

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services
Date:	6 March 2025
Title:	2025/26 Bus Grant (BSIP) Funding
Report From:	Director of Hampshire 2050

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to spend the County Council's allocation of 2025/26 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Bus Grant funding for schemes and measures to improve local bus services, as set out in Hampshire's BSIP.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services delegates authority to the Director of Hampshire 2050 to enter into the necessary contractual arrangements, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, for receipt of the County Council's allocation of £13,049,411 of 2025/26 Bus Grant Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Bus Grant funding from the Department for Transport (DfT).
3. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services delegates authority to the Director of Hampshire 2050 to allocate the funding to measures that will support and improve local bus services and associated infrastructure, consistent with the objectives set out in Hampshire's BSIP.
4. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services delegates authority to the Director of Hampshire 2050 to spend and enter into contractual arrangements (in consultation with the Director of Universal Services and the Head of Legal Services) with local bus operators in Hampshire and existing suppliers in accordance with the principle set out in paragraph 3 above, up to the value of the BSIP grant awarded to the County Council by the Department for Transport (DfT) in conjunction with existing Passenger Transport budgets.
5. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services delegates authority to the Director of Hampshire 2050, in consultation with the Director of Universal Services and the Head of Legal Services, to determine the principles for the award of the funding which will be allocated to support the objectives of the Hampshire BSIP.

6. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services notes the Department for Transport (DfT)'s conditions and expectations that are attached to the County Council's allocation of 2025/26 Bus Grant funding and agrees they are acceptable.

Executive Summary

7. This report sets out the background to and purpose of the County Council's allocation of £13million of 2025/26 Bus Grant funding from the Department for Transport (DfT). This funding has been allocated by the DfT to Hampshire County Council and is intended to be used for the purposes of delivery of local bus priority schemes, bus initiatives and service improvements as set out in the Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).
8. The three elements of the 2025/26 Bus Grant funding from the DfT awarded to Hampshire comprise a capital funding allocation (£7.5million), a revenue funding allocation (£5.3million) and a Bus capacity and capability revenue grant (£125,000).
9. This report sets out the proposed approach for utilising this 2025/26 Bus Grant funding, which has been developed in partnership with bus operators. The schemes and initiatives to be delivered in 2025/26 will contribute to the delivery of Hampshire's BSIP objectives and County Council policies including the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4, Hampshire Economic Strategy and Hampshire Climate Change Strategy. The improvements meet the expectations set out in the DfT Memorandum of Understanding that accompanied the 2025/26 Bus Grant award letter dated 20 December 2024.

Contextual information

10. Hampshire's BSIP was co-developed by the County Council and Hampshire's bus operators in response to the publication of the first ever National Bus Strategy for England, published in March 2021. The Hampshire BSIP, which was submitted to DfT in October 2021, describes how the County Council will work with bus operators to improve local bus services in several ways, including but not limited to:
 - more frequent bus services
 - more early morning and evening services
 - bus priority measures to speed up buses that are delayed by traffic congestion
 - de-carbonising Hampshire's bus fleet
 - promoting the bus network as a single system, integrated with other modes of public transport
 - innovation and use of technology to seek to meet the public transport needs of rural areas in ways that are affordable and financially sustainable
 - better value for money bus fares with integrated ticketing
 - development of more Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes

- improved bus stations, interchange facilities at rail stations, and investment in better waiting environments at bus stops.
11. In March 2022, the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approved the Hampshire Enhanced Partnership Plan (EP Plan) and Hampshire Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EP Scheme), as the local response to “Bus Back Better”, the national bus strategy, building on the Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) that was approved in October 2021. Having an approved EP Plan and EP Scheme was a requirement in order for Hampshire County Council to receive BSIP capital funding and is a formalised statutory partnership that requires such plans are jointly owned and governed by the Council and bus operators.
 12. Following submission of the Hampshire BSIP in April 2022, the County Council has received and has substantively delivered £7,158,924 of improvements funded from DfT “BSIP Plus” funding across two financial years (2023/24 and 2024/25). Some of the improvements utilising this funding are continuing into the 2025/26 financial year. An updated Hampshire BSIP was published in July 2024, and approved by the [Executive Member of Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services at the Decision Day on 24 October 2024](#).
 13. In mid-October 2024, the DfT announced over £1billion of 2025/26 Bus Grant BSIP funding for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) in England to help them deliver improvements set out in their BSIPs. Hampshire has been allocated a total of £13million, split into three parts - a capital funding allocation (£7.5million), a revenue funding allocation (£5.3million) and a Bus capacity and capability revenue grant (£125,000).
 14. Alongside this BSIP funding, the Local Authority element of Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), which has been previously awarded to the County Council as a separate payment will now be awarded as part of the 2025/26 Bus Grant, providing a further £1,068,177 of revenue funding. The County Council will continue to utilise this BSOG element of the 2025/26 Bus Grant as a part of the core budget for operating supported bus services delivered under tender to the County Council in areas of Hampshire that are not viable to be run commercially.
 15. The 2025/26 Bus Grant funding from DfT comes with conditions and expectations attached to it that were set out in a Memorandum of Understanding which accompanied the grant award letter, which the County Council must sign to show that it is prepared to comply with the requirements. The most important of these conditions are summarised in the next section of this report.

DfT Conditions and Expectations on how the 2025/26 Bus Grant Funding should be utilised by LTAs

16. The DfT has stated that the 2025/26 Bus Grant BSIP capital funding can be used by LTAs to deliver bus priority infrastructure, other bus infrastructure, including improved bus stops, stations and interchanges and any other assets delivering an improved bus passenger experience.
17. The DfT has stated that the 2025/26 Bus Grant BSIP revenue funding can be used by LTAs for bus network support and development; simpler and more affordable fares; improved personal safety and security including measures to

reduce anti-social behaviour; initiatives that deliver bus information or improved bus network identity; measures that improve accessibility and inclusion; development of future proposals, including feasibility studies.

18. The DfT has stated that the Capacity and Capability element of the 2025/26 Bus Grant funding (which is revenue funding) is to be used towards programme delivery costs including staff costs.
19. Within a Memorandum of Understanding, sent to the County Council on 20 December 2024, the DfT has set out a number of expectations to be followed by LTAs in using the 2025/26 Bus Grant funding:
 - they must either pursue the statutory franchising process or maintain an effective Enhanced Partnership that delivers tangible benefits for passengers
 - LTAs should adhere to national guidance on bus infrastructure scheme development and implementation e.g. LTNs 1/97 & 1/24
 - LTAs should adhere to DfT guidance on branding and communications
 - LTAs should pro-actively promote concessionary fare travel take-up, and make concessionary travel passes valid for use on any on BSIP-funded Demand Responsive Transport services
 - the DfT does not expect to fund from this allocation any schemes where it is not clear that the majority of benefits accrue to buses and/or bus passengers; for example roads schemes which increase network capacity with only a tangential or subsidiary benefit to bus services
 - LTAs “must maintain a commitment in their Enhanced Partnership (EP) to overall funding that the Authority will provide for buses, from all sources, in each financial year of this funding”. The commitment in the Hampshire EP should demonstrate that the funding provided is additional to previously planned bus funding levels and base funding levels (for local bus) are not reduced.
20. In light of the final expectation “to maintain a commitment in its Enhanced Partnership (EP) to overall funding that the Authority will provide for buses, from all sources, in each financial year of this funding”, this means therefore the funding should be used for additional spending on bus services and cannot be used to realise one-off savings by simply replacing existing County Council spend. The 25/26 Bus Grant also cannot therefore be used to reinstate the service reductions made as part of the Universal Services’ SP25 Passenger Transport saving agreed by Cabinet in October 2024.
21. Looking to the future the DfT has advised that following the Comprehensive Spending Review, in summer 2025 there will be a multi-year BSIP Bus Grant allocation to LTAs beyond the 2025/26 Bus Grant for the 2026/27 financial year onwards to spring 2029. Whilst the funding level has yet to be determined, the funding award would represent a significant increase in funding for local bus measures and would need the County Council to rapidly develop plans to utilise such funding in the most strategic and impactful way that supports the priorities agreed in the Hampshire BSIP. The DfT has indicated that the 2024 BSIP will need to be updated in order to receive funding for 2026/27 and beyond. In the

following sections of the report the proposed themes for capital and revenue expenditure are presented.

Proposed Themes for Capital Investment

22. The paragraphs that follow set out the main categories of investment for the capital funding element of the 2025/26 Bus Grant. A total of £7.5million capital funding for bus infrastructure will be spent on the following themes, which are all in alignment with the DfT guidance set out in paragraph 15 for the how capital spend should be utilised:

- Bus Priority scheme on Bishopstoke Road, Eastleigh
- Bus Infrastructure improvements at Sixth Form Colleges
- Safety and Security package of investment in bus shelters, lighting improvements and CCTV
- Real Time and on-bus passenger information improvements
- Rural Bus Shelter Fund - for Town/Parish Councils
- other Bus Stop Infrastructure Improvements & repairs
- community self-help innovation - capital (a contribution towards vehicle costs).

23. Descriptions of the capital improvements that are proposed to be delivered under each theme are set out in Tables 1 and 2 of Appendix 1 to this report. For new bus shelters and Real Time information, the County Council will look to incorporate into the capital cost up to five years' worth of maintenance of these assets. Beyond this, any further maintenance costs would be met from existing Passenger Transport budgets. These improvements all contribute towards the priorities set out in the Hampshire BSIP for bus priority, bus interchanges and bus stop infrastructure and are all deliverable within the timescales required by the DfT.

24. For clarity, any capital spend in this area will be added to the Capital Programme and the County Council's standard governance arrangements will apply.

Proposed Themes for Revenue Spend

25. It is proposed that the £5.3million revenue funding element of the 2025/26 Bus Grant will be spent on the following themes, which are all in alignment with the DfT guidance summarised in paragraph 17 for how the revenue funding should be utilised:

- support for commercial bus services, including service enhancements
- one off funding to mitigate the impacts of high bus industry inflation on future retendering of the supported bus network serving rural areas
- feasibility studies on bus priority measures to develop pipeline of future capital schemes
- Fares/Marketing & At Stop Information initiatives
- Bus Stop Infrastructure upkeep

- Transport Safety Partnership for Gosport Interchange & Eclipse busway
 - community self-help innovation - revenue (Seed funding)
 - disability awareness initiatives
 - staff costs and project management.
26. Descriptions of the revenue initiatives that are proposed to be delivered under each theme are set out in Tables 1 and 3 of Appendix 1 to this report. These initiatives all contribute towards the priorities set out in the Hampshire BSIP for improvements to the frequency of bus services, the waiting environment, passenger information and safety, security, as well as seeking to meet the travel needs of rural areas and are all deliverable within the timescales required by the DfT.

Justification for 2025/26 Bus Grant Programme and Alignment with Policies

27. In order to develop the programme of schemes and initiatives summarised above, following the mid-October announcement of 2024/25 Bus Grant funding, the County Council held a series of workshops and meetings with local bus operators to help understand their priorities and develop a plan for how the £13million of funding allocated to Hampshire could be utilised to help achieve the aims and priorities set out in the Hampshire BSIP.
28. To develop the programme, a series of internal workshops were held involving all County Council staff working on bus improvements. In these workshops, proposals were prioritised based on the deliverability of schemes and initiatives within the short timescales required by the DfT, taking into account the time needed for procurement and mobilisation and the available level of resources within the County and in bus operators' teams to deliver improvements. This indicative work programme was then refined. The Hampshire Enhanced Partnership supports the proposals.
29. In developing the programme, every effort has been taken to ensure that the 2025/26 Bus Grant is used in a way that supports the aims and objectives of the Hampshire Local Transport Plan 4, published in February 2024, the Hampshire Economic Strategy, and the Hampshire Climate Change Strategy.
30. Delivery of the proposed programme of measures that includes bus priority, improvements to bus timetables and investment in the waiting environment and better bus information aligns strongly with the several of the Core Policies of the Local Transport Plan including:
- C1 – Putting people and places at the heart of our decisions
 - C3 – Transport strategies and schemes to be developed in accordance with consideration of all users
 - C6 – Encourage sustainable travel behaviour.
31. The programme also aligns with and supports all three Passenger Transport thematic policies and the two Rural Transport thematic policies listed below:
- PT1 - Place customers at the heart of an affordable, easy to use, and efficient low carbon public transport system

- PT2 - Provide the infrastructure needed to enable reliable, frequent, fast and connected public transport trips
 - PT3 – Increase the reach of public transport services
 - RT 1 - Maintaining accessibility in rural areas, and providing viable alternatives to the private car
 - RT2 – Sustainable access to the countryside.
32. The programme for utilising the 25/26 Bus Grant will support a number of the six types of “capital” outlined in the Hampshire Economic Strategy. Investment in bus priority measures and in bus stop infrastructure adds to the “physical capital” of infrastructure in Hampshire that supports people to access employment opportunities, including the 18.9% of households without access to a car. Better connectivity by bus will support access to education, skills and training opportunities, and walking to and from bus stops improves levels of physical activity, which supports the “human capital” of the Hampshire workforce. Improved bus networks also facilitate easier access to services, community facilities and social networks that are part of the “social capital” of Hampshire.
33. The programme for utilising the 25/26 Bus Grant will support the Hampshire Climate Change Strategy, as providing more attractive public transport alternatives can help reduce dependence on travel by car in our towns and cities or how frequently they are used, which will help to reduce emissions of local pollutants which result in poor air quality.

Finance

34. The table below sets out the funding themes and the indicative areas of spend which have been attributed to each. It should be noted that these are indicative allocations and should be viewed with a degree of flexibility due to the operational nature of bus services and the evolving market conditions.
35. The 2025/26 Bus Grant has been calculated by DfT on a formula based on population size, the distance buses travel and levels of deprivation. As Hampshire is a large county with significant rural areas, this means that bus services connecting communities within Hampshire travel longer distances. The amount of BSIP funding that may be awarded to Hampshire in future financial years is likely to vary. Although allocations for future years are expected, the amount that the DfT may award to Hampshire is subject to change, as may the conditions and expectations as to how future funding is utilised.
36. The Council is committed to ensuring that this funding is spent on areas which offer long term sustainability rather than on projects or services which, once the one-off funding has been spent, may require ongoing revenue funding which the County Council does not have available. For new assets, such as real time screens, the costs of maintenance for an initial five-year period will be included in the capital costs. All other maintenance would be funded from existing Passenger Transport budgets.

Capital Funding – main themes	Indicative spend (£)
Bus Priority scheme on Bishopstoke Road, Eastleigh	2,100,000

Bus Infrastructure improvements at Sixth Form Colleges	1,210,000
Safety and Security package of investment in bus shelters, lighting improvements and CCTV	1,890,000
Real Time and on-bus information improvements	1,343,000
Rural Bus shelter Fund - for Parishes	405,000
Other Bus Stop Infrastructure Improvements & repairs	450,334
Community self-help innovation - capital (a contribution towards vehicle costs)	150,000
Total 2025/26 Bus Grant Capital funding element	7,548,334
Revenue Funding initiatives – main investment themes	Indicative spend (£)
Support for commercial bus services, including service enhancements	2,750,000
Funding to mitigate the impacts of high bus industry inflation on future retendering of the supported bus network serving rural areas	965,000
Feasibility Studies on bus priority measures to develop pipeline of future capital schemes	550,000
Fares/ Marketing & At Stop Information initiatives	231,000
Bus Stop Infrastructure upkeep	105,000
Transport Safety Partnership for Gosport Interchange & Eclipse busway	370,000
Community self-help innovation - revenue (Seed funding)	150,000
Disability awareness initiatives	75,000
Staff costs and project management (including £125,000 of 25/26 Capacity and Capability grant)	275,000
Total 2025/26 Bus Grant Revenue funding element	5,471,000

37. When retendering the supported bus network serving rural areas, the County Council will seek to carefully manage financial risks such as inflation. Funding to operate the supported bus network in Hampshire utilises a combination of core revenue budget, BSOG funding and other external funding. Despite strong recovery of bus passenger demand post-COVID, passenger numbers are still lower and this has impacted farebox income. The causes of this are changes in travel behaviour such as more hybrid working and online shopping. Some concessionary pass holders are making fewer journeys than pre-2020. This reduced demand has adversely impacted operators' income from fares. At the same time as this the sector is experiencing abnormally high inflation. The cause of this is above inflation increases in driver wages, fuel, vehicle insurance and National Insurance employer increases from April 2025.
38. These inflationary pressures will feed through to higher contract prices for supported bus services. In essence, bus contract inflation is to outstrip an inflationary allowance that has been made for supported bus services, meaning that with available budgets, the County Council cannot afford to maintain the same network of supported bus services and some would have to cease.

39. In light of these exceptional cost increases, it is proposed that £965,000 of 2025/26 Bus Grant is allocated on a 'one off' basis, for one year only, to address the impact of inflation on the contract costs of operating supported services. During 2025/26 the County Council will retender the whole supported bus network which will come into effect in September 2025. This funding will help to provide as comprehensive a network as possible, particularly for rural areas and market towns. This one-off funding will also help to protect the bus network while passenger numbers and bus operator revenues continue to grow following the pandemic, to the point where tender prices will return to a stable level, and more services move towards commercial viability.
40. Due to the financial challenge that the County Council is currently facing, a revised approach to the funding of supported services will be instigated. The core revenue budget for supported bus will remain at the present level (which is in line with the requirements not to reduce the base budget set out in the DfT's MoU). To seek to maintain the existing level of service in our rural communities, the inflationary increases in service costs will be covered using external DfT funding thereby delivering year on-year cost savings to the County Council's core bus revenue budget. Conversely, should external funding not be available in future years to cover the full costs of the operating the retendered network, then the services would be reduced to a level which can be met from the core budget.
41. The planned retendering of the supported bus network would use the following principles:
- seek to ensure that the County Council is not exposed to additional financial risks
 - the core bus budget for supported bus services (post SP25 agreed reductions) remains unchanged
 - contract costs over and above the core budget will be funded using external funding sources
 - the County Council will closely monitor the performance of the contracts we support with this 25/26 Bus Grant (including tracking of trends in numbers of passengers using these services, and the level of funding support per passenger carried). This process will form part of the DfT's requirements for LTAs to submit quarterly monitoring returns
 - where supported services are retendered for periods longer than 12 months, that contracts include a mechanism for ending the contract early in order for the County Council to dynamically manage and respond to changes year-by-year in response to the level of external funding that it receives
 - seek to improve engagement with operators to tender more innovative solutions which may help to lower costs.

Consultation and Equalities

42. Hampshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 4 creates a policy base which is supportive of improving public transport and made a commitment to develop and deliver the BSIP.

43. 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. Whilst consultation on the BSIP started in October 2021 the County has continued to engage stakeholders via a range of initiatives. The most engaging is the Passenger Transport Forums. These are regular online meetings with all County Councillors, district and parish councils and interested community groups. The Council has also used focus groups with regular bus users and infrequent or non-bus users and supplements this with statistical surveys using market research best practice all of which helps inform and keep the plan up to date and focused on measures that are needed.
44. It is a DfT requirement that in order to access bus funding the County Council must have an Enhanced Partnership (a statutory partnership) with operators. The Enhanced Partnership (EP) governance takes the form of regular meeting between the Bus operators and County Council lead members and officers. The EP has the role as defined in Government guidance of recommending what to prioritise local bus investment on. The EP has been engaged in the development of the programme for 2025/26.
45. The outputs of the BSIP and EP and the schemes and initiatives set out in this report 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.
46. In terms of equality impacts, the approach set out in the Hampshire BSIP seeks to reduce inequalities within Hampshire. For many people, buses are the best way to access work, education, healthcare, and leisure activities. In this context it is important to note that in England, according to statistics from the Confederation of Passenger Transport:
- 44% of low income households have no access to a car
 - over 75% of job seekers do not have access to a car
 - disabled people are less likely to have a car available to their household than non-disabled people (52% compared to 77%) – with no car available to over two and a half million disabled adults in England
 - in 2023, people on the lowest income bracket made 67 local bus trips on average, while those in the highest income bracket made the least bus journeys (an average of only 25)
 - younger people (aged 17 - 20) make more bus journeys than any other age demographic, and women rely on buses more than men in every age category
 - analysis conducted by KPMG and ITS Leeds has shown that, after allowing for other factors that influence deprivation, a 10% improvement in local bus service connectivity in town and city neighbourhoods is associated with a 3.6% reduction in deprivation.

47. Statistics also indicate that there is a higher reliance on buses for commuting amongst particular sectors of the population: females, part-time workers and those in manual occupations. 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 on these residents. Around one in three bus journeys in Hampshire are made by concessionary pass holders.
48. The Hampshire BSIP priorities 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.
49. 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

50. 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.
51. The carbon impact of specific initiatives and schemes will be assessed on a case by case basis as and when they proceed through design and approval processes. It should be noted that a detailed carbon evidence base was developed as part of the LTP4. It identified a need to achieve a 10% shift away from private vehicles to alternative modes of transport. Improving bus services through BSIP investment is one of the principal ways of widening choice and as such is one of the most important and impactful ways of decarbonising the transport system especially now that the bus fleet is also being electrified.

Climate Change Adaptation

52. The programme does not include any schemes or projects specifically targeted at adapting to climate change. However, capital projects will be designed with adaption potential in mind as they progress through the various design gateways. For example, the replacement and refurbishments of bus shelters and remedial work at Fareham bus station will help to ensure that bus users have a better journey experience during milder, wetter winter weather and provide bus users with shade in the event of warmer summers.

Carbon Mitigation

53. 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.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u> Bus Service Improvement Plan Plus	<u>Date</u> 18 September 2023
Public Transport Policy Update – Bus Service Improvement Plan	24 October 2024
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

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, 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 bus services supporting access to religious events or places of worship.

Appendix 1 – Programme Summary for 2025/26 Bus Grant

The tables below summarise what schemes and initiatives are proposed to be delivered under each programme theme. These are indicative and are in the process of being further developed.

Table 1 – Investment Packages involving both Capital and Revenue elements of 2025/26 Bus Grant

Theme	Overview of packages of improvements to be delivered using capital and revenue grant
<p>Safety and Security package of investment in bus shelters, lighting improvements, CCTV and TravelSafe Partnership on Eclipse bus corridor between Fareham and Gosport</p>	<p>This would see a package of improvements to improve bus passenger safety and security at Gosport Interchange and on the Eclipse BRT busway between Fareham and Gosport. New CCTV cameras would be installed at Gosport Interchange and along the busway to improve safety and security of bus users. All bus shelters on the busway would be replaced with new ones, together with lighting improvements and targeted measures to address anti-social behaviour and improve personal safety and security of users of the Eclipse corridor.</p> <p>A pilot TravelSafe Partnership for the Eclipse corridor and other bus routes in Gosport would be established working with Hampshire Police and Gosport Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council. Dedicated patrol officers would be employed to work evening shifts on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings to undertake uniformed patrols both at Gosport Interchange and on the Eclipse BRT busway. Portsmouth City Council would undertake real time monitoring of the new CCTV cameras. The patrol officers would be equipped with police radios and Portsmouth City Council CCTV control room would be able to contact them and inform them of the locations of any anti-social behaviour identified from the camera feeds. The patrols would help act as a deterrent to criminal damage and anti-social behaviour and offer reassurance and support to bus users.</p>
<p>Community self-help innovation</p>	<p>This capital and revenue funding would be available for community groups to submit bids to help with establishing their own community bus service. The capital costs would include a contribution towards the cost of purchase of a minibus or MPV that would be owned by the community group. The vehicle would be used to operate services to meet the need of an area not served by the bus network. Revenue funding could be used to lease a vehicle and/or contribute towards</p>

	seed funding that would help with initial start-up or operating costs, such as fuel or leaflets and publicity costs. The aspiration would be that local communities would be able to continue to run the service themselves to meet transport needs in a low-cost and effective way, which could include crowdfunding or other local fundraising activities.
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Table 2 – Investment Programme for £7.5m Capital Element of 2025/26 Bus Grant

Theme	Overview of schemes to be delivered using capital grant
Bus Priority scheme on Bishopstoke Road, Eastleigh	This would be a funding contribution to cost of detailed design and construction of bus priority measures on the B3037 Bishopstoke Road bus lane and associated junction improvements between Riverside and Chickenhall Lane, between Bishopstoke and Eastleigh.
Bus Infrastructure improvements at Sixth Form Colleges	This funding would see investment in improvements to bus stops and shelters used by bus services that serve Sixth Form Colleges in Hampshire. An example being the provision of additional stands on Chestnut Avenue to serve students travelling to Barton Peverill College in Eastleigh which are needed as a result of growth in the number of bus services operating.
Real Time and on-bus passenger information improvements	There would be a programme of implementation of new Real Time Passenger Information screens at key bus stops delivered by the County Council and a programme for upgrading on-bus next stop information screens delivered by bus operators.
Rural Bus Shelter Fund - for Town/Parish Councils	Town and Parish Councils would be able to submit bids to, to seek a funding contribution towards the cost of delivery of new bus shelters in their area at locations where there is a passenger need (where there is currently no shelter or an existing Town or Parish Council owned shelter that is in poor condition and needs replacing). A condition of receipt of funding would be that the Town or Parish Council would manage the purchase and installation of the new shelter themselves and commit to meeting the ongoing costs of maintenance.
Other Bus Stop Infrastructure Improvements & repairs	This programme will replace or refurbish of some of the existing stock of bus shelters that are in the worst structural condition and deliver improvements to kerbs and hard standing areas. The budget would be utilised for assist with the cost of repair work at bus stations.

Table 3 – Programme of initiatives for £5.3m Revenue Element of 2025/26 Bus Grant

Theme	Overview of initiatives to be delivered using revenue grant
Support for commercial bus services, including service enhancements	<p>Bus operators would submit an individual grant application setting out which commercial bus services they propose to make improvements to, that are likely to become self-sustaining from passenger growth within 2 years. Timetable improvements that could receive funding support include earlier morning and later evening services, higher daytime or peak hour frequencies or additional Saturday or Sunday frequencies. Commencement dates would be agreed with operators, who would then publicise the timetable improvements. Funding would also be available for services that are not covering their costs from passenger fares. Grant funding agreements would be reached with each operator covering performance monitoring and marketing.</p>
Funding to protect supported bus network in rural areas following retendering	<p>The County Council has an existing budget for supported bus services in Hampshire. This comprises core budgets, some external funding contributions and BSOG funding of £1,068,177 for 2025/26. Bus operator costs have increased over recent years as a result of increased driver wages and fuel, maintenance and insurance costs. This would mean that without additional funding, the service provision that the County Council would be able to secure if retendering using existing budgets alone would reduce. To minimise adverse impacts on largely rural communities in Hampshire of these increases in operating costs and seek to minimise any potential service reductions that would otherwise be necessary, funding will be allocated to help enable the continuation of the remaining supported bus network in rural areas in a form that is as close to current service levels as possible for 2025/26. The whole supported bus network is due to be retendered over spring/summer 2025, with services under the new tenders commencing in September 2025. This retendering process will enable the County Council to utilise both existing revenue budgets and the additional 2025/26 Bus Grant funding, in order to seek to retain as much of the primarily rural supported bus network as possible for the duration of these tendered contracts.</p>

<p>Feasibility Studies on bus priority measures to develop pipeline of future capital schemes</p>	<p>Funding would be used to carry out feasibility studies for bus priority scheme proposals to be delivered in future years. These studies would develop designs and costs for forms of bus priority appropriate to a particular location on the bus network. The form of intervention that could be proposed could include physical bus lanes or bus gates or modal filters or bus priority at traffic signals. Part of the feasibility work undertaken will include development of designs for bus station improvements or bus interchanges. This work would include engagement with stakeholders, councillors and bus users to get feedback on and shape the proposals.</p>
<p>Fares/ Marketing & At Stop Information initiatives</p>	<p>In partnership with operators, targeted promotional fares and joint marketing initiatives that are in addition to existing marketing budgets would be developed and delivered. These would be designed to encourage more travel by bus. Promotional fares initiatives would be local ones that are additional to the Government funded £3 capped single fare which is set to run until 31 December 2025. These initiatives would target people who are not currently regular bus users and seek to encourage more bus use at times of day when there is spare capacity. This could include discounted weekend travel or cheaper evening bus travel such as night-time economy bus travel to support the hospitality sector in town centres. A QR code is proposed to be provided at every bus stop linking to bus travel information.</p>
<p>Bus Stop Infrastructure upkeep</p>	<p>This funding would be used to pilot a regime of enhanced bus shelter maintenance for shelters under the County Councils' ownership, alongside existing budgets for this purpose to monitor if this has an effect on bus passenger numbers and bus passenger perceptions of the service.</p>
<p>Disability awareness initiatives</p>	<p>This funding would involve working in partnership with charities who provide advocacy support people with hidden disabilities and visible ones to review and improve the quality of training materials that operators use to train bus drivers or develop refresher training packages for existing drivers. This would enable these staff to better meet the varying and different needs of bus passengers who have such disabilities, helping reduce barriers to travelling by bus.</p>
<p>Staff costs and project management</p>	<p>The Capacity and Capability element of revenue grant of £125,000 whilst welcome does not cover the full costs of programme management and staff resourcing of the BSIP schemes and initiatives planned for delivery in 2025/26 set out in Tables 1, 2 and 3.</p>

	<p>Further funding from the £5.3m of revenue funding element is proposed to be utilised so that the full costs incurred by the County Council for project management and staff time delivering the 25/26 programme are funded.</p>
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