

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Meeting
Date of meeting:	9 January 2024
Subject:	Portsmouth Enhanced Partnership - Forward Plan
Report by:	Kerri Farnsworth - Interim Director Regeneration
Report Author:	Peter Shelley - Transport Development Manager
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the progress of the Portsmouth Enhanced Partnership and to seek approval for the Forward Plan.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the progress of the Portsmouth Enhanced Partnership and Scheme;
- 2.2 Approves the Portsmouth Enhanced Partnership Forward Plan;
- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Transport to make minor amendments to the plan.

3. Background

- 3.1 In March 2021, the Government announced a new National Bus Strategy. 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) and form an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with bus operators to deliver the desired and stated improvements. The EP places responsibilities on both the LTA and the bus operators. 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.

- 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 for Transport on 8 August 2022. Following a statutory consultation period, the EP was formally 'made' (implemented) on 8 December 2022 following approval by the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation.
- 3.4 The Portsmouth EP supports Portsmouth City Council's Imagine Portsmouth, which sets out a new city vision for Portsmouth's future by 2040. The Portsmouth EP will respond to the outcomes of the Imagine Portsmouth work, particularly about creating a city with easy travel and creating a green city.
- 3.5 The Portsmouth EP as well as other external funding received by Portsmouth City Council including the Zero Emission Buses Regional Area Grant (ZEBRA) and Transforming Cities Funding all support and help to transform bus travel, which is a key objective of the Portsmouth Local Transport Plan 4¹. These all aim to increase the number of people using the bus to above pre pandemic levels, by creating faster and more reliable bus routes, making bus tickets more affordable and launching the first electric buses. In addition to this the council is improving cycle and walking routes as well as providing rental e-scooters and bikes which all contribute to delivering cleaner air in the city.
- 3.6 On 12 January 2023, the first Enhanced Partnership Board meeting was held. Two further meetings have been held. The Chair is the Cabinet Member for Transport. The Board includes the Managing Directors of city bus operators First Solent and Stagecoach South with representatives from neighbouring LTAs, Hampshire County Council and West Sussex County Council. This reflects the key role of cross boundary services and the importance of access for residents in the wider travel to work area being able to access the city as an economic hub for leisure, employment and education.
- 3.7 Meetings have also been held of the Programme Board which involves the bus operators in delivery and the Stakeholder Group which involves wider interest groups and other transport and infrastructure providers.
- 3.8 The year one funding payment of £7,057,100 was received on 20 January 2023. A new National Bus Strategy Delivery Manager took up post from 3 January 2023 to lead the implementation of the BSIP programme, working with colleagues across the Council, staff at the bus operators and the DfT.
- 3.9 As the original BSIP was submitted on 31 October 2021, an annual review was required to be submitted to the DfT in late 2022 and a further review is now required.

¹ [Local Transport Plan 4 \(LTP4\) - Portsmouth City Council](#)



- 3.10 With twelve months' delivery experience, the opportunity is being taken to mildly update the EP and update the BSIP as an appendix.
- 3.11 The success of the BSIP award was due to the close involvement of the Cabinet and Council Members, a process of co-design with local bus operators based on many years of effective partnership working and the engagement from more than 1,100 residents and over 30 businesses so that the bid reflected local needs and priorities.

4. Bus Service Improvement Plan Delivery to Date

- 4.1 The first measures to be introduced were early morning journeys on the busiest routes from 4.30am to improve access to employment. Early journeys started with First Solent routes 1,2,3,7,8 and 18 from 5 December 2022 and Stagecoach 21 and 23 from 3 January 2023. A deliberate decision was taken to provide links beyond the Portsmouth boundary to the wider travel area with routes to Fareham, Portchester, Havant, Leigh Park and Waterlooville included. This recognises that employment opportunities and travel needs take no account of administrative boundaries.
- 4.2 Late night journeys were introduced on Friday and Saturday nights through to 1.30am on key routes from the same weeks to support the night time economy.
- 4.3 Buses routes were introduced on Christmas Day for the first time in many years. Routes operated across the city boundary, recognising family ties. Over 1,500 passenger journeys were made. Buses will also run on Christmas Day 2023 with Stagecoach re-introducing services on Boxing Day.
- 4.4 March 2023 saw the introduction of Free Fares Sundays. This was extended to Free Fares weekends in September 2023 with 100,000 extra journeys made. Free fares are also provided for Small Business Saturday on 2 December 2023.
- 4.5 Pompey Young Person Tickets, from 23 October 2023, young people in Portsmouth can now benefit from discounted tickets up to age 19 to make it cheaper and easier for them to access education and training as well as leisure opportunities.
- 4.6 Tap on Tap off ticketing (TOTO) was introduced on First Solent bus routes in Portsmouth and the city region from 26 November 2023. With TOTO, passengers simply tap their bank card or smart device on the ticket machine when they board and do the same on the exit reader when they alight. They are simply charged for the journeys they make but pay no more than a daily and weekly cap. This is ideal for hybrid working and for those whose plans may change. This will be an additional alternative to payment by cash which will continue to remain an option. We are still working with Stagecoach.



- 4.7 245 bus stops in Portsmouth have real time displays. Real time displays will be introduced across the remaining c300 bus stops in the city, where feasible, through BSIP funding.
- 4.8 As Cabinet is well aware, Portsmouth introduced a Clean Air Zone in November 2021 and has 5 Air Quality Management Areas so we were delighted in March 2022 when our bid to the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme was successful. The bid, in partnership with Hampshire County Council and First Bus 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 travel through 4 of the 5 city AQMAs.
- 4.9 A ZEBRA update bid for a further 28 buses was successful in January 2023 allowing four of the longer distance routes in the South East Hampshire Rapid Transit network to become zero emission, also from March 2024. 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 Ferry.
- 4.10 The 62 electric buses will be the largest fleet on the south coast. A bid for further 40 electric buses for route 2 between Southsea and Paulsgrove and the A3 corridor Star routes 7 and 8 between Portsmouth, Waterlooville, Wecock Farm and Clanfield was due to be submitted whilst this report was being prepared. If successful, these buses will be based at the new First Bus electric-ready bus depot and regional headquarters being established at Hilsea.
- 4.11 To further support the environment, 15 living roof bus shelters will start to be installed across the city from early 2024.
- 4.12 The city's other local operator has also invested in local bus services in the last year. In June 2023, Stagecoach invested £5.3 million in 22 new double deck buses for the 700 between Portsmouth, Havant, Chichester and Littlehampton. These are the latest Euro VI, clean diesel buses which meet CAZ standards and feature smart start stop technology.
- 4.13 The Council has funded a number of other pro-public transport measures to complement the BSIP programme. To reduce city centre car use and support the visitor economy, the Council supported a direct Park and Ride route to Southsea seafront was provided over the summer holidays and provided almost 11,000 passenger journeys.
- 4.14 Contracts for supported bus routes 12, 13/14, 18, 22 and 25 were renewed from September 2023 to maintain essential links.
- 4.15 To address the cost of living crisis and enable Portsmouth residents with an older person's concessionary bus pass to travel at cooler times of day and support their volunteering in charity shops and the like, the start time for the



Portsmouth older person's concessionary pass was extended from 0930 to 0900 on weekdays from 1 November 2022. From April 2023, the last journey time for these passes was extended from 11pm to 2am for those passholders who wish to support the night time economy. In addition, holders of those passes can catch the bus free before 0900 to travel to a hospital appointment reducing travel costs and improving attendance at appointments. Holders of a Disabled Person's concessionary pass have been able to travel at any time since 2020 to improve access to employment, training and education.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The EP and BSIP are living documents which respond to changing needs and continuing engagement with residents including the 2023 Travel Survey, which had 700 responses and the Your Bus Journey survey for Portsmouth, 580 responses so far.
- 5.2 The entire BSIP programme will be complete by March 2025, apart from the Capital Programme which will be completed six months later to avoid working on the highway at the same time as the Transforming Cities Fund works which have been retimed as a result of the pandemic.
- 5.3 In terms of additional bus journeys and extra services which BSIP will fund, please see below, these which will start from February 2024, funded to March 2026, a year later than originally funded for but will contractually operate commercially at operator risk beyond this until December 2026. This will extend the value of these elements of BSIP by 18 months and offer the best chance of commercial sustainability.
- 5.4 In terms of service improvements, the proposals are to increase the frequencies of the busiest services to make them 'turn up and go' and to improve evening and Sunday service levels across a range of routes to improve access to employment and leisure facilities. Two of the busiest routes would move to 24 hour a day operation reflecting Portsmouth's 24 hour economy.
- 5.5 The detailed BSIP developments will be provided as an appendix to the EP.

6. Reasons for recommendations

- 6.1 The Portsmouth Enhanced Partnership and Scheme are living documents, and the proposed changes reflect residents' priorities and continuous engagement with partners and the Department for Transport. All funding is within the existing BSIP programme and objectives.
- 6.2 The Portsmouth EP supports Portsmouth City Council's Imagine Portsmouth, which sets out a new city vision for Portsmouth's future by 2040. The



Portsmouth EP will respond to the outcomes of the Imagine Portsmouth work, particularly about creating a city with easy travel and creating a green city.

- 6.3 The Portsmouth EP as well as other external funding received by Portsmouth City Council including the Zero Emission Buses Regional Area Grant (ZEBRA) and Transforming Cities Funding all support and help to transform bus travel, which is a key objective of the Portsmouth Local Transport Plan 4².

7. Integrated impact assessment

- 7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment is included as appendix B of this report.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The proposed changes to the Enhanced Partnership Scheme as set out in this report fall within section 3.7.1 of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme:

'3.7.1. Once the Scheme is made, it will be reviewed by the PB every six months following publication of data on progress towards targets, as required by the BSIP – this will ensure any necessary action is taken to deliver the targets set out in the BSIP. Portsmouth City Council will initiate each review.'

- 8.2 In accordance with section 138E of the Transport Act 2000 and section 3.8 of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme, Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variations where this section is quoted are subject to bespoke voting mechanism set out in the terms of reference of the Programme Board and Enhanced Partnership Board and the final approval by Portsmouth City Council (other than the variations to the Obligations of Bus Operators (Section 4 of the Enhanced Partnership Scheme)). Therefore, any such changes must follow the governance procedures of the Enhanced Partnership and subsequently the governance procedures of Portsmouth City Council.

- 8.3 If the changes proposed in this report are approved, then the Council will also need to follow other statutory requirements, including but not limited to public procurement rules (including the Council's internal contract procedure rules), subsidy control rules and competition rules. Legal advice should be sought before implementing such changes to ensure that the Council complies with the applicable laws and regulations at all times.

9. Director of Finance's comments

- 9.1 The Bus Service Improvement Plan was approved as item 47 of the Transport Portfolio Capