportunity to undertake maintenance of footways and pedestrian areas, carriageways and drainage.

Impact to general traffic

A SATURN microsimulation model was used to model the impacts of the proposed scheme to understand the effect on the High Street and the surrounding areas. Surveys were conducted in December 2023 to update the model prior to use. The model includes the proposed changes at Queensway and the Junction 21 scheme.

The surveys that support the model show the extent of through traffic on the High Street with 78% of eastbound traffic and 58% of westbound traffic using the High Street to travel further afield.

The model shows that traffic on the High Street is reduced by over 50% with the scheme in place and that the majority of traffic reroutes onto the New Bristol Road. Church Road shows an increase in eastbound traffic both in the AM and PM peak but a smaller reduction in westbound traffic in the AM peak. The Scaurs and Ebdon Road show an increase in northbound and southbound traffic respectively but no significant increase in

overall vehicular movements. The junction of High Street, New Bristol Road, Locking Road and Milton Road shows an increase in traffic on New Bristol Road with a very slight increase on Locking Road but a reduction on High Street and Milton Road.

Delivery programme

The next step is to start the detailed design process before reviewing the contractor's target cost in Spring 2026. Statutory consultation to make the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) will take place in Spring 2026. We expect the works to start on site in June 2026 and for works to take six months.

DECISION:

- To approve the revised design for the BSIP junction improvement scheme at Worle High Street, including changes to The Scaurs and Ebdon Road.

- To authorise officers to proceed with implementing the BSIP infrastructure scheme at Worle High Street, including changes to The Scaurs and Ebdon Road.

REASONS:

To help realise the journey time, reliability improvements and increased patronage necessary to ensure the 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 issues affecting bus services at this location, combined with the likelihood of future growth exacerbating those issues if not dealt with using this funding opportunity. The 7 is a critically important service in Weston-super-Mare, being particularly well used and relied upon by residents and serving a number of key locations in the town, such as the town centre, Worle High Street and the hospital. We have already had to make changes to the Service 7 to streamline the service and improve its long-term financial sustainability, but the service still needs further improvements in sustainability, and so these steps are essential – as part of that process – for improving the appeal of Service 6 & 7 to current and future bus users.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

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

Costs

Exact scheme costs have not been fully assessed and confirmed at this stage, but are currently estimated to be £2,950,000, 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 KDT151 project codes BSIP027 and BSIP049 which currently have approved capital programme budgets of £2,950,000 combined.

These costs will be coded to Asset Register Infrastructure Asset A6031-01 which is the council's reference for capital works relating to B-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.

Alliance Homes have agreed to make a contribution of £34,000 for improvements to the paving at The Maltings.

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 Worle High Street 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 Worle High Street scheme, consultation and

engagement has been undertaken with stakeholders for two years. This includes discussions with ward members, Cabinet Members, the local community and bus operators.

Three workshops were held with the local community between October 2023 and February 2024 to help understand local issues and to identify appropriate solutions for the High Street, The Scaurs and Ebdon Road. A separate online event was held in December 2023 for local businesses to have their say. Briefings with elected representatives have been held at various stages of the design process.

A public engagement event was held in July 2025 sharing the preliminary designs and an online SNAP survey was launched at that time. 141 online surveys were completed, and feedback was received from the in-person event. The online survey showed that 64% of respondents either support or strongly support the improvements. While there is broad support for measures to improve pedestrian safety, accessibility and the overall appearance of Worle High Street, concerns remain about traffic flow, parking and the potential impact on businesses. Respondents emphasised the need for careful planning, enforcement and ongoing maintenance to ensure the success of the proposed changes.

Below is a summary of comments raised and key themes from workshops and consultation events and how these have been considered by the project team.

<u>Common or significant feedback raised and officer responses</u>

Source	**Issue / concern raised**	**Intervention**
Community Workshops	Pedestrian safety, narrow pavements, no pavements	Widened pavements and continuous crossings at junctions where possible, provision of crossing points along the High Street, new footways on The Scaurs / Ebdon Road enabled by making traffic flows one-way
Community Workshops	Improved sustainable transport measures	Improved bus waiting facilities along full section of the route. Improved pedestrian access. Provision of cycle facilities
Community Workshops	Traffic speed / congestion	Measures to discourage through traffic on the route including traffic calming / 20mph zone
Community Workshops	Lack of village feel / identity	Provision of a gateway at either end of the main section of the High Street, community facilities – seating, planting, notice board
Community Workshops	Ponding / cluttered pavements	Being resolved through the design process where possible
Community Workshops	Traffic restrictions junction with Milton Road, New Bristol Road	Not being progressed at this stage due to cost and feasibility
SNAP Survey / Public Consultation	Parking and loading	Provision of a loading bay and disabled bays on the High Street and look to retain additional parking within the detailed design

Summary of future/remaining engagement

Officers will continue to work with the local community and key stakeholders during the design development and delivery of the scheme.

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 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.

- **Journey time delays, complaints, disruption during works –** The works at Worle High Street will take approximately six months. This is a busy area used by many road users and people accessing the local businesses. 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 2023-24. This NPPF update includes the need to identify residential development within Green Belt land if no other appropriate locations can be identified.

Our preferred options for site allocations have been agreed in principle, pending final cabinet approval in October. We are now updating our strategic transport modelling to enable the Council to understand the impacts from the full scale of proposed Local Plan development. This will 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 plans.

