

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Meeting
Subject:	Bus service Improvement Plan
Date of meeting:	7 March 2023
Report by:	Tristan Samuels - Director of Regeneration
Report Author:	Peter Shelley - Transport Development Manager
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by

1.1. This report was requested by Cabinet.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress to implement the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) following the City Council's award of £48.3m.
- 2.2. The BSIP is part of the National Bus Strategy which also includes the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) scheme. As Portsmouth City Council has been successful with ZEBRA, this report will include an update on that scheme.

3. Background

- 3.1 In March 2021 the Government announced a new National Bus Strategy called Bus Back Better (BBB). As part of this, and to receive future transport funding, Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), such as Portsmouth, had to publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) by 31 October 2021 and form an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with bus operators to deliver the desired and stated improvements. The BSIP is the delivery programme for the EP.
- 3.2 In April 2022 Portsmouth City Council was notified of an indicative award of funding to deliver measures outlined in our BSIP. Although not the full amount bid for, it was one of the highest allocations in the country. The allocation is £48.3 million over 3 years (April 2022 – March 2025) split between £33.8 million for capital measures and £14.5 million for revenue interventions.

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- 3.3 Cabinet approved the Portsmouth Enhanced Partnership and Scheme (EP) on 21 June 2022. Formal confirmation of the BSIP award was agreed by the Department of Transport (DfT) on 8 August. The DfT required some textual clarifications which were agreed and this allowed the formal operator objection period to commence and then statutory consultation to be undertaken. The EP was formally 'made' (implemented) on 8 December 2022 following approval by the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation. As required, the EP was been notified to the bus operators, Traffic Commissioner, Hampshire County Council and published on the City Council website: [Public transport - Travel Portsmouth](#)
- 3.4 As the original BSIP was submitted on 31 October 2021, an annual review was required to be submitted to DfT and published on the City Council website: [Portsmouth BSIP Annual Review 2022](#)
- 3.5 On 12 January 2023, the first Enhanced Partnership Board meeting was held. The Chair was the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation. The Board includes the managing directors of city bus operators First Solent and Stagecoach South and representatives of adjoining LTAs, Hampshire County Council and West Sussex County Council.
- 3.6 The year one funding payment of £7,057,100 was received on 20 January 2023. As noted below, several measures have been introduced in the current financial year, but DfT has invited authorities to complete a change control document to request unspent funding to roll forward into the next financial year.

4. Bus Service Improvement Plan Delivery to Date

- 4.1. The first measures implemented saw early journeys from 4.30am on key routes on Monday to Friday to improve access to employment. Early journeys on First Solent routes 1,2,3,7,8 and 18 started on 5 December and Stagecoach 21 and 23 from 3 January. A conscious decision has been taken to provide links beyond the Portsmouth boundary to the wider travel area with routes to Fareham, Portchester, Havant, Leigh Park and Waterlooville, recognising that employment opportunities and travel needs do not recognise administrative boundaries.
- 4.2. Late night journeys through to 1.30am on Friday and Saturday evenings were introduced on key routes from the same weeks to support the night time economy and those working in that sector.
- 4.3. Buses were introduced on Christmas Day for the first time in many years. Again, routes operated across the city boundary recognising family ties. Over 1,500 passenger journeys were made.

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- 4.4. A new National Bus Strategy Delivery Manager took up post from 3 January 2023 to lead the implementation of BSIP programme, working with colleagues across the City Council, staff at the bus operators and with the DfT.
- 4.5. Every Sunday in March 2023 will be a 'Free Fares Sunday' for passengers boarding buses in Portsmouth allowing access to the wide range of activities that the city has to offer and encouraging residents to return to the bus or try bus travel for the first time.
- 4.6. Funded by Government, but not via BSIP, the £2 maximum single fare for January to March has received positive feedback from Portsmouth residents and should help increase bus travel.

5. Zero Emission Bus Regional Area

- 5.1. Portsmouth City Council in partnership with Hampshire County Council and First Bus bid for funding from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) scheme.
- 5.2. In March 2022, the City Council was notified that it had been successful and will see 34 electric buses enter service by March 2024. These will be used on routes 1 and 3 serving Portsmouth and Southsea and through to Fareham and the 9/9A between Fareham and Gosport for the ferry to Portsmouth. The 1 and 3 will account for almost 25% of bus journeys in the Portsmouth Clean Air Zone and will travel through 4 of the 5 city AQMAs. The value of the investment, with match-funding, is £14.5 million.
- 5.3. A ZEBRA update bid for a further 28 buses has been submitted and if successful would allow four of the longer distance routes in the South East Hampshire Rapid Transit network to become zero emission. The routes are the X4/X5 between Portsmouth, Gosport and Southampton and the E1/E2 Eclipse routes which use the busway between Fareham and Gosport for the ferry to Portsmouth. The value of the bid, with match-funding, is £13.3 million.

6. Engagement

- 6.1 The Portsmouth BSIP was built on a survey of over 1,100 residents and 32 local business in summer 2021 while in 2022, over 900 Portsmouth residents took part in the National Highways and Transport survey where the city was ranked joint second amongst 111 participating authorities. Public transport feedback is being analysed to inform the next steps in BSIP.

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6.2 Portsmouth City Council will be taking part in the Transport Focus 'Your Bus Journey' starting in early 2023. Funding costs are being shared with the local bus operators. A further residents' survey will be conducted this year to ensure that the BSIP continues to reflect local priorities.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Cabinet has supported the EP and BSIP process which has taken almost two years so far and is asked to note this report.

7.2 Although a time-consuming process, which has resulted in a later start to implementation than originally anticipated, the successful funding awards for BSIP and ZEBRA will support Portsmouth City Council's Imagine Portsmouth 2040, which sets out a vision for the future of the city, particularly the creation of a green city with easy travel.

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Signed by Tristan Samuels, Director of Regeneration

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location