

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services
<b>Date:</b>	24 October 2024
<b>Title:</b>	Public Transport Policy Update – Bus Service Improvement Plan
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Hampshire 2050

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to highlight the significant progress being made in delivering the Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), agree and continue the partnership approach to delivering the BSIP and to consider national changes related to public transport and their implications for Hampshire.

### Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services notes the progress being made with the delivery of Hampshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in partnership with Hampshire's bus operators.
3. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services approves the partnership approach to improving bus services in Hampshire as set out in the Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan and rules out bus franchising as a viable option at the present time.
4. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services approves the 2024 Hampshire BSIP, as appended to this report.

### Executive Summary

5. Better public transport impacts upon a range of important County Council outcomes. Whilst being a cornerstone of the Hampshire Local Transport Plan it also directly impacts the ability of people to access life opportunities including work. As our road network becomes increasingly full, buses offer an alternative choice and without them our transport system will not be as efficient or as economically connected as it needs to be. Buses are a part of the mix of transport initiatives necessary to decarbonise transport and achieve climate change commitments. The use of buses is also directly linked to improving physical and mental health and good public transport is also critical to linking communities and people with each other and access to essential services and

life opportunities. This paper updates members on the work taking place and highlights some of the key investments that have been made over the last few years. These total in excess of more than £60 million, all of which has been secured from external sources, as well as significant match-funding from bus operators.

6. The paper seeks agreement for Hampshire's 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which sets out an investment programme for the next five years. The report considers the importance of the County Council continuing to use external funding to implement BSIP measures to make the bus network as resilient and strong as it can be. The current difficult financial position that the County Council faces means our capacity to support buses with revenue is becoming increasingly difficult so it is important that we seize opportunities like BSIP funding and make the most of them.
7. The paper highlights a number of examples where the County Council has been successful alongside our partners in securing external funding to deliver significant improvements to the county's public transport network, e.g. zero-emission buses, rail station access improvements, more frequent bus services, bus priority measures, more real-time information displays and improved transport interchanges.

### **Contextual information**

8. Better bus services support the Hampshire Public Health Strategy 2023-26, the Hampshire Economic Strategy 2023 and the Climate Change commitments and targets to be Carbon Neutral by 2050. During the development of Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4 the extensive links between the strategies above and the outcomes set in the Hampshire 2050 Vision were identified and evidenced. There is a strong and direct link between the core policy framework of the County Council set out above and supporting better bus services through the development and delivery of the Bus Service Improvement Plan.
9. The Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was updated in summer 2024 and builds on the first iteration approved in 2021. It is available at Appendix 1, and at: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/transport/HampshireBusServiceImprovementPlan.pdf>
10. The BSIP and Hampshire's Enhanced Partnership (EP) are overseen by the EP Board comprising the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 & Corporate Resources (Chair), and the Managing Directors of Hampshire's three main bus operators (Stagecoach, First Bus and Go South Coast/Bluestar) plus a member representing smaller bus operators. In terms of governance, the Board is supported by the EP Working Group and the EP Stakeholder Forum.
11. The EP Board has a strong focus on partnership working and delivering on shared objectives, along with a great deal of joint delivery of projects across local authority boundaries, particularly with the many bus services that cross from Hampshire into Portsmouth, Southampton and Surrey.
12. The BSIP vision for improving bus services in Hampshire is as follows: "The County Council and bus operators recognise that the bus has a huge untapped potential to cater for a larger share of everyday journeys. Through a programme

of co-ordinated and sustained investment, over the next decade we will deliver a renaissance in bus passenger travel, which will see the number of journeys made by bus increase year on year and achieve a doubling of bus use by 2038 from 2023/24 levels to 42 million journeys.” As a reference point prior to the pandemic, bus use in Hampshire peaked at circa 31 million journeys per annum. It is important to note that achieving the passenger growth target set out in the vision is dependent on funding coming forward to deliver the schemes set out in the BSIP, e.g. the Bus Route Priority Network and further pump-priming to expand the commercial bus network.

13. The vision will be achieved through a strategy of targeting investment at the strongest parts of the commercial network by making core routes more appealing, faster, and more reliable and through effective promotion of services within the communities they serve. The Hampshire Bus Priority Route Network comprises the forty-five main bus corridors in the county that are strong commercial propositions and/or play an important inter-urban connectivity function between Hampshire’s main towns.
14. A series of Bus Route Investment Plans are being developed for the main bus routes that will set out our collective ambition with operators and a series of interventions that will deliver passenger growth. These plans will sit alongside proposals to develop a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network for locations including Basingstoke, Farnborough, the Southampton area and South East Hampshire.
15. Working within the framework set out in the National Bus Strategy, the BSIP sets out the guiding principles that will deliver significant increases in patronage:
  - Regulation
  - Customer Focus
  - Infrastructure, network management and bus priority
  - Improved public transport information and accessibility
  - Investing in zero-emission buses to improve air quality
  - Supporting bus services that provide social cohesion
  - Promoting bus use for access to education
  - Innovation and digital accessibility
  - Fares and ticketing initiatives
16. **Track Record of Delivery.** The County Council has a very strong record of delivering bus improvement schemes in partnership with both operators and our neighbouring Local Transport Authorities. Examples of where this has been achieved include; the successful Eclipse busway in Gosport and Fareham; the A3 ‘Star’ Bus Corridor between Waterlooville and Portsmouth, and; the Stagecoach Gold route serving the Blackwater Valley between Aldershot, Farnborough and Camberley in Surrey. These schemes all feature measures to improve bus speeds through congested areas, high quality vehicles, real time passenger information, high frequency services seven days a week and upgraded bus stop facilities.
17. This investment in turn drives significant investment from private sector bus operators in new fleets, low-emission buses and more frequent services. The

outcome of this investment in high-quality bus corridors demonstrates that where investment is made jointly between operators and the County Council, attractive services and passenger growth are delivered.

18. Other examples of strong joint investment include the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) projects, a Government fund targeted at improving public transport links between city centres and their outlying areas. The County Council was successful in partnering with Southampton, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight Councils to deliver a suite of improvements to bus networks, interchange facilities and cycling and walking facilities. Examples include Gosport Interchange delivered with Gosport Borough Council, Ryde interchange on the Isle of Wight and significant bus priority measures in Portsmouth, Southampton, Havant, Totton and Marchwood. In turn operators are investing in more frequent services, new buses and new ticketing technologies such as 'tap-on tap-off' ticketing with capped fares.
19. A significant further success for Hampshire has been the DfT's Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) fund. The County Council partnered with Portsmouth City Council and First Bus and secured a £13million funding contribution from DfT that has delivered sixty-two zero-emission buses to the First Bus fleet in Fareham, as well as contributing to the depot charging equipment. The funding levered in a further £15million investment in the project from First Bus. The outcome is that virtually 100% of bus services in Fareham, Gosport and parts of Portsmouth are zero-emission.
20. These initiatives give further benefit to the Hampshire economy by creating new jobs (more bus drivers, bus depot engineering staff and support staff), and building new skills amongst Hampshire's workforce, e.g. First Bus engineers in Fareham are all now trained in electric vehicle maintenance.
21. More evening and late-night buses support the nighttime economy, and together with more early morning buses, create employment opportunities for people to access shift-work jobs.
22. A further success is the Solent Transport Future Transport Zone initiative, where the partners secured £28million of DfT funding to trial sustainable ways of transporting people and goods. This includes the Breeze 'Mobility as a Service' app which facilitates integrated public transport ticketing along with scooter and e-bike hire.
23. **BSIP Investment to date in Hampshire.** The County Council was awarded £7.2million in BSIP funding across 2023/24 and 2024/25 by DfT, which was complemented by the County Council ring-fencing approximately £2million of underspend on Concessionary Fares for bus improvement projects. This funding has been focused on pump-priming enhanced service levels on seventeen of Hampshire's bus routes where there is strong potential for long term commercial growth and network expansion. Examples include Bluestar 1 between Winchester, Chandler's Ford and Southampton where the Sunday and weekday evening services have doubled in frequency and buses now operate twenty-four hours a day on Friday and Saturday nights. The 32 service between Basingstoke and Newbury has seen the introduction of a new Sunday service, and the Stagecoach 6 service in Farnborough has seen increased daytime and evening services. There have also been improved services introduced in Andover, Waterside, Aldershot, Alton, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh,

Gosport and Fareham. It is anticipated that these service enhancements will become commercially viable at the end of the funding period and form a part of an expanding core commercial network.

24. The remainder of the BSIP funding is being invested in supporting commercial services that are yet to return to commercial viability following the pandemic; improvements to bus shelters; more real time information screens; bus priority at traffic signals along several busy bus corridors; feasibility studies to design the key aspects of the Hampshire Bus Priority Route Network ensuring that a pipeline of schemes is 'shovel ready' when funding opportunities arise; a social media and outdoor advertising bus promotional campaign with bus operators using billboards and short films on social media to promote the benefits of bus travel [Your Bus Helps Hampshire And Its Future \(youtube.com\)](#) ; trialling new Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services, initially in parts of Andover where local buses do not offer the best value for money and alternative provision needs to be explored.
25. **How better buses supports our policy framework outcomes.** The BSIP is important for public health because the quality of the public transport network and infrastructure directly facilitates more active modes of travel and it widens people's life opportunities and access to services. In the most deprived areas of Hampshire, we also have some of the highest levels of bus use reflecting the important role they play. People who regularly use public transport build regular exercise into their daily routine.
26. Investment in Hampshire's public transport system through the BSIP will help to provide public transport that is easily accessible, reliable, affordable and contributes to quality of life and wellbeing in several ways. Good public transport enables access to employment, friends and family, education and healthcare facilities. It also encourages a shift towards a wider range of more sustainable transport options that can promote a healthier lifestyle.
27. The BSIP is also consistent with the Hampshire Economic Strategy 2023. In order to deliver economic growth at scale and deliver better services for residents, the County Council must work in partnership with its private sector partners and its neighbouring local authorities. The BSIP typifies this partnership approach to delivering a more integrated public transport network, leveraging in private sector investment and working in close partnership with its neighbouring Local Transport Authorities to improve cross-boundary bus services.
28. Transport patterns have changed as a result of the pandemic with more people choosing to spend more time at home and in local town centres with a decline in long distance commuting. Good bus services help support local economies by facilitating better access to high streets and town centres, thereby supporting regeneration, leisure and socialising opportunities.
29. There are persisting pockets of deprivation in Hampshire where earnings, educational attainment and skill levels are lower, and where young people grow up with fewer life opportunities than their counterparts in more affluent areas. BSIP investment and the resulting improved public transport network can assist in promoting more opportunities for young people in deprived areas, enabling them to access employment and education more easily. By way of example an initiative was launched as a pilot in Havant using Future Transport Zone funding which supports job seekers by providing them with transport vouchers to

support them in the first months of finding and seeking new employment. It has proven to be very popular and particularly so with young women.

30. In respect of climate change and carbon net zero policies, the improvements being delivered to the bus network through the BSIP help to support a transition from car to public transport for many journeys, resulting in reduced congestion, lower emissions and improved air quality.
31. **Working in partnership with neighbouring Local Transport Authorities.**  
The County Council is delivering a broad range of BSIP initiatives in partnership with neighbouring authorities, particularly Portsmouth and Southampton where many bus services operate across local authority boundaries into and out of the two cities.
32. There are several examples where Hampshire residents have benefitted from Portsmouth's BSIP investment in additional bus services on the busy bus services from Havant Borough into Portsmouth including 24 hour a day services from Leigh Park into the city, and early morning and late-night buses on the A3 Star corridor to Waterlooville. Equally, Portsmouth residents have benefitted from Hampshire's investment in additional services between Fareham and Portsmouth. Similarly, a number of promotional campaigns targeting younger people and concessionary pass holders have been jointly funded and co-ordinated by the three authorities working together with bus operators.
33. There are also Hampshire procurement frameworks that are open to neighbouring authorities including real time information systems, bus shelter supply and bus stop improvements, further demonstrating the benefits of partnership working.
34. The County Council continues to work with Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight Councils on several public transport schemes. Building on the success of Eclipse BRT, the A3 Star corridor, The Hard interchange, Ryde Interchange and TCF investment, the next phases of South East Hampshire Rapid Transit (SEHRT) are being planned. Similarly, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposals for the Southampton area continue to be developed, with potential links to Eastleigh, Romsey and the Waterside being considered.
35. Other noteworthy projects that are delivering improvements to public transport include the County Council taking on an increasing role in the provision and maintenance of bus shelters. The Council has recently entered into a bus shelter advertising contract with Clear Channel, initially for the boroughs of Rushmoor, Hart and Gosport with others likely to follow. The contract has the benefit of providing a number of new bus shelters in those areas and on-going maintenance, and the County Council will also receive a share of the ongoing advertising revenue from the advertising panels in the shelters.
36. **National Bus Policy Update.** Following the launch of the first ever National Bus Strategy for England in 2021, the DfT is now working to consider and determine the exact scope of the anticipated Better Buses Bill, announced in the King's Speech. It is expected that the bill will include:
  - making it easier for Local Transport Authorities to franchise bus services
  - permitting local authorities to set up their own bus companies
  - reforming bus funding to give more flexibility and control to local leaders.