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

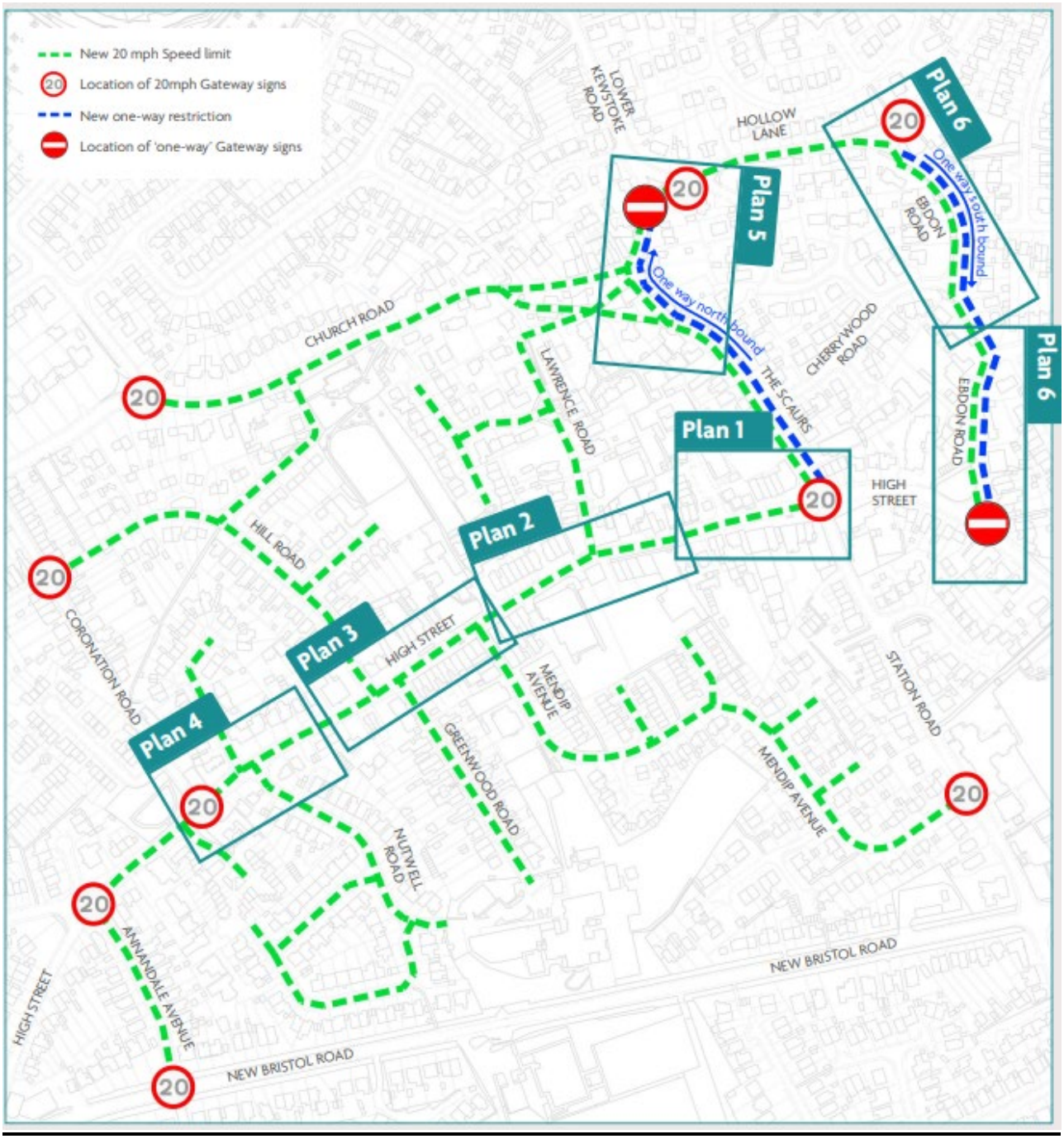
Date: 26 September 2025

WITH ADVICE FROM:

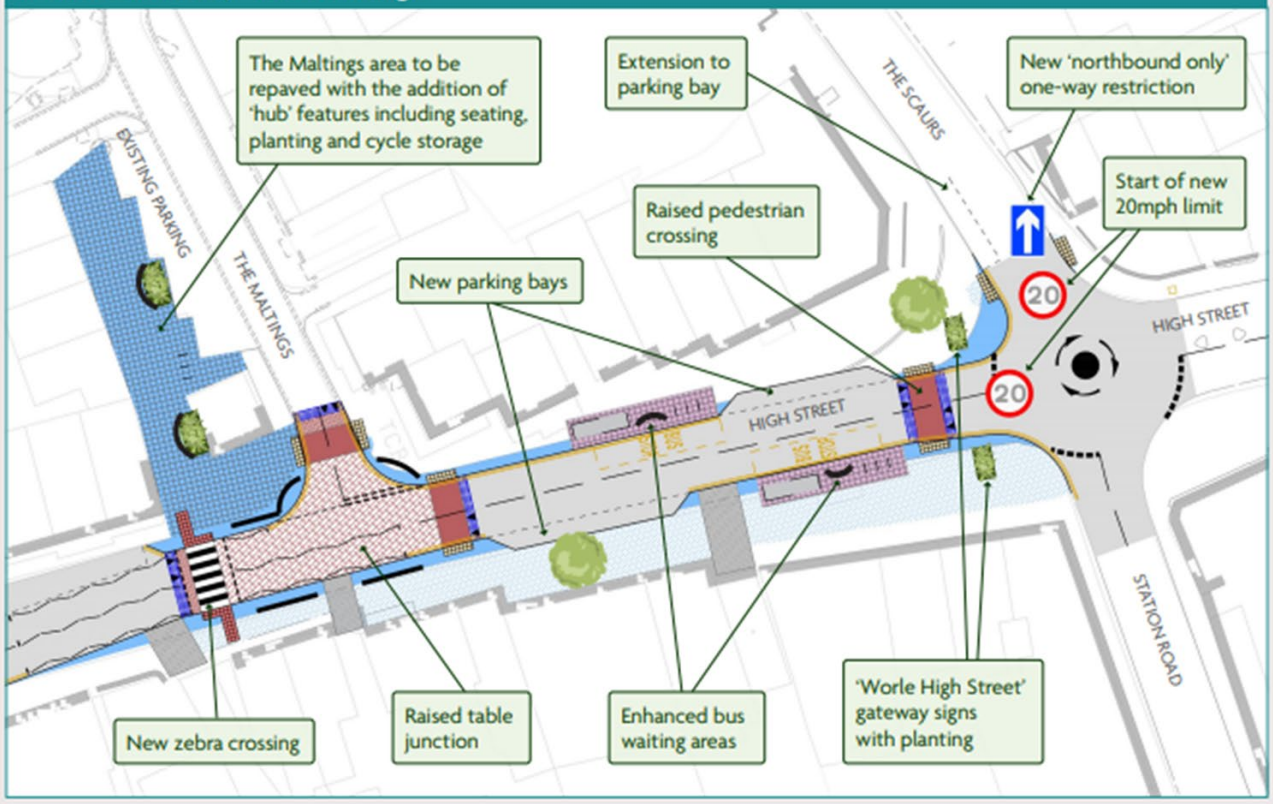
Signed:  Director of Environment, Assets and Transport Services

Date: 26 September 2025

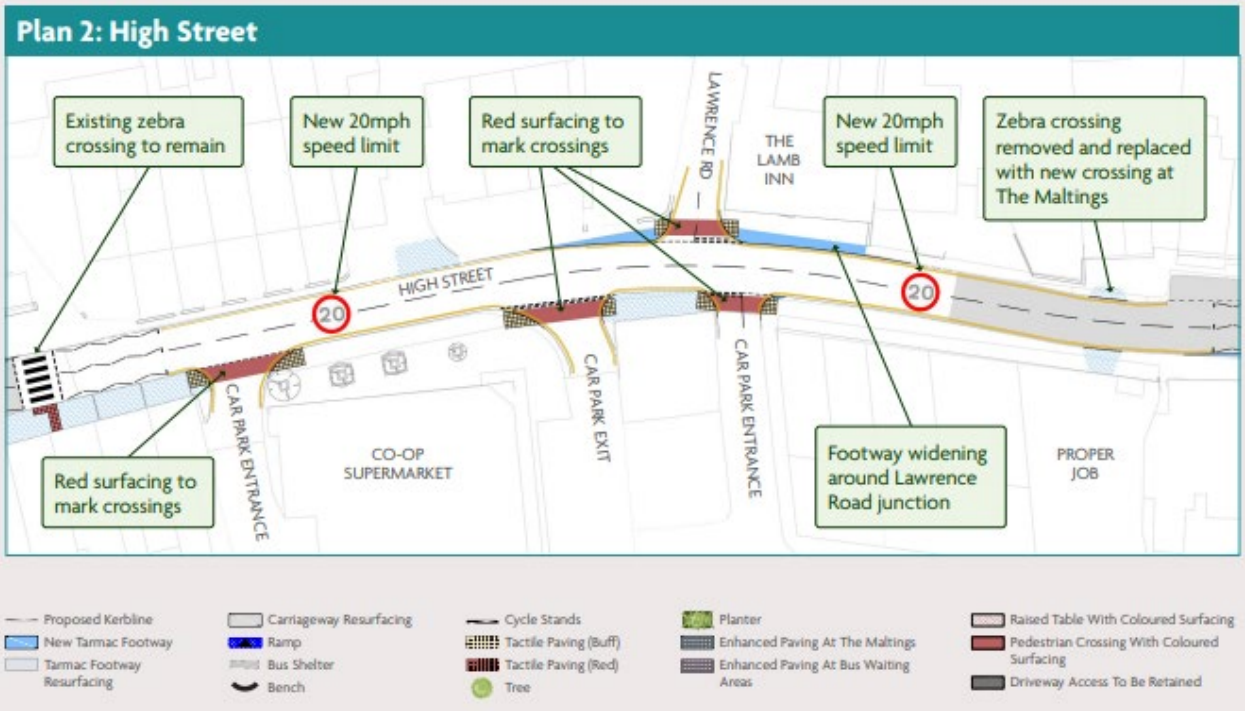
Appendix – Proposed designs



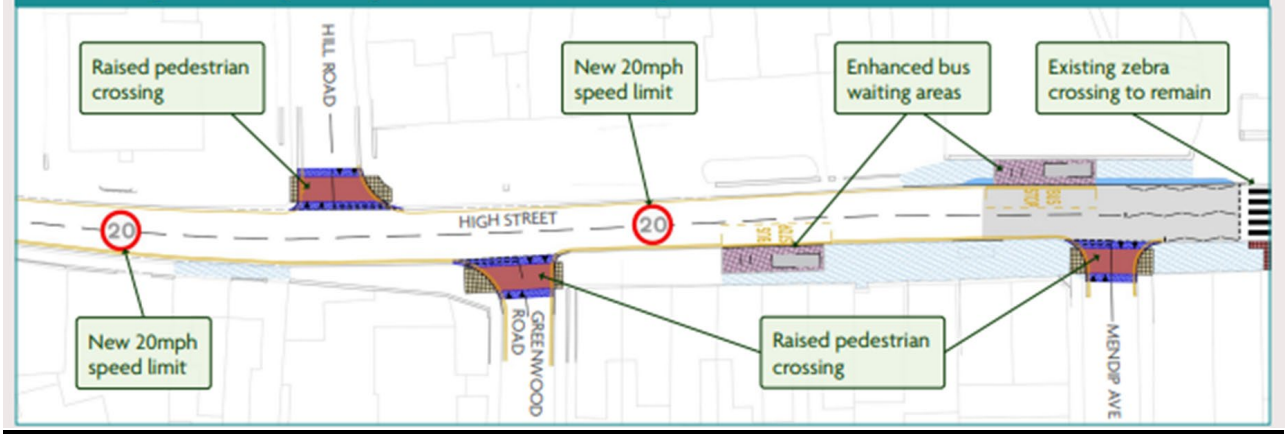
Plan 1: The Hub / The Maltings



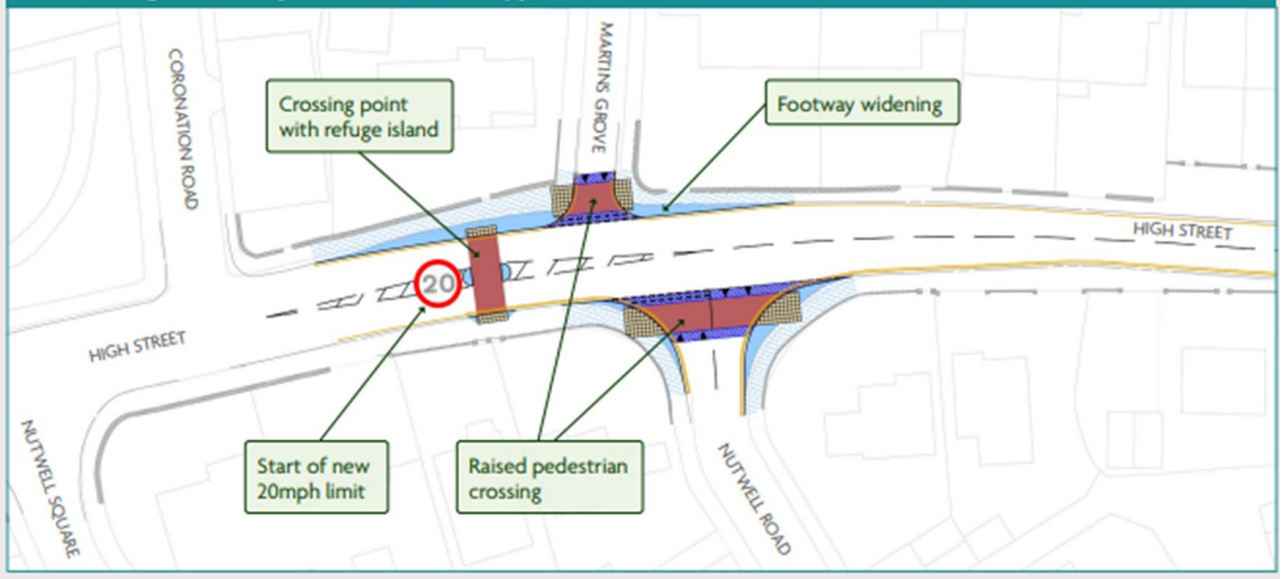
Plan 2: High Street



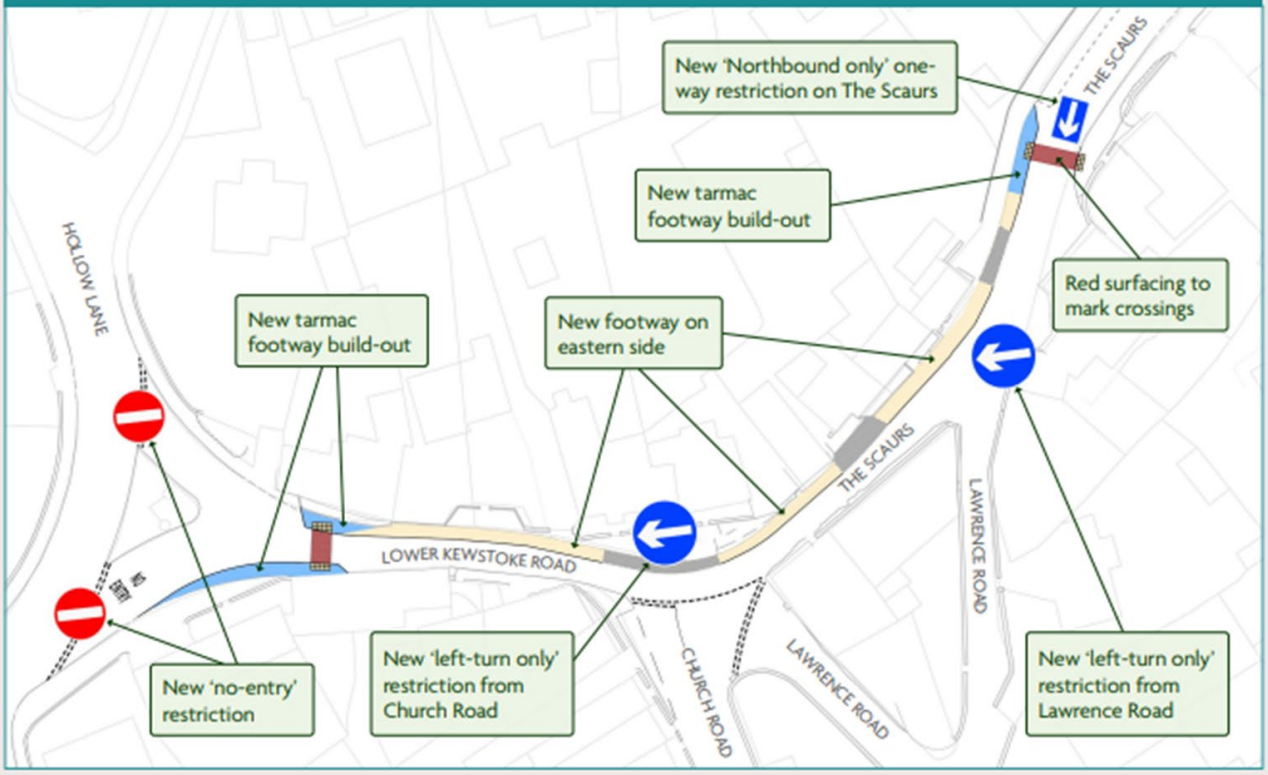
Plan 3: High Street (Mendip Avenue to Hill Road)



Plan 4: High Street (Western Gateway)



Plan 5: The Scaurs



Plan 6: Ebdon Road