

Wiltshire Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan

Wiltshire Council

1. Overview

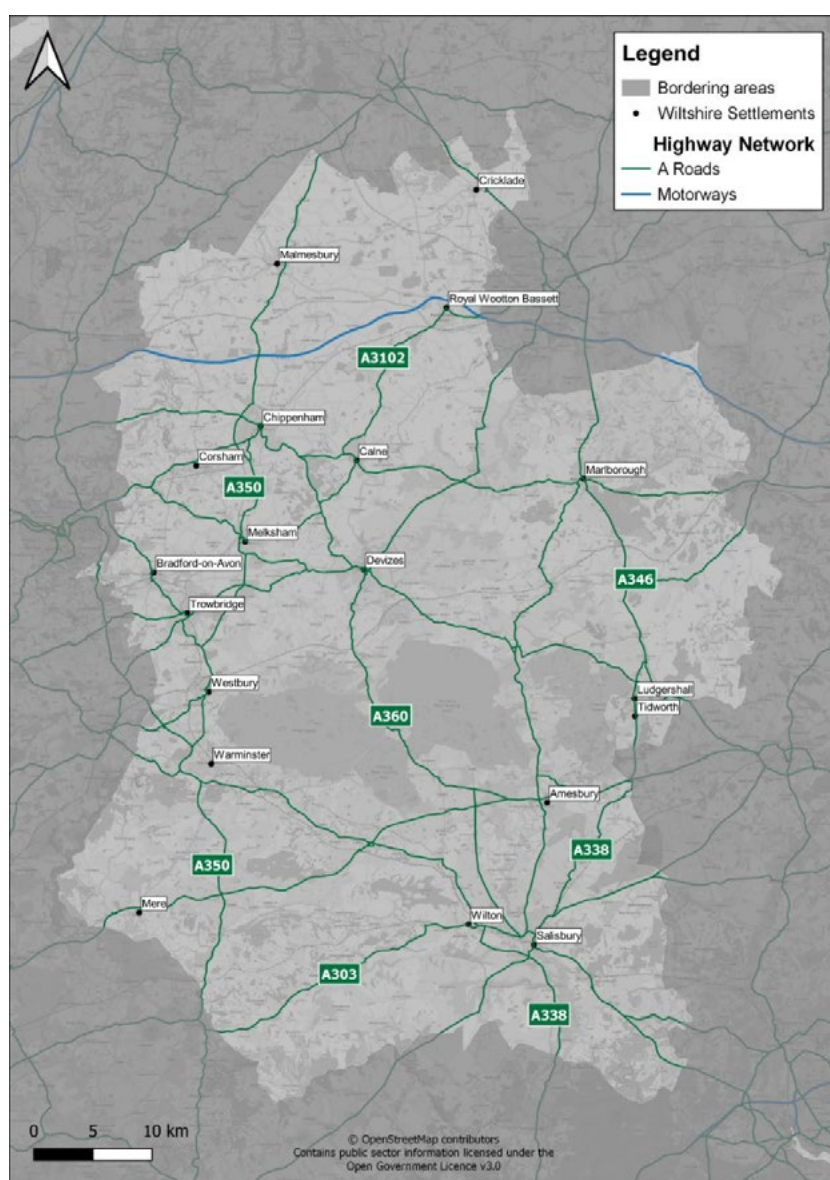
Wiltshire Council intends to enter into an Enhanced Partnership. The intention to pursue an Enhanced Partnership was decided on 29 June 2021.

This Bus Service Improvement Plan will be published on 29 October 2021 and the Enhanced Partnership will enter force on 1 April 2022. Wiltshire Council will publish a review of the BSIP by 31 October of each subsequent year for as long as the Enhanced Partnership is in force.

The BSIP will be consistent with the Bus Strategy and wider Local Transport Plan 3 covering the period 2011 – 2026 and which can be found [here](#).

This Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) covers the entire administrative area of Wiltshire Council illustrated at Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1 – Wiltshire Administrative Area



2. Current bus offer to passengers

2.1. Introduction

This section describes the bus service offer within Wiltshire, assesses its quality and suitability for the residents of Wiltshire residents, and analyses the impact of background highway and socio-demographic conditions on buses. This section references the comprehensive discussion of baseline conditions within Wiltshire found in 'Wiltshire Bus Service Improvement Baseline Note' (WBN).

2.2. Analysis of existing local bus services compared to BSIP outcomes

2.2.1. Operator context

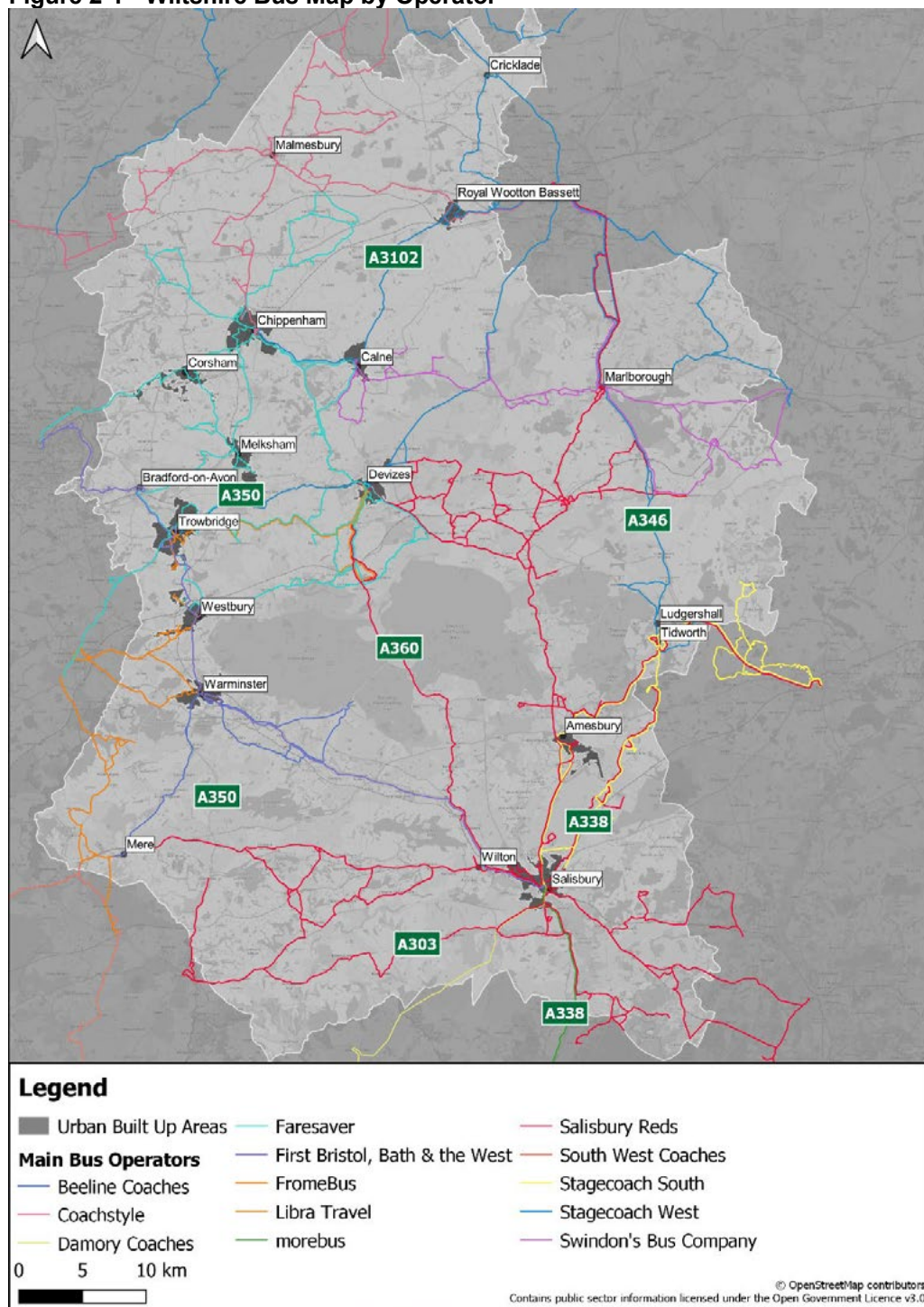
The bus network within Wiltshire is provided by several different operators, with different primary operators across differing parts of the local authority. Wiltshire Council supports around 70% of bus services operating in its area, the main exceptions being urban services in Salisbury and a number of strategic interurban services. Commercial bus services in Wiltshire are mainly provided by :

- Go South Coast (operating mainly as Salisbury Reds in South and East Wiltshire)
- Stagecoach West (North and East Wiltshire);
- Independent operator Faresaver (West/North Wiltshire).
- First who operate a small number of bus services in Wiltshire.

These operators also operate tendered services in the same areas, along with a number of other smaller bus operating companies and community transport providers in Wiltshire.

Figure 2-1 shows the bus map for Wiltshire as of summer 2021.

Figure 2-1 - Wiltshire Bus Map by Operator



2.2.2. Bus service supply

Summary

The Wiltshire bus service network has remained largely unaltered in structure for some years, although there have been some changes to service numbers, frequencies and the company running each route. The stability in bus network support provided by Wiltshire Council (WBN section 6.4) has assisted in retaining more passengers than in some other neighbouring authorities (WBN Figure 6-1).

In addition, outside Salisbury and a few key interurban services, weekday service frequencies are mostly hourly or less, which is not sufficient to attract mode shift. Some services run less often at weekends, with very few services operating in the county on Sundays.

In the Salisbury area, the majority of daytime bus services are run on a commercial basis* with services within the city generally running at 15–30-minute headways. Outside the Salisbury area, only 30% of the bus network is run commercially* and in many cases the commerciality of the service has been heavily influenced by the carriage of school and college students. (* - indications of commerciality are based on pre-covid information).

Tendered services

Tendered weekday services are also heavily built around the carriage of students, which has enabled off-peak service to be provided in a very cost-effective manner. However, this has meant that peak hour journeys on these services are often unattractive to commuters, particularly as these timetables tend to be timed to coincide with the start and finish times of educational establishments.

The inter-urban bus network across Wiltshire is generally good in terms of connectivity but services are operated by several different companies and so are not marketed as a single network. Inter-urban journeys in Wiltshire are generally slow as they also act as a local service for the villages and housing estates along the route and so there is a need to provide more direct and faster journeys on certain routes to make them a realistic alternative to making the same journey by car.

Few services operate more frequently than half-hourly, the highest frequencies being between Chippenham, Corsham and Bath (3 buses per hour), between Swindon and Royal Wootton Bassett (5 buses per hour) and between Andover and Tidworth (4 buses per hour). The state of the interurban network is summarised in WBN Section 5.4, with this table highlighting the limited nature of the interurban network both in the evenings and on Sundays. WBN Section 5.4 outlines further detail of the state of the current bus network and frequencies.

Access to employment

Analysis conducted in WBN section 3.4.2 has highlighted that there are 12,000 workers travelling between Wiltshire and Bath and North East Somerset (WBN Table 3-3) with 1,300 residents of Trowbridge travelling to Bath and North East Somerset for work (WBN Table 3-4). Of these commuters only a small number currently utilise the bus service to travel to Bath, indicating that the current service is undesirable to facilitate modal shift (WBN Section 3.4.3).

At present, only Chippenham and Corsham are served by a regular service, the X31 which operates every 20 minutes. These services are however slowed down due to diverting from the main road to serve isolated housing estates such as Rudloe. As such the bus service is not competitive with the train, which takes 10 minutes, or driving to a Park and Ride site to the north of Bath as there is currently no Park and Ride provision to the east of Bath. Our analysis has highlighted that there is additional scope for buses to capture modal shift within the Bath travel to work area within the west of Wiltshire, for example, Melksham however does not have a frequent direct link to Bath, despite around 350 workers currently travelling between the two areas.

Similarly, within the Swindon travel to work area WBN Section 5.4 outlines that there are currently a limited number of services, which are for the most part hourly, between Swindon and its hinterlands within Wiltshire. This is despite WBN Section 3.4.2 suggesting that there are 18,000 people travelling in either direction between Wiltshire and Swindon. The lack of flexibility in terms of frequency of buses is likely to be a major barrier to use of the bus within this travel to work area and could account for why less than 1% of workers use the current bus service to travel to Swindon for work. An opportunity therefore exists to strengthen services into Swindon within its travel to work area to encourage mode shift. This will build upon the investment of time and resources by Stagecoach to improve the 55 service over the past 10 years.

Under provision between Salisbury and its travel to work area has also been highlighted, for example with the hourly bus service to Devizes which takes around 1 hour 40 minutes.

Figure 2-2 - Wiltshire Key Interurban Bus Network



Outside Salisbury, local services linking housing estates within most of the market towns are generally funded by Wiltshire Council and often lack peak hour journeys or good integration with other public transport services. Frequencies are also inadequate to allow for flexible journeys or commuters. As such, a large proportion of bus users within Wiltshire (47% according to our bus service survey) utilise the bus because they have no alternative mode available.

Summary:

- Low frequency services on town services outside Salisbury, with limited peak-period services.
- Slow interurban services due to diversions to serve villages and housing developments, and low frequencies even to major attractors of demand such as Bath and Swindon.
- Infrequent and slow bus services outside the core interurban and town networks.

2.2.3. Bus fares

The fares charged for bus journeys across Wiltshire vary across the county, with those in the north of the county being generally lower than those in the south and east (WBN Section 5.10.1). For example, a day ticket offered by Faresaver is currently £7.00 (WBN Table 5-12) and £7.50 with Stagecoach West (WBN Table 5-13) whilst the equivalent ticket offered by Salisbury Reds for travel beyond Salisbury costs £9.00 (WBN Table 5-15).). The purchasing options for tickets for the larger operators are summarised in Table 2-1.

Operators of commercial services do not generally accept tickets issued by other operators, although tickets issued by other operators are accepted on tendered services over common sections of route. Other examples of ticket inter-availability include:

- The Wiltshire Day Rover ticket is organised by the council and is issued and accepted by all operators in the county. Each individual operator retains the revenue for each ticket sold. However, since the introduction of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, use of this ticket has fallen considerably and the ticket is subject to limited public knowledge.
- A multi-operator ticket called Swindon TravelPass Plus is valid on Stagecoach West and Swindon Bus Company services for passengers travelling to Swindon from towns such as Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade, although this does not allow interchange with services within Wiltshire.
- Stagecoach South and Salisbury Reds accept each other's tickets on the Activ8 service between Andover, Tidworth, Amesbury and Salisbury.
- The Avon Rider ticket which can be used on nearly all of operators services across the WECA (West of England Combined Authority) area comprising Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Bristol and North Somerset. It is also accepted on services in Wiltshire operated by Faresaver and First for travel to Bath from Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge and Westbury (and vice versa)

Each operator offers their own range of ticketing products, with the majority offering tickets on a weekly, monthly and annual basis. The presentation is however variable, with each operator adapting digital ticketing in slightly differing ways. Faresaver, together with all operators of tendered services, offer multi-journey/carnet ticketing products, although these are not standardised in terms of the number of individual days included within the bundle. These tickets are becoming increasingly desirable due to more flexible working and travel habits and may play a significant role in attracting bus passengers back to the network after the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Group tickets are available for the Salisbury Park and Ride services and on day rover tickets offered by most operators. However a group single/day return ticket is not generally available on other services operating in Wiltshire.

The provision of concessionary travel to older and disabled people is mandated by the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme. Validity on weekends is at any time; on weekdays validity starts at 09:30 but with a number of timed exceptions on infrequent rural services – for instance it is valid from 09:10 on route 54 between Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon.

The PlusBus ticket is also available to purchase with train tickets to enable travel to/from railway stations by bus.

The providing of discounted travel to young people varies considerably. Stagecoach and First deem those under the age of 16 are eligible for a child's ticket whereas Faresaver and Salisbury Reds offer those tickets to those under the age of 18. First also offer an intermediate discount to young adults (aged 16 – 21). This variability may create complexities in understanding of eligibility for ticketing and could lead to young people purchasing a less relevant ticket to their needs, as well as increasing the financial burden on a group with less disposable income.

A comprehensive discussion of bus fares within Wiltshire is available in WBN section 5.10.

Table 2-1 - Ticket options for larger operators

Operator	Ticket purchasing option
Go South Coast	theKEY, mobile ticket, on bus, shop
First	Online, m-ticket, on bus,
Faresaver	Mobile ticket, on bus
Stagecoach	Online, mobile ticket, on bus

Summary:

- Bus fares are variable across Wiltshire, with passengers in the north of the county generally paying lower fares than those in the south/east.
- Multi-operator ticketing is limited to a Wiltshire-wide day rover, and specific corridors and travel-to-work areas. There may be scope to encourage more travel by bus by extending the scope to travel to more destinations on one ticket, particularly to those who do not currently have access to a car.
- Currently there is a complex and inconsistent range of discounts for young people.

2.2.4. Bus passenger information

Much information is available on channels which are universally available across the UK: Traveline, Google Maps, Bustimes, and a variety of open-source websites such as OpenStreetMaps.

There is currently no county-wide branding for bus services in Wiltshire. In Salisbury, the majority of bus services are operated by the Go South Coast, who have adopted a distinctive Salisbury Reds branding for these routes. A small number of services elsewhere in the County also have route-specific branding applied to vehicles, such as the “Discover” D1 interurban service operated by First between Bath and Salisbury and local services in Bradford on Avon, Melksham and Westbury. Bus operators provide information for their own services.

Whilst each operator has its own website and, in many cases, a social media presence, countywide publicity provided by Wiltshire Council for bus services is limited, having been affected by funding cuts over several years. Passengers are generally directed to Traveline or bus company websites for timetable information and the availability of up-to-date printed publicity is limited.

This said, Wiltshire Council does maintain a digital platform for disseminating sustainable travel information, the Connecting Wiltshire website (www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/). This site offers journey times for all modes of transport, providing the user with information on the pollution and health impact of each of the differing modes.

Roadside timetable displays are maintained by the bus operators for commercial services, but with the Council producing these for key interchange points and most tendered services. However, the quality and consistency of these displays varies widely and are in need of an upgrade to reflect their importance in marketing and giving confidence in bus services, rather than just providing basic information about them.

There is currently limited real-time information available at bus stops outside Salisbury and the equipment that does exist is mostly life expired.

Summary:

- The reliance on bus operators to publish their own timetables at bus stops can lead to inconsistencies in information provided, potentially making the bus experience confusing for existing and prospective passengers
- Roadside information is provided to a variable standard and specification. There is limited roadside real-time information outside Salisbury.
- Wiltshire Council have a platform, Connecting Wiltshire, which has the potential to become a single source of information for passengers.

2.2.5. Bus fleet

Based on information collected for us we currently have 298 vehicles which are able to operate within Wiltshire, with many vehicles possessing Euro 6 compliant engines. The table below outlines the current emission standards of the bus fleet in Wiltshire, highlighting that 38% of the buses covering this are to Euro 6 standards, 1% are electric and 34% are older than Euro 4 standards. As such an opportunity exists to improve the emission standards of the bus fleet within Wiltshire, which will also facilitate the improvement in passenger amenities and experience.

Emissions Standard	Percentage of buses (%)
Electric	1
Euro 6	38
Euro 5	26
Euro 4	23
Older	11

Summary:

- A mixed fleet of emissions standards operates in Wiltshire, albeit it is generally to a high emission standard.

Bus priority measures

Wiltshire Council currently have a limited amount of bus priority measures in operation. These measures are outlined in WBN section 5.7, but to summarise:

Salisbury

- Bus lane – A338 Downton Road
- Bus lane – A345 Castle Road
- Contraflow bus lane - Milford Street

Rest of Wiltshire

- Devizes - Newman's Road bus gate
- Devizes - Quakers Estate (Keepers Road) bus gate
- Devizes - Rear of Market Place bus Island
- Melksham – Asda and Sainsbury's supermarkets
- Trowbridge - top of Drynham Road
- Trowbridge - access through Market Street pedestrianised area and left turn into Castle Street
- Westbury - access through High Street pedestrianised area
- Semington – High Street bus gate

Wiltshire Council is in the process of replacing existing bus gate enforcement (typically bollards) with ANPR enforcement as the maintenance of the bollards is very onerous, they often fail and then drivers ignore them. Wiltshire Council currently operate ANPR-based cameras to detect bus lane incursions. These cover a limited number of bus priority measures within the county, with some operators highlighting concerns relating to misuse of the current infrastructure which lacks enforcement, for example on Downton Road in Salisbury.

Despite current interventions in use within Wiltshire, bus services within the county still suffer from longer journey times during the peak periods to account for congestion as outlined in Table Y. This therefore highlights that there is additional scope to increase the use of bus priority to improve the reliability of bus journeys, providing opportunities for more consistent journey times and an improved service for passengers.

Route Section	Service	AM Peak Journey Time	Inter-Peak Journey Time
Chippenham - Bath	X31	90	62
Devizes – Swindon	49	68	55

Summary:

- Pinch points remain on the current highway network, and opportunities exist to reduce bus journey times and improve bus service reliability.

2.2.6. Wiltshire Council staffing – capacity and capability

As explained in Section 9 of the WBN, eight staff are engaged in public transport operations and delivery, but seven of them also arrange school transport which takes up a large amount of their time. Wiltshire Council has a strong relationship with the bus operators and maintains regular contact regarding specific operational ideas and issues. The officers are however working at full capacity and are subsequently limited in expanding their scope of engagement and strategic level work without investment in further supportive resource.

As Wiltshire Council intends to deliver extensively in all facets of the BSIP ambitions, considerable additional staffing resources will be required.

Summary:

- Limited officer capacity to provide additional engagement with bus operators and to provide proactive policy and operational direction.

2.2.7. Views of passengers and stakeholders

To inform the development of Wiltshire Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan, the Council has sought engagement with a range of internal and external stakeholders. This has included a public engagement survey, several meetings and email discussions with bus operators, meetings with local politicians including town and parish councils, and internal Wiltshire Council working groups. The purpose of this engagement has been to ensure collaborative insight to inform the decision making within this BSIP.

The following sections outline the engagement with the public and stakeholders regarding Wiltshire Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan.

2.2.7.1. Online public survey

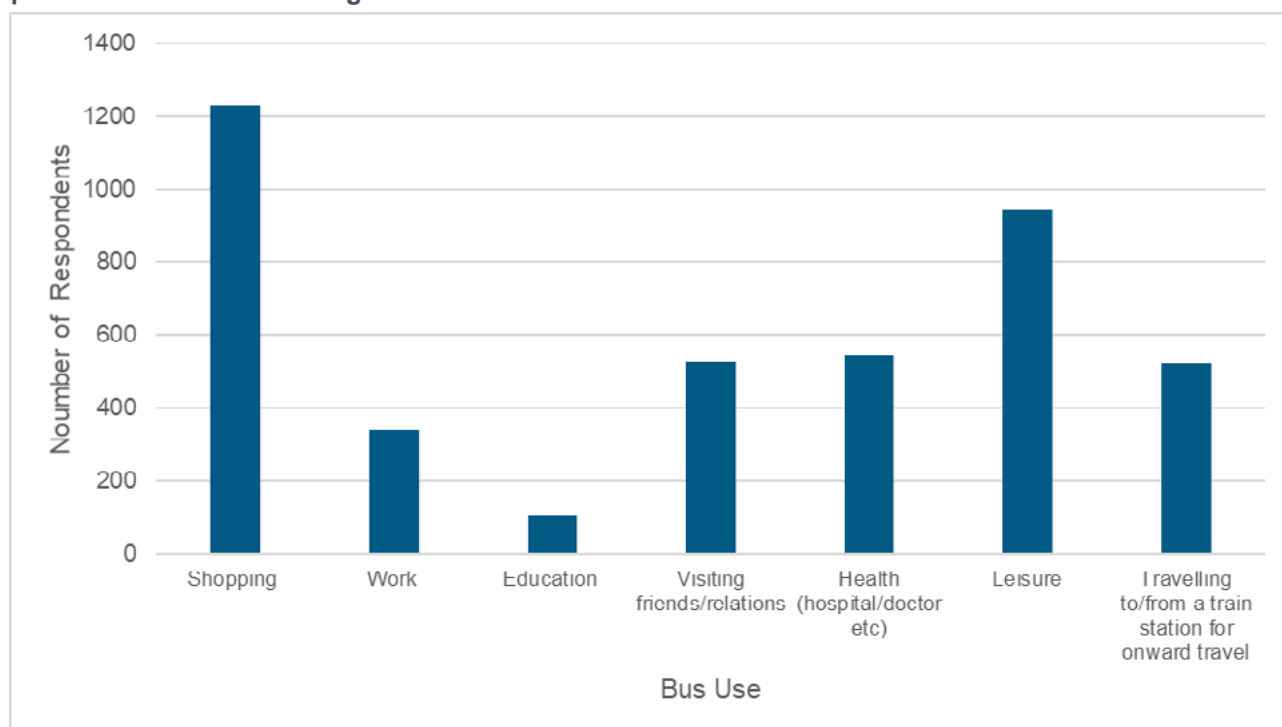
Wiltshire Council ran a non-statutory public engagement survey from 23 July to 23 August 2021. This survey was open to both individuals and businesses and received 2,047 responses from individuals and 21 responses from businesses. These businesses included 2 offices, 1 retailer, a school and 5 leisure or hospitality venues. The main aim of the survey was to understand where the bus service offering fulfils needs for travel, where it could improve and what the network lacks. The key findings from the survey are outlined below:

- Most survey persons had a Wiltshire postcode; and
- 8% of persons use the bus five or more times a week.

Reason for using the bus

- 79% of respondents stated they utilised the bus for shopping purposes. This was followed by 61% stating they used it for leisure and 35% for health visits.

Respondents reasons for using the bus



Bus affordability

- 43% of persons under 65 stated that better value fares would encourage bus usage.
- 40% of persons under 65 disagreed or strongly disagreed that they take the bus because it's affordable.
- 64% of persons under 20 stated that better value fares would encourage bus usage.
- 15% of persons agreed or strongly agreed that they take the bus because it's affordable.

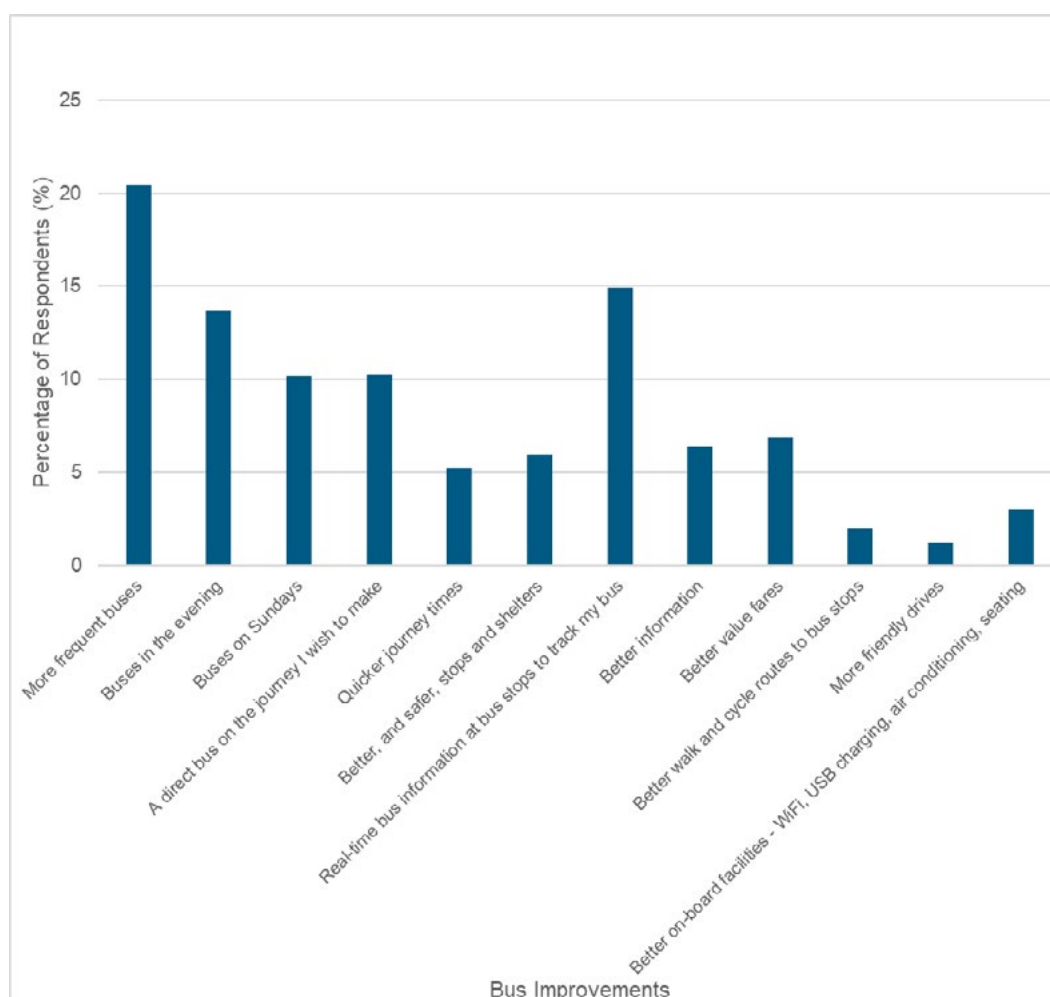
Current positives

- 64% of persons expect to use the bus the same amount post-COVID, whilst 25% expect to use the bus more post-COVID.
- 58% of persons under 20 outlined that the bus takes them where they want to go with just a short walk either side of their journey.

Future improvements

- Persons most frequently selected that more frequent buses, real time bus information at bus stops, a direct bus on journeys and buses on Sunday would encourage them to use the bus.
- When ranking the bus service, the highest proportion of survey persons disagreed that they felt safe when travelling on the bus and that the bus takes them where they want to go.

Respondents views on what would make them use the bus more



Businesses

- 65% of employees and 68% customers travel to site by car or motorcycle.
- Business persons highlighted that more frequent buses (74%) and later buses (68%) would encourage employees to use the bus.
- 68% of business persons said that more frequent and more direct buses to their site would encourage customers to use the bus.

Overall, from the survey responses for individuals, it is clear that most users do intend to continue to use the bus network, however there are key challenges limiting the extent to which the network meets the needs of Wiltshire's residents, these include the themes highlighted in the National Bus Strategy of improved bus stop infrastructure, including information, as well as more frequent and affordable buses.

When considering businesses, the responses to the survey suggest a high level of car dependency to access businesses for both workers and visitors due to poor physical connectivity to the bus network, or timetables which do not match with the needs of those engaging with the businesses. A significant opportunity exists here to improve the connectivity between bus services and local businesses, which could unlock economic and social benefits for employees and businesses alike.

2.2.7.2. Engagement with MPs

Meetings with Michelle Donelan MP, Wiltshire Council staff and elected members as well as the bus operators local to the north of Wiltshire have taken place. The MP was very supportive of the overall benefits an effective BSIP would bring to the county and wanted to add her support to overall bus usage. The general feedback from the meetings have been that bus priority should take more of a prominent role over other areas of the BSIP, which has been a common theme when meeting with bus operator's. Further meetings are planned of this nature post October 2021.

2.2.7.3. Bus operator engagement

Wiltshire Council has a strong working relationship with the local bus operators and has worked to engage with them throughout the BSIP process. This has included meetings to introduce the BSIP and offer feedback and ideas to shape Wiltshire Council's BSIP, a specific meeting to discuss bus priority and engagement exercises for feedback and ideas relating to operators' priorities. This included potential for service enhancements and bus priority schemes. The meetings conducted to date are outlined in the table below. Wiltshire Council will continue to engage with the bus operators to develop the BSIP ideas and the Enhanced Partnership (EP).

Meeting Date	Meeting Agenda	Bus Operators in Attendance
29.07.2021	Introducing the BSIP to smaller bus operators in Wiltshire and to discuss potential avenues for improvements via the BSIP.	Coachstyle, Beeline and SW Coaches, Libra Travel, South West Community Transport
05.08.2021	Introducing the BSIP to larger bus operators in Wiltshire and to discuss potential avenues for improvements via the BSIP.	First, Stagecoach, Go South Coast, Faresaver and Swindon's Bus Company.
26.08.2021	BSIP draft challenges and outcomes meeting – discussion of the initial draft from Atkins.	Faresaver, South West Community Transport, Go South Coast, Stagecoach, South West Coaches/Beeline Coaches and First
16.09.2021	To discuss the initial bus priority interventions feedback from the operator.	Stagecoach

Summary:

- Bus service frequency, destinations served, safety and information are key concerns of Wiltshire residents in relation to improving the network.
- Further engagement is required to reach 'hard to reach' groups to ensure their voices are heard in relation to bus service improvement in Wiltshire.
- A significant social and economic opportunity exists to tailor the bus network to cater to the needs of businesses and employees.
- Wiltshire Council will continue to work closely with bus operators to deliver the aims of the BSIP.

2.2.7.4. Engagement with neighbouring local authorities

We have engaged with five of the seven bordering local authorities in relation to our BSIP proposals and are endeavouring to set up further engagement with those in which meeting have not occurred yet. We have a good working relationship with our adjacent local authorities, and it is intended that this will continue to support our respective BSIP delivery. The aim of these meetings was to establish principles for avoiding conflicting requirements, unnecessary wastage and avoiding duplication of routes, The local authorities we have engaged with to date are:

- Swindon Borough Council
- West of England Combined Authority (WECA)
- Dorset
- Somerset

2.2.8. Bus service outcomes

According to DfT bus statistics, the bus passenger trip-rate in Wiltshire is 19 annual bus trips per head of population and has been falling since 2009/10; the data suggests patronage has decreased by around 10% during the same period. This trip-rate is similar to comparative local authorities. When considering car ownership within Wiltshire, the level of bus ridership is slightly higher than would be predicted against the national average (WBN Figure 6-3).

According to the Census 2011, 2.7% of Wiltshire's population utilise buses to travel to work. This represents a low mode share by bus and is likely to represent a small proportion of total bus trips within the county. This again highlights the potential to provide changes to the bus network to cater for journeys to work. There is scope for working collaboratively with employers and other partners to develop an understanding of travel demand and flows at given times of the day to influence the development of the bus product, particularly to major employment sites and to the significant draws for journeys to work at Bath, Salisbury and Swindon.

Bus service monitoring (WBN Section 6.2) by Wiltshire Council has highlighted that the percentage of buses running late (6 minutes or more) has fluctuated between 6 and 14 percent over the 5-year period of 2014-15 to 2018-19. This suggests that there is a need to improve the performance of the network within Wiltshire, particularly in relation to reducing highways delays. Therefore schemes to improve reliability of the bus services are to be pursued as part of the BSIP and we are currently working with the DfT BODS (Bus Open Data Service) to utilise their system to identify locations and services where reliability is a problem.

Summary:

- The bus trip-rate is marginally higher than would be predicted by the level of car ownership, but there is significant scope to increase the use of bus particularly for journeys to work.

2.3. LTA financial support for bus services

Due to the more rural nature of Wiltshire, there are numerous services which cannot run on a commercial basis and therefore are supported by the local authority as socially necessary services. Wiltshire Council currently support 70% of routes across the local authority area outside Salisbury at differing times and on differing days. The council currently spends the following supporting bus services within Wiltshire.

Item	Description	Annual Value	Funding Source
Tendered Bus Service	Socially necessary bus services	£5,275,000	Revenue Budget
ENCTS	Concessionary Fares for older and disabled people, currently being	£4,100,000	Revenue Budget

	paid at Pre Covid levels		
Salisbury Park and Ride	To support the overall parking strategy for Salisbury City	£473,000	Revenue Budget
RTPI	Real Time Passenger Information running costs	£70,000	Revenue Budget

Summary:

- There is currently a large amount of support provided to operators for services in Wiltshire, providing a framework for future collaboration and network development.

2.4. Other factors that affect the use of local bus services

2.4.1. Supply of car parking

Wiltshire currently has 9,153 of parking spaces provided and operated by Wiltshire Council. The greatest number of these spaces are within Salisbury, followed by Chippenham and Trowbridge.

Data from Wiltshire Council highlights in the 2019/20 financial year Wiltshire Council's income from all off-street parking was £8,236,690 with an enforcement spend of £1,099,020. Wiltshire Council employs 32 enforcement officers with 3 supervisors.

The number of parking penalty charge notices issued for contravening parking regulations between 1 January 2019 and 30 January 2020 by Wiltshire Council was 265,669, with 46% of these notices issued in Salisbury. For a comprehensive discussion of car parking in Wiltshire, review WBN Section 7.1.

Table 2-2 - Number of Wiltshire Council parking spaces within Wiltshire towns

Location	Total number of spaces provided by Wiltshire Council
Amesbury	85
Bradford-upon- Avon	291
Calne	75
Chippenham	1,318
Corsham	260
Devizes	879
Malmesbury	259
Marlborough	628
Melksham	346
Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade	278
Salisbury	2,952
Trowbridge	1,159
Warminster	384
Westbury	239

3. Headline targets

3.1. Bus journey times

3.1.1. Target development

A number of interventions are proposed to improve bus journey times on key urban routes, primarily operating in Salisbury, and core interurban routes providing key linkages across the county. There are four planks to this strategy: the provision of bus priority where this is feasible; route reviews to identify and action highways issues that can affect bus services such as obstructive parking and poor junction geometry; 'tap on tap out' account-based ticketing; and service design to remove, where in the interests of the majority of passengers, minor route diversions.

Those rural services entering Salisbury and Chippenham will benefit from bus priority proposed in those locations. Other rural services will benefit from reviews of highway conditions, though the impacts of these are expected to be minor. Finally, it goes without saying that measures taken by neighbouring authorities as part of their BSIPs will influence the speed of services crossing Wiltshire boundaries, particularly those entering the journey-to-work destinations of Andover, Bath and Swindon.

We will work to improve bus service provision in line with our priority route hierarchy of:

- Superbus routes, including routes in Salisbury
- Interurban routes
- Town networks
- Rural routes

This hierarchy is based upon the frequency of services and level of demand. Focus will be on infrastructure, service and ticketing improvements. Any measures would not propose to control branding or fares on these routes, for example Superbus routes and as such operators will maintain their own identity.

Assuming that all the measures set out above and as detailed in Section 4 of this BSIP are implemented, we target:

- 10% reduction in journey time on Salisbury urban services;
- 10% reduction in journey time on designated 'Superbus' interurban services; and
- 2% reduction in journey time on all other local bus services.

3.1.2. Monitoring proposal

We propose to measure these outputs in the following ways:

- Analysis of published scheduled journey times (baseline 2018/19);
- Analysis of achieved journey times. At present we are reliant on data from operators' own Automatic Vehicle Location Systems. Where we have access to this data, the baseline will be 2018/19 or 2019/20; where we do not, the baseline will be autumn 2020 onwards utilising DfT BODS data;
- Analysis of both these metrics in comparison to general traffic journey times, using Bluetooth data. We believe the latter is important. In a possible scenario that car journey times increase, it is entirely possible that bus journey times do not change. In this instance, the effect of measures to speed up buses is to insulate buses from the effects of increasing congestion, and will only be recognised in a comparison with general traffic.

3.2. Bus journey time reliability

3.2.1. Target development

The measures put forward above will also deliver greater consistency of journey times, which will translate into improvements in reliability. Assuming that all the measures set out above and as detailed in Section 4 of this BSIP are implemented, we target:

- 10% improvement in reliability on Salisbury urban services;

- 10% improvement in reliability on designated 'Superbus' interurban services; and
- 2% improvement in reliability on all other local bus services.

3.2.2. Monitoring proposal

The baseline available to us is as for bus journey times.

For almost all services, we will use the 'percent on-time' metric, using the standard definition of between 1 minute and 59 seconds early and 5 minutes and 59 seconds late, which we propose to measure at timing points.

For the few services where frequency is at least 6 buses per hour, we propose to use the metric of excess wait time, subject to this being practical within the constraints of the data.

3.3. Passenger numbers

3.3.1. Target development

We expect patronage to respond positively in response to:

- Reduced journey times;
- Improved reliability;
- Improved passenger information, promotion and marketing;
- Upgrades to bus stop and interchange infrastructure;
- Reduced fares for young people;
- The ability to complete multi-leg bus journeys on one ticket; and
- Targeted marketing and bus network design for journeys serving specific employers and business parks, and for journeys to school for students not entitled to free transport.

This response will vary by different service groups. Overall, our target, if all the interventions outlined at Section 4 are delivered, is a 10% patronage uplift, minus the effects of ongoing Covid recovery.

3.3.2. Monitoring proposal

We propose to request data on the number of boardings in Wiltshire from operators to enable us to present one aggregated patronage figure for Wiltshire in each six-monthly BSIP update.

3.4. Passenger satisfaction

3.4.1. Target development

At present there is no source of independent, detailed information on bus passenger satisfaction in Wiltshire. Transport Focus surveys have been undertaken in some neighbouring authority areas but these are likely to have focussed on users of urban services in those areas.

We will therefore conduct independent surveys to establish a baseline for passenger satisfaction. If it is possible to maintain an adequate sample sizes, we will disaggregate the results by Salisbury urban services, the Superbus network and remaining services.

3.4.2. Monitoring proposal

We propose to undertake repeat surveys to enable us to present a figure for Wiltshire in each six-monthly BSIP update.

4. Delivery

4.1. Vision for the Wiltshire BSIP

Our vision for improving the bus offer in Wiltshire is:

Wiltshire Council and bus operators recognise the importance that the bus has great potential to cater for more of our journeys in Wiltshire, for work, leisure, education and social journeys. Over the next decade with a sustained and co-ordinated programme of investment we will deliver improvements to the bus offer in Wiltshire and increase the number of people using the bus for their everyday journeys.

With investment and a process of positive, sustained improvements in our bus services, infrastructure, information and ticketing offer we aim to achieve a virtuous circle of investment and passenger growth. We recognise that increasing bus use for everyday journeys will contribute to achieving a wide range of our policy objectives, such as de-carbonising travel, reducing inequalities and using our transport network and road-space much more efficiently.

4.2. Make improvements to bus services and planning

We will build on that co-operation to develop a more collaborative process as part of the Enhanced Partnership to consider proposals to change the bus network and to consider external influences, notably the planning of new development both in the context of opportunities to grow demand but also to ensure that bus services are able to meet the connectivity, mobility and accessibility needs of the population in an efficient and cost-effective way. Our current proposal is to focus on developing infrastructure, marketing and services on four bus corridors a year.

4.2.1. Faster, more frequent and reliable services

4.2.1.1. Increase bus priority measures

We will assess the feasibility, develop, design and implement measures at locations identified in response to issues raised by bus operators. We will achieve this through a systematic programme of route reviews which will be conducted in the following priority order:

- Superbus routes, including routes in Salisbury
- Interurban routes
- Town networks
- Rural routes

Potential measures to improve bus journey times and reliability will range from bus priority measures (both physical and signal priorities), changes to junction layouts, traffic calming reviews and parking and loading reviews. Measures will be developed where congestion, highway layouts, car parking or network constraints cause delays to buses and passengers. Measures will be developed in order to reduce bus journey times and facilitate reliable operation and will be designed to maximise the benefits of the highway network for all users.

We will, subject to funding and feasibility, develop and implement measures at the locations set out below and continue to monitor and identify locations where bus priority measures are needed. The locations identified below are initial locations identified for bus reliability improvements during engagement with our bus operators and highways officers, these will be subject to further investigation, review and feasibility.

Settlement/corridor	Location and initial concept
Salisbury southern corridor	Amendments to Britford Park and Ride access junction
	Enforcement of the Britford Park and Ride and mitigating bus lane encroachment
	Rowbarrow - bus gate enforcement and Transit Signal Priority (TSP)

		Harnham Gyratory Junction Improvements
		New Bridge Road bus lane
		Exeter Street roundabout junction amendment
		Exeter Street bus lane
Salisbury northern corridor		Southbound bus gate approaching the A36
		Maximising the existing A345 bus lane and junction amendments
		Extension of the existing inbound bus lane to the Beehive Park and Ride site
Salisbury city centre		Brown Street junction amendment
		London Road / Barrington Road TSP
		New Street / Catherine Street junction amendment
		Castle Street markings and junction amendment
Salisbury corridor (NH)	A36	Petersfinger Park and Ride junction amendment
		College roundabout junction amendment
		St Mark's Roundabout junction amendment
		Castle roundabout junction amendment
		St Pauls roundabout junction amendment
		Wilton Road inbound bus lane junction amendment
		Park Corner junction amendment
		Wilton roundabout junction amendment
Chippenham		Priority for buses on High Street and Market Place / Gladstone Road bus gate
		Bridge Centre gyratory - westbound busway and bus only on Bath Road east (eastbound)
		Bath Road (east of Rowden Hill) inbound bus lane
		Bath Road west of Rowden Hill junction amendment and inbound bus lane
		Bath Road northbound bus lane to Rowden Hill
		London Road modal filter
		TSP at town centre junctions, including Station Hill junction and New Road signals
Trowbridge		Identify appropriate
Calne		Bus access southbound down High Street
		Signals at Curzon Street and the Square - linked signals and add SVD
		Bus only right turn to the Square
		Square eastbound only except buses
Devizes		Identify appropriate locations for bus priority in the town
Royal Bassett	Wootton	High Street: Amendments to existing arrangements and laybys at junction with Longleaze. Parking controls on both sides of the road. TSP at New Road High Street
		Bincknoll Lane bus lane
		Inbound bus lane on approach to junction 16.

Bus priority measures will be complemented by the People Friendly Streets concepts for central Salisbury should it be introduced in the future.

The importance of National Highways as the operator of the A36 through Salisbury will be noted, and for the schemes above noted as being under National Highways control, we will seek their co-operation in incorporating bus priority at signals under their control, particularly in relation to Urban Traffic

Management and Control (UTMC) signal integration. We have recently begun a discussion with National Highways regarding traffic flows and renewing the life expired signals in Salisbury; we will actively seek to ensure that NH considers signal priority here. We will also engage with National Highways regarding the ongoing work to develop and deliver improvements along the A303.

Some of the priorities shown in Chippenham will be developed in conjunction with Superbus interurban service proposals, and will support their operation. For instance, a bus gate on London Road could facilitate development of improved services to Pewsham and provision of cross-Chippenham services. Other proposals recognise the need to position the bus network to attract demand from new development.

During its lifetime the BSIP will also investigate opportunities to improve conditions for buses in Calne and Chippenham town centres, particularly in relation to future growth plans in Chippenham but also across the county as identified in the emerging Local Plan for the period 2016-2036.

We will continue to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities, notably Swindon Borough Council and WECA, to ensure that any changes in nearby towns will be consistent and co-ordinated with those in Wiltshire, thus ensuring a consistent strategy for buses across the authority borders.

4.2.1.2. Review service frequency and journey times

Increase bus service frequencies on key interurban and town services

Our analysis of travel to work patterns and travel to work areas within Wiltshire and beyond has highlighted significant opportunity to improve the bus offer for journeys within the travel-to-work areas to Swindon, Bath and Salisbury respectively. Subject to funding we will work with operators to deliver an increase in service frequencies for interurban services along the key corridors within the travel to work areas, this is in line with our priority route hierarchy of:

- Superbus routes, including routes in Salisbury
- Interurban routes
- Town networks
- Rural routes

This will ensure that services are substantially more regular than they currently are and strengthen the role of the bus in providing for journeys in these areas for all journey purposes. In order to develop our network we will require funding to grow patronage on our current services and build a platform for introducing future service changes.

To support this we will build on the current town bus networks within Wiltshire with a particular focus being placed on increasing the frequency of our key town services to at least 2 buses per hour. Within Salisbury, we expect these services to provide a turn-up and go feel for passengers along the key bus corridors.

Wiltshire Key Interurban Bus Network

Diagrammatic Map – not to scale



Key:

- Buses to/from Swindon
- Buses to/from Salisbury
- Buses to/from Chippenham
- Other key bus routes
- Less frequent bus services

The thickness of the lines indicates the frequency of each bus service (thick lines indicate a service that runs at least once per hour on Monday-Saturday). Local services and those that operate less than 5 days a week are not shown.

Potential Superbus Corridor

Increase evening and weekend provisions on key interurban services and town services

As part of the consultation and feedback process, it is evident that later services and weekend provision is a key barrier to bus patronage within Wiltshire. We have and will continue to work with operators to identify opportunities where the bus offer can be strengthened in the evening and weekends. Although providing evening services would require a second driver, this creates the opportunity to provide extra early morning journeys at little cost (just fuel) as the daytime driver could finish earlier.

The focus of increasing evening and weekend services will focus on the identified Swindon, Bath and Salisbury opportunity areas with a focus on the interurban services and the supporting town/city services required to provide connectivity for bus users in Wiltshire.

Improve links with major employers and businesses to improve/provide bus accessibility to employment sites

We will continue to work with our colleagues within the Economic and Regeneration team, alongside local employers to understand the challenges and opportunities relating to accessing employment sites via public transport and opportunities for pedestrian and cycle routes to provide last/first mile connectivity. Wiltshire Council intends to make informed decisions on bus service provisions to ensure services are catered to both geographical extent of businesses and their employees, but also that timetabling considers shift beginning and end times.

Early discussions have occurred with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) which have highlighted areas where limited transport links, particularly by bus, are barriers to accessing employment opportunities and limit the available labour market for major businesses in Wiltshire and as such impacts their operations and productivity.

Particular locations highlighted identified by the DWP include Bumpers Farm Industrial Estate in Chippenham, Port Marsh in Calne and Leafield Industrial Estate in Corsham sites alongside MoD Corsham where there is potential for either more frequent bus services to coincide with working patterns or developing DRT services to provide access to employment opportunities. Other locations identified include Solstice Park, Amesbury and Southampton Road retail area in Salisbury. We intend to build on this initial work to develop an understanding of where this demand originates from and at what time to develop improvements, either through the enhancements to the bus network or DRT, to access to employment opportunities in Wiltshire.

Powers and a strategy to enforce moving traffic offences

Supported by Wiltshire Council Highway Network Management Plan that we will develop to establish a network and user hierarchy we will further utilise our powers under the Traffic Management Act 2004 to enforce moving traffic offences at key locations which have been identified as problematic for bus operations. This will include increased enforcement of the bus lane and bus gate in Salisbury along the A338 Downton Road from Britford Park and Ride.

4.2.1.3. Increase demand responsive services

Due to the rurality of Wiltshire, there are significant opportunities to introduce DRT services to the county. It is intended that we will review the use of DRT to feed into the enhanced services offered along our inter-urban network, potentially as a method of increasing the speed of inter-urban services. As a council, we are experienced with the running of DRT services; for example, we are utilising the government's Rural Mobility Fund to develop a scheme in the Pewsey Vale area. We will utilise best practice from our prior experience to maximise the potential of DRT in Wiltshire, for example we are currently exploring options for providing DRT to improve access to Melksham railway station. Opportunities for Bedwyn, Trowbridge and Westbury railway stations will be explored in the future.

From liaising with the DWP it is likely that some of the workplaces which are currently not directly served by bus services would not sustain a regular bus service. These include Leigh Delamere Motorway Services on the M4, The Manor House in Castle Combe and Stonegate Farmers Ltd in Lacock.

As such there is potential for a DRT style service to be provided to connect up these smaller employment sites with the improved conventional bus network, thus opening up economic opportunity for those who are currently unable to access this employment and encourage mode shift. For example, DRT may be able to provide a connection between the X34 service and Stonegate Farmers, but this would unlikely be achievable with a conventional bus operation.

4.2.1.4. Consideration of bus rapid transport networks

Wiltshire Council will continue to work on bus priority measures which will enhance the key bus corridors into Salisbury, ensuring that maximum priority is given to buses such as the use of bus lanes and use of real time punctuality information to inform an Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) system in Salisbury. We will also apply similar principles to our Superbus routes and interurban services.

Reducing journey times will not only increase the attractiveness of services and drive up demand, but also improve efficiency and help bus operators to reduce costs. Therefore, we commit to delivering comprehensive bus priority measures along bus corridors within our main urban areas, to speed up and improve reliability of bus services on well-used corridors.

Work will continue with National Highways to facilitate improved bus priority within Salisbury on the A36, particularly in relation to UTMC signal integration. As the current signal infrastructure along the A36 is life expired, an opportunity exists to link asset renewal with the aims of the BSIP.

4.2.2. Improvements to planning / integration with other modes

4.2.2.1. Integrate services with other transport modes

Mobility hubs and active transport

We will investigate the role of mobility hubs, for both rural and urban locations which will allow for integration of bus services with active travel measures such as cycle infrastructure. These hubs will be designed and developed in a way that encourages and enables increased levels of travel by bus. We will consider opportunities in line with our route priority hierarchy:

- Superbus routes, including routes in Salisbury
- Interurban routes
- Town networks
- Rural routes

We will ensure that these hubs will have good connectivity to local housing and services to encourage active travel over the 'last mile'. Mobility hubs can also provide an important interchange location for new housing and employment development, we will work with Go South Coast to develop such an offer at the new King's Gate site in Amesbury which provides access to bus services for new residents without disrupting the operation of bus services along the corridor.

Develop improved integration between bus and rail services including bus service extensions and improved frequencies.

We will improve upon the connectivity between bus and rail services within Wiltshire. This includes reviewing connectivity to the stations at Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Westbury, Chippenham, Pewsey, Melksham, Great Bedwyn, Pewsey and Salisbury. This will include the potential retiming of bus services to provide more efficient interchange with rail services and provide earlier and later bus services to create new public transport connections for commuters. We will also work with neighbouring authorities to identify opportunities where a station may meet the needs of Wiltshire residents, for example Kemble in Gloucestershire. This will open up new public transport opportunities, thus supporting our economic and social goals.

We are currently working to improve the quality of interchange between modes at Salisbury railway station by continuing design work to provide an interchange adjacent to the railway station. We have also been reviewing the introduction of earlier morning services to Trowbridge railway station to allow commuters to catch early morning trains.

4.2.2.2. Simplify services

The current inter-urban and town services within Wiltshire are already generally quite simple, however opportunities will be pursued to disseminate this information to the travelling public and remove complexities identified during future public and stakeholder engagement.

Contrastingly, the provision of rural services can often be complicated, serving slightly different routes at differing times of the day in order to meet differing travel needs (particularly for students). Such arrangements have been acknowledged by Wiltshire Council and in the National Bus Strategy as a barrier to use of the bus and we intend to review our rural services with a view to simplifying them where possible.

4.2.2.3. Review socially necessary services

Wiltshire Council has continued to provide socially justified services over the last decade and will utilise funding from the Bus Service Improvement Plan to further strengthen these socially necessary services. We will utilise funding to enhance evening and Sunday services in Salisbury, and to provide a comprehensive service offer focused on the interurban services where it is felt that there is the best opportunity for patronage to grow quickly.

Wiltshire Council commits to fully supporting bus operators as they seek to respond to the challenges of short-term inflationary pressures and the need to increase revenues by attracting back customers who have stopped travelling by bus during the Covid-19 pandemic. This may require some form of short-term targeted revenue support, to retain current frequencies in order to provide a strong platform for achieving our shared ambitions outlined in this document for long-term sustainable passenger growth. Alongside this, we will trial innovative and value for money approaches to meeting the public transport travel needs of rural areas that cannot be viably served by conventional timetabled bus services.

4.2.2.4. Invest in Superbus networks

The Superbus network is based on where current bus service frequencies are higher than hourly, and where the assessment of journey-to-work areas illustrates potential to develop services to meet latent demand. This would entail increasing frequencies, and where feasible removing poorly-patronised diversions to villages and serving these villages differently, either through local services or through the provision of mobility hubs.

The network would, along with the Salisbury urban network, be the priority for investment in roadside passenger infrastructure, passenger information including real-time, investment in bus priority measures in town centres and in other measures such as parking and loading reviews elsewhere. In return, these services would be the focus of investment by operators in high-specification vehicles. Improvements to interchanges would focus on hubs at Chippenham, Melksham, Devizes, Salisbury and Amesbury. Between Salisbury and Amesbury, we would seek to achieve even headways in both directions delivered by the Andover, Swindon and Larkhill services together, to maximise the benefit of the high number of buses between Salisbury and Amesbury.

4.3. Improvements to fares and ticketing

4.3.1.1. Lower fares

Develop ticket products suitable for part-time commuters

Wiltshire's bus network has an under-representation of commuters utilising the bus network, and changes in working patterns may mean this could put further stress upon the network. In Wiltshire only Go South Coast and Faresaver offer multi-day ticket bundles on commercial services and there isn't necessarily wide public awareness of these tickets and the conditions

We therefore propose to simplify this system through standardised flexible ticketing products covering all of Wiltshire and the bus operators, with a key focus on advertising these tickets to embrace the increasingly flexible nature of passenger journeys.

Develop initiatives to encourage young people to use the bus

Attracting and retaining young people as bus passengers is a key component of the Wiltshire Bus Service Improvement Plan and the cost of bus fares is often seen as a causal factor for young people to avoid using buses. Wiltshire Council intends to introduce fare initiatives that can be supported by

ticketing platforms and flexible ticketing products, to encourage young people up to the age of 25 to continue to utilise the bus service after they have the option to own their own vehicle.

This scheme will provide a discount when compared to the price of an adult ticket, acting as an intermediate fare stage between child and adult fares funded through BBB. We will work with neighbouring authorities when developing this scheme to ensure consistency of age range and ticketing offer.

In addition to this we are seeking to reduce the number of young people being driven to school by their parents, as well as those driving their own vehicle to school by decreasing the financial burden of using the bus. This strategy will include a review of the current vehicle provision and routing of bus services to ensure they are accessible and appropriate to the demand for young people, particularly in relation to transport to schools. A focus will be on targeting students over the age of 16 and those travelling to schools within 2-3 miles of where they live.

4.3.1.2. Simplifying fares

Achieve the provision of a consistent offer of reduced fares for younger people across Wiltshire, with discounted fares available to the age of 25. Extend this to jobseekers

Young person's ticket eligibility within Wiltshire is currently variable, and Wiltshire Council believe this is a barrier to travel for younger people. This is also shown in the results from the online survey, where 16% of under 20s stating that better value fares would encourage them to use the bus more (question 10).

The council will therefore utilise BSIP funding to provide a reduced ticket product for young people up to the age of 25. This ticket will provide a discount on the relevant adult fare. This scheme will be managed centrally by Wiltshire Council and will involve proportionate distribution of revenue to the relevant operators.

It is envisioned this ticket will be offered to jobseekers to promote social mobility and reduce barriers to employment within Wiltshire.

Develop existing multi-operator ticketing schemes in the Swindon and Bath journey-to-work areas, (geographical extent, method of fulfilment, governance)

For the most part, bus routes in Wiltshire are not contested by multiple competing operators, nor are there many sections of road on which different operators provide parallel services. One major exception is the activ8 service between Andover, Tidworth and Salisbury, and here Salisbury Reds and Stagecoach South accept each other's tickets.

It may be felt then that there is no scope for multi-operator ticketing beyond those described in the [WBN section 5.10]. However, we are conscious that there are some trip attractors located outside major urban centres where the lack of through-ticketing may constrain demand, and constrain the ability of staff and visitors to reach these facilities. Examples are Salisbury District Hospital and Great Western Hospital in Swindon. We will therefore aim to develop ticketing schemes which extend the reach of bus services by:

- Extending the current Swindon multi-operator ticket boundary beyond Royal Wootton Bassett, and develop app-based fulfilment alongside the current Smartcard scheme to make it more easily accessible;
- Investigate a £1 flat fare for journeys in Salisbury city for passengers using "tap-on, tap-off" ticketing;
- Develop a Salisbury 'add-on' scheme to allow connecting journeys to be made at no extra cost;
- Consider towns where an "add-on" fare would work for cross town journeys similar to that available in the PlusBus scheme;
- Expand the successful Avon Rider offer to cover the Bath travel to work and connecting town services; and
- Offer a countywide multi-operator season ticket.

Review distance-based fares and review fares for groups, couples, family and single parent families

Bus fares within Wiltshire are often unable to compete with the cost of the car when there is more than one passenger within a group. As such Wiltshire Council will aim to develop ideas to create group fares within Wiltshire to increase the competitiveness of the bus against the car.

Develop account-based ticketing schemes to make the bus product easier to use and to reduce bus stop dwell times

Conventional bus ticketing systems lead to long dwell times at bus stops. PlusBus currently enables passenger to purchase a train ticket with a bus ticket to complete the last stage of their journey from their destination railway station to their final destination. Various improvements have been made over recent years, with the option of cashless payment by contactless bank card, reducing cash handling and change giving, and with season and carnet ticket products being made available by Smartcard, and in greater number, by mobile phone app. These have been adopted by all the major bus operators in Wiltshire.

Nevertheless, there are further opportunities to reduce bus stop dwell times by further reducing passenger transaction times. Account-based ticketing (ABT) in a 'tap on tap off' environment is the next step in this evolution, but requires two things. The first is that given that there is more than one ticket machine supplier currently used by bus operators in Wiltshire, the development of a supplier-agnostic solution and back office. We note that DfT has stated that a local transport authority should assume that a solution is in place by the end of the BSIP funding period. The second is the provision of a second card reader on each bus to enable passengers to 'tap off' separately from those tapping on. We are therefore seeking funds to equip all buses used on services operating in Salisbury, interurban routes and town networks across Wiltshire with second card readers.

Account-based ticketing will also have the benefit that the fares product becomes invisible. The complexity of fares products – even within one operator – is a significant cause of uncertainty, particularly to prospective passengers. It can be a cause of embarrassment to passengers, and even dispute. For these reasons, even if someone is minded to use the bus, they will tend to choose not to. A case in point is a younger person, unsure of themselves and who find interaction with 'authority' figures difficult. The adoption of ABT will make it more likely that these people will see the bus as a viable means of making journeys, even occasionally.

4.3.1.3. Integrate ticketing between transport operators and modes

Work with the DfT and Train Operating Companies (TOCs) to develop electronic PlusBus

PlusBus tickets allow users to specify bus at the start as well as the end of the journey. This supports our vision to improve interchange opportunities between bus and rail services within the county.

We note that Great Western Railway is currently experimenting with paper-based QR codes. This gives rise to an opportunity to encourage bus/rail interchange through ticketing where bus operators also use QR codes. This is expected to help encourage travel by public transport for journeys in the west of the county towards the Bath and Bristol areas as well as the Swindon and Salisbury travel to work areas.

4.4. Make improvements to bus passenger experience

4.4.1.1. Higher specification buses

Bus operators in Wiltshire have made significant investment in their vehicle fleet, and many vehicles used on the key interurban services to the east and south of the county in particular are to a very high standard. We propose to undertake market research with bus operators to assess customer's (bus and non-bus users) priorities. Where passengers are on buses for some time – as with interurban services – we propose a broad specification which is likely to focus on seat pitch, leg room and ambience. We will then seek that new investment in buses meets that specification.

4.4.1.2. Implement next stop audio/visual announcement on buses

In July 2021 the government announcements its intention to make the provision of 'next stop' audio and visual announcements on buses a legal requirement, we are awaiting further details on this. We will seek funding to ensure that all buses operating in Wiltshire are so equipped, and the system maintained. This will help to overcome a key reason for prospective passengers not to choose bus – uncertainty and fear of missing their stop.

4.4.1.3. Invest in accessible and inclusive bus services

Upgrade existing bus stop infrastructure and interchange provision

Subject to funding of sufficient staff resources, Wiltshire Council will complete an audit of all bus stop infrastructure within the county to develop a baseline understanding of where improvement is required to provision for passengers boarding and alighting, passenger information and shelter facilities.

We will liaise with user groups to develop an agreed set of standards for bus stop provision. The standards will need to be developed around the function of stops, the bus routes and communities they serve. These standards will include meeting the requirements of the Equality Act and the nature of the stop (urban, rural, conservation areas). We will then develop a programme to apply these standards across Wiltshire. Again, the BSIP seeks funding to implement this programme.

As part of this work, we will be developing a consistent quality standard for shelter provision throughout Wiltshire and seek expanded provision.

At the interchanges in Wiltshire (both bus/bus and bus/rail) we will develop enhanced standards, and we are seeking funding from the BSIP to implement these. This includes wayfinding to assist passengers in accessing and getting around interchanges, particularly those new to buses. The first application of this will be in Salisbury where there is currently no formal central interchange in the centre.

4.4.1.4. Protect personal safety of bus passengers

Implement measures to improve the personal safety of bus passengers on walking routes to and from, and at, bus stops and interchanges – CCTV and lighting

We will review the incidences of crime and antisocial behaviour at bus stops within Wiltshire and utilise an evidence-based approach to provision of improved CCTV facilities. We will mandate the provision of on-bus CCTV on interurban and Salisbury, Chippenham and Trowbridge town services, and publicise its existence.

We are seeking funding to undertake a series of audits of walking routes to bus stops in our towns and villages, particularly those lying on the key interurban network with a view to ensuring that walk routes are level, well-lit, have some safe crossing points and not obscured by vegetation or other things.

4.4.1.5. Improve the bus offer for tourists

There is some scope for improving tourist connectivity in Wiltshire, particularly in relation to major tourist destinations such as Stonehenge, Avebury and Longleat. Although there are no specific plans to provide further tourist services within Wiltshire, we will work to ensure that services to such sites are retained and the proposed bus service improvements as a whole will benefit all bus passengers, including tourists, particularly the increase in services on Sundays.

Providing a clear bus information for tourists via a centralised information platform in Wiltshire will also be key to helping raise awareness of opportunities to visit locations by bus and supported by next stop audio-visual information on buses can give tourists re-assurances to travel by bus. We will work with local tourist bodies to identify key locations and develop information for tourists to be included on the centralised point.

4.5. Invest in decarbonisation

Pursue opportunities to bid for zero-emission buses

We will develop business cases and funding bids to ZEBRA and other sources for zero-emission buses. The initial focus will be on services where daily mileages are within the operating range of

depot-charged battery-electric buses. This is likely to mean an initial focus on the local services in Salisbury, but we will consider other locations, particularly where operation of zero-emission buses could give buses preferential access to town centres and other environmentally-sensitive locations. We will conduct analysis of the technologies available for making longer-distance services zero-emission. This will need to consider the requirements of services; the nature and distances of the routes being served in order to identify the most appropriate and efficient technology for operating bus services in Wiltshire.

Prioritise services at locations which operate through an AQMA

There are currently eight Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Wiltshire. As an authority we have a statutory requirement to mitigate against poor air quality. As such, we will ensure our work to bring zero-emission buses to the county will prioritise routes operating in these areas to maximise the benefits of reduced emissions and improved air quality.

4.6. Improvements to passenger engagement

4.6.1.1. Customer charter

Introduce passenger charter through collaboration with operators

Working alongside our bus operators and bus users, we will devise a passenger charter which will outline what passengers should expect from our network. This charter will set the minimum standards for bus services within Wiltshire and clarify pathways of contact for elements such as information and complaints.

Develop community-based passenger focus teams

To encourage engagement and ensure that the Enhanced Partnership reflects the needs of the people of Wiltshire, we will establish community-based focus teams to develop an understanding of the localised transport needs within Wiltshire. It is envisioned that this will be based upon the existing Wiltshire Council Area Board arrangements. We intend that these boards will act as a continuous way of engaging with bus passengers and addressing their concerns regarding local issues. It will also be important to gather views from non-bus users to understand barriers to using the bus for journeys in Wiltshire. Initial discussions have been had with a community group called 24/7, who have long had an interest in public transport across Wiltshire. Work will continue with 24/7 to ensure an impartial community focus feedback can be achieved to improve bus service provision across Wiltshire.

Develop a centralised source of bus information for Wiltshire

As part of our efforts to develop a standardised channel for passenger engagement with the bus network within Wiltshire, we will work with our operators to develop a centralised point of information for passengers to report their concerns and ideas for the network.

We will explore the possibility that the Connecting Wiltshire website could be the primary platform to achieve this goal, although this is subject to further engagement and operator feedback. We expect that the centralised site will be all encompassing as a one stop location for information on public transport within Wiltshire, as well as being used as a site to promote the benefits of using the bus, for example through providing case study examples of how bus services have worked for residents.

4.6.1.2. Strengthen network identity

Strengthen network identity using a central point for bus information in Wiltshire

At present information relating to bus services within Wiltshire is potentially confusing and disjointed. As previously mentioned, we intend to liaise with our operators to develop a centralised point for information within Wiltshire and will continue to engage with operators to ensure the site also meets their needs and provides specific reference to their own initiatives. We will work with our local bus operators to develop public awareness of this platform as a standardised point of information for bus passengers.

4.6.1.3. Improve bus information

Produce a long-term marketing strategy in partnership with bus operators, including for jointly-operated services. To include amongst others a printed information campaign and develop Connecting Wiltshire

Physical information provided at the roadside within Wiltshire is currently inconsistent and lacking any standard formatting. With BSIP funding there will be a priority focus to standardise the provision of roadside timetable information into a format which is consistent across the county which does not vary based on operator of the service. It is intended that all bus stops within Wiltshire will be provided with this standardised information format.

We will also focus on advertising the benefits and connectivity available by using the bus network within Wiltshire, this may include online advertising campaigns and local leaflet drops to advertise services and amenities which they unlock access to.

Upgrade and expand real-time passenger information system and ensure that local bus services used in Wiltshire are able to communicate with neighbouring authorities' RTPI (and vice versa)

Wiltshire Council will be renewing and expanding the RTPI system currently in use in Salisbury, expanding this to further serve the Superbus, interurban and town network routes. Funding for part of the networks RTPI replacement has been secured through Section 106 monies. The provision of RTPI information at stops will be defined when setting the standards for stops but it would be expected as a minimum that stops serving the Superbus, interurban and town routes would have real-time displays. It is anticipated there will be a degree of flexibility within this system which will allow for integration with other local authorities RTPI systems, perhaps through use of the enhanced Bus Open Data Service currently being developed by the DfT.

Ensure each operator providing bus services in Wiltshire has at the very least a website and mobile phone app with basic service information (timetables, fares, maps) to an agreed 'best practice' specification

As part of the Enhanced Partnership, the provision of a website and basic service information, alongside agreeing to the best practices outlined in the passenger charter, will be a pre-requisite to being able to operate within Wiltshire.

Explore the potential to integrate these sources of information to overcome weakness of low awareness of Traveline

As there is limited awareness of the Traveline national website, we intend to focus our efforts on the aforementioned centralised point of information for public transport in Wiltshire. Through promoting this site we hope to improve public understanding of the bus network in the county and provide a platform which facilitates and encourages use of the bus for journeys in Wiltshire.

Develop a specification for roadside information suitable for different types of stops and interchanges and apply this consistently throughout Wiltshire

Wiltshire Council plans to provide a significant upgrade to all bus stops within the county following on from a complete audit of all stops. We will develop a specification for information provision at bus stops based on the number of bus services calling at the stop; at a minimum, these stops will feature a flag, timetable casing and standardised timetable information.

Agreed standard dates for timetable changes throughout the year

To ensure consistency and avoid confusion for passengers, we will work with our bus operators to standardise when timetables change within Wiltshire. This will allow us to maximise marketing efforts and minimise impacts of changing timetables on the passengers.

4.7. Other (processes, procedures and relationships)

Developing the Local Transport Plan 4

We are committed to developing a Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) which will include strategies and measures which seek to support the delivery of our BSIP and help deliver the outcomes of the government's Transport De-carbonisation Plan. It is anticipated that the LTP4 will include a bus strategy, rail strategy and car parking strategy.

Develop a Wiltshire Council Highway Network Management Plan

We will develop a Highway Network Management Plan. As outlined in our Local Transport Plan this will:

- set out the council's overall objectives for network management
- describe the council's approach to network management which would include
 - dealing with congestion 'hot spots' and maintaining journey time reliability on key routes
 - monitoring traffic on key routes and managing traffic in the largest market towns
 - developing and implementing a road and user hierarchy
- detail what arrangements are in place at the regional level to aid network management co-ordination and consistency
- provide details of the Traffic Manager's role and responsibilities, and how the council liaises with stakeholders, the National Highways and neighbouring authorities
- set out how the performance of the council and its network function is monitored.

This plan will provide the framework for how we as an authority manage investment, maintenance, streetworks and incidents to support the operation of bus services in Wiltshire.

Identify and agree a bus network hierarchy for investment

We have identified our key and principal bus network; from this we have identified priority routes/network for investment in Wiltshire. The hierarchy for investment is:

- Superbus routes, including routes in Salisbury
- Interurban routes
- Town networks
- Rural routes

This hierarchy is based upon existing operations, patronage and travel patterns. However it is recognised that there could be specific local priorities and needs, this hierarchy will provide a framework for directing investment and will also be recognised in our Highway Network Management Plan. This will need to be further developed and agreed through the Enhanced Partnership.

Focus resurfacing, including gulley re-location, to improve ride quality on key interurban and town bus routes

Through our consultation, some operators raised concerns regarding the quality of road infrastructure. As such, we will work with internal teams such as our Highways Department to ensure that maintenance challenges relating to bus corridors are dealt with as high priority tasks. We also want to be proactive in improving the ride quality for bus passengers through considering the impact of road design on this and carrying out remedial works where appropriate. Developing a Wiltshire Council Highway Network Management Plan will establish the basis of this approach and the priorities.

Internal bus delivery group – pan-department: passenger transport, climate change and carbon reduction, social care, education, network management, highways, development control, air quality, sustainable transport, transport planning, planning policy, economic development

We have already established an internal working group to develop the BSIP. We intend for this group to continue across and beyond the BSIP development period to maximise the benefits of expertise across the council in informing the improvements to the bus network and supporting its ongoing

operation For example, identifying and implementation of ‘quick win’ highway improvement schemes or slight adjustments to timetables. Another example of cross-working will be to ensure that teams leading funding bids and scheme development consider buses from the outset.

Put buses at the heart of Streetworks processes including planning and communicating road closures and restrictions

Operators within Wiltshire have raised concerns regarding the operational impact of temporary highways works. This not only impacts operations; it affects the reputation and image of buses and also passengers. To address these concerns, we will introduce holistic assessments of the impacts of temporary roadworks and closures to ensure that these works are planned to minimise the impacts on the bus network. For example, we will work to minimise the number of simultaneous roadwork schemes occurring along a bus route to reduce reliability issues.

We will also open up new lines of communication with our bus operators to ensure they are informed about temporary highways works within the county and the extent to which this may impact their services. We will need to ensure operators are provided with sufficient notice in order to effectively plan for any diversions that may be required and to inform passengers.

Car parking: review parking supply, tailor enforcement to the needs of bus services and supporting Park and Ride in Salisbury

We intend to review the impact of car parking upon the operation of the bus network within Wiltshire. This will include:

- Assessing the impact of the supply and availability of car parking in city and town centres on the demand for bus services and their contribution to delays and congestion. This will also need to consider the impact of on-street parking on the operation of buses.
- Identifying areas where car parking is currently impacting the operation of bus services and developing mitigation and enforcement under the framework outlined in the Highway Network Management Plan.

Wiltshire currently has a well-established Park and Ride offer in Salisbury. The success of these sites is influenced by parking policy and as such will be an important factor in developing a parking strategy for Salisbury. This will also include upgrading our Park and Ride sites in Salisbury to improve their impression and the waiting environment for customers to enable them to act as interchanges.

Develop planning policy and processes to support the delivery and operation of bus services and infrastructure

As a planning authority we can utilise planning policy and decisions to support the delivery and operations of bus services and infrastructure in Wiltshire and support the ambitions of the BSIP.

Planning policies relating to the location of housing and employment development, parking standards and density of housing can help reduce car dependency and encourage bus use especially when supported by design guides and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which put bus at the centre of proposals for new development.

We will develop policies for our emerging Local Plan (for the period 2016-2036) which support the aims of the BSIP and will engage with bus operators to develop the spatial strategy and supporting policies. The Highway Network Management Plan that we will develop will also be important in supporting the development of these policies.

We will engage bus operators as consultees on all major development applications and engage them at the earliest possible opportunity in the development control process.

Work with Local Planning Authorities to align transport planning and town planning work more closely, developing new standards and guidance to ensure that new housing developments are built in locations that are straightforward and commercially viable to serve well by extending existing local bus services and are future-proofed, with layouts that make it easy to operate a bus service through them and that these are accessible with walking distances to the bus route minimised.

We will embed stronger public transport accessibility tests into development planning processes and will facilitate developers to better engage with their local bus at the pre-application and pre-master-planning stage.

Bus operators will be a statutory consultee on all planning applications involving >50 new dwellings and new office or retail floorspace. A new set of standards as to the expectation of a minimum standard of provision of infrastructure and bus services that will be required for different sizes of new development will be developed in partnership with developers and local planning authorities by September 2022. In discussions with LPAs and developers there will be a strong focus on enhancing the existing bus network first rather than developing new dedicated services, to maximise the wider community benefit.

Work with National Highways (formerly Highways England) to support bus operations in Wiltshire

We will work closely with National Highways who are responsible for the operation and management of the Strategic Road Network (SRN), in Wiltshire the A36, A303 and the M4 are part of the SRN. We will work with National Highways to support bus operations in Wiltshire and identify opportunities to reduce delays to our key bus services including our Superbus routes.

Work strategically with the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body to develop strategic improvements for buses across the region

We will work with our partners in the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body (Western Gateway STB) to monitor opportunities for improving the bus offer in the region through infrastructure or service investments. The STB also presents a possible avenue for funding to deliver improvements to the bus offer in Wiltshire.

Working with Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and Network Rail to improve integration between bus and rail

We will work with TOCs operating in Wiltshire and Network Rail to help deliver infrastructure, services and ticketing improvements to help improve the integration between bus and rail. This will ensure we make the most of the opportunity provided by rail in Wiltshire and enable people to complete journeys by public transport (bus and rail) within and beyond Wiltshire.

Policies and processes to develop and maintain co-operation and co-ordination with neighbouring authorities

We have a strong working relationship with our adjacent authorities, which we will build upon to ensure the benefits of the BSIP are felt in relation to cross boundary bus services and ticketing. This will need to cover all aspects of local authority functions which effects bus planning and operations including:

- Planning and development control for new residential and employment sites.
- Streetworks, utilities works and disruptions.
- Strategic plans for transport networks.
- Transport scheme and business case development for schemes which cover all modes of travel.

The Western Gateway STB will also be an important platform for us to maintain this dialogue.

Develop alternative funding streams for the bus outside DfT BSIP money e.g. LEP, diversion of existing LA budget, S106, commercial

Wiltshire Council is committed to using other funding streams to support our ambitions relating to the Bus Service Improvement Plan. As such, we will work holistically across funding streams to maximise the benefit of investment across our bus network.

We have recently received funding from the government's Rural Mobility Fund to provide DRT services in Pewsey Vale. We are also utilising Section 106 funding to support our bus network ambitions. Additionally, the council currently invest a large amount of its own funds into bus services within the county and intends to utilise all of these funding streams to support the implementation of the BSIP ambitions.

Wiltshire Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan

This document was published by Wiltshire Council

For further information please visit the following website: www.wiltshire.gov.uk