37. Given that the partnership model has been so effective in Hampshire in delivering growth in passenger numbers and securing investment from both Government and private sector bus operators, at this moment in time bus franchising does not appear to offer the most effective operating model for Hampshire. However, this will be subject to on-going review as the national policy and operational landscapes continue to evolve. Franchising is deemed to be most effective in large metropolitan areas where there is a propensity for wasteful competition and duplication of services. In those areas there is scope to use resources in a more co-ordinated way to provide a better-balanced bus network.
38. **Hampshire's Priorities for Bus.** The County Council will continue to deliver high quality bus schemes in partnership with Hampshire's bus and Community Transport sectors and our neighbouring transport authorities. Prior to the pandemic, this approach bucked the national trend by delivering an increase in passenger numbers.
39. The County Council will continue to work with bus operators and neighbouring authorities to decarbonise the public transport network, submitting funding bids for zero-emission buses and associated infrastructure wherever possible.
40. The County Council will work with the EP Board and partner organisations such as TfSE to lobby Government for longer term BSIP funding settlements, enabling the Council to build a stable, funded programme of bus improvement measures that will continue to secure private sector investment.
41. The Council will explore opportunities for a more flexible Concessionary Fares scheme, where concessionary pass holders would make a small contribution towards the scheme, either as an annual fee or through a charge of for example 50p per journey. The money raised could be used to supplement the County Council's public transport support budget and deliver a transformational change to the amount of bus and Community Transport services that the Council could provide, particularly for non-commercially viable routes in rural areas and market towns, where it is becoming increasingly difficult to provide public transport services due to the pressures on the overall County Council's budget. However, the Concessionary Fares scheme is a national scheme and would require legislative change to make it possible.
42. The County Council is also keen to see continuation of the government-funded £2 single fare cap for all bus journeys. The scheme has been particularly successful in Hampshire in encouraging people back to public transport following the pandemic, and it offers significant savings in a rural county where bus journeys tend to be longer and therefore more expensive than in large towns and cities where journeys are typically shorter. The scheme has been complementary to the overall package of investment being made in Hampshire's bus network through ZEBRA, TCF and BSIP.
43. **Impacts of SP25.** The County Council is required to deliver a balanced budget and proposed some changes to services to help achieve this, all of which were included in the budget consultation. A number of changes were approved by Cabinet on 14 October 2024 which will see changes to the supported bus network and community transport provision from April 2025. The decisions made by Cabinet will explore an increasingly joined-up approach to the County Council's procurement of School Transport, local bus services and Community

Transport. This report does not seek to cover this ongoing work which will largely impact the non-commercial networks but there is a relationship worth noting. The investment being made in Hampshire's commercial bus network and in supporting infrastructure is a way of reducing demands on our supported bus budget by maximising the potential of the commercial network to meet travel demands from all. In practice the stronger, more resilient and profitable for operators we can make the commercial network the larger it will be and the less it will need public support.

44. In addition to lobbying Government for longer term, stable bus funding and flexibility around the Concessionary Fares scheme, the pressure is driving innovation in service provision. The council is trialling DRT in the Andover area to establish and if this can prove to be a more cost-effective solution than local bus, and the Council is engaging with Community Transport (CT) operators, seeking to broaden the coverage of the CT network and explore the possibilities of the sector providing more local bus services and Home to School Transport.
45. Other possible solutions include a shift towards local communities e.g. parish and town councils, arranging local supported transport to fit the needs of local residents. Although funding is not available, the County Council provides support and advice on the setting up of such schemes through the Transport Self-Help Scheme [Providing a community transport service: self-help kit | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#) Examples include the Meon Valley Community Bus Association and the Hartley Wintney Community Bus.
46. Other items covered in the report could lead to more income being generated for the Council, including from bus shelter contracts.

## **Finance**

47. The report seeks endorsement of the 2024 Hampshire BSIP and for the continuation of the partnership approach to delivering better bus services. Any schemes emanating from the BSIP programme would need to secure funding, but there are no direct cost implications as a result of this report.
48. Other items covered in the report could lead to more income being generated for the Council, including flexibility around the Concessionary Fares scheme and being able to charge users a small fee.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

49. Significant consultation with stakeholders has taken place through the development of Hampshire's draft Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4. Stakeholders and the public are clear that public transport and bus services should be a focus for the County Council's policies, supporting the principle of 'reducing dependence on the private car'.
50. In line with guidance issued by the Department for Transport at the time the National Bus Strategy was published, the County Council has undertaken consultation to gain the views and support of stakeholders both on the existing bus network and potential improvements that could be made through the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership.



51. Following the original submission of the Hampshire BSIP in October 2021, the government required the County Council to engage with stakeholders on both a formal and informal basis around the development of the EP Plan and EP Scheme. The informal consultation took place between October 2021 and January 2022 and consisted of a range of initiatives including a Passenger Transport Forum, meetings with district and parish councils and a series of virtual drop-in sessions that any interested stakeholders could sign up to. Two focus groups were also conducted, the first group consisted of regular bus users and the second group consisted of infrequent or non-bus users. In addition to this there were regular meetings with all local bus operators and neighbouring local authorities. Overall, there was strong support for the scope and direction of the BSIP as well as support for the priorities the County Council has identified.
52. The outputs of the BSIP and EP will have a particularly positive outcome for those groups who are statistically more frequent users of public transport including younger and older people, women, those with the protected characteristics of disability, race, pregnancy and maternity, those living in rural locations and those on lower incomes. Residents with the protected characteristic of religion or belief could also be impacted positively through improved services supporting access to religious events or places of worship.
53. In terms of equality impacts, there is a higher reliance on buses for commuting amongst particular sectors of the population: females, younger age groups (16–19-year-olds), part-time workers, those in manual occupations, and those on low incomes. 18.9% of households in Hampshire have no access to a car or van. In light of this, there is a need to support the most socially excluded residents who are disproportionately represented as bus passengers and the outputs of the BSIP will have positive impacts these residents. Around one in three bus journeys in Hampshire are made by concessionary pass holders.
54. The BSIP commitments are to work towards more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, and better co-ordinated bus services which would enable people to access essential services and lead independent lives for longer within their own communities.
55. Furthermore, people using public transport build physical exercise into their regular routine. This links well with Hampshire's Public Health Strategy, helping people to live healthy lives. As more people choose to use public transport, better public health outcomes can result.

### **Climate Change Impact Assessments**

56. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
57. As this report does not deal specifically with approval to implement specific schemes, the climate change tools will be utilised as and when funding is available and individual schemes or packages of schemes come forward for Executive Member approval. Better public transport is a cornerstone of LTP4.

Decarbonising the transport system is one of the main objectives of both the BSIP and LTP4. Reducing reliance on the private car use will deliver positive impacts against the county council's air quality and climate change objectives.

## **Carbon Mitigation**

58. By increasing the modal share of journeys made by bus and decreasing the share made by private car, BSIP measures would support a reduction in carbon emissions from transport. Buses also make more efficient use of road space – a double decker bus can take up to 75 cars off the road. Bus operators will continue to invest in their bus fleets, which already perform well in terms of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter emissions. On average, each journey made by bus generates a 50% reduction in carbon emissions over a journey made by private car. Bus operators, in partnership with the County Council will continue to seek funding from the Government towards zero carbon buses, which could be either electric or hydrogen buses. This will see the number of diesel buses progressively reduced over time.

## **Conclusions**

59. The recommendations in this report are consistent with the policy objectives of LTP4 and will contribute to Hampshire's Climate Change Strategy, Economic Strategy and the County Council's Public Health Strategy. BSIP investment promotes strong and resilient economic growth and enables people to live safe, healthy, independent lives.
60. Endorsement of the 2024 Hampshire BSIP and continuation of the partnership approach to delivering better bus services will help to secure both external and internal funding for these improvements. Delivery of BSIP measures will help make bus services more reliable, more frequent, faster and operate over a longer span of the day. Investment will be made in passenger facilities, bus infrastructure and marketing, collectively improving the customer proposition and attracting more people to public transport. It builds on the existing positive relationship between the County Council and its bus operators which has enabled Hampshire to deliver passenger growth to levels prior to the pandemic against a national backdrop of decline in passenger numbers.
61. The recommended approach will help meet the objectives of the Government's National Bus Strategy and Hampshire's BSIP which was co-developed with bus operators and a wide range of stakeholders.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	no
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	yes

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<a href="#">Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus-2023-09-18-ELMUS Decision Day (hants.gov.uk)</a>	<u>Date</u> 18 Sept 2023
<a href="#">Hampshire's Bus Enhanced Partnership Plan &amp; Scheme-2022-03-10-ELMETE Decision Day (hants.gov.uk)</a>	10 March 2022
<a href="#">Bus Service Improvement Plan-2021-10-28-ELMETE Decision Day (hants.gov.uk)</a>	28 October 2021
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
Bus Back Better – A National Bus Strategy for England <a href="#">Bus Back Better (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>	<u>Date</u> March 2021
Bus Services Act 2017: Enhanced Partnership Guidance <a href="#">The bus services act 2017: enhanced partnerships (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>	Updated July 2021

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The outputs of the BSIP and EP will have a particularly positive outcome for those groups who are statistically more frequent users of public transport including younger and older people, women, those with the protected characteristics of disability, race, pregnancy and maternity, those living in rural locations and those on lower incomes. Residents with the protected characteristic of religion or belief could also be impacted positively through improved services supporting access to religious events or places of worship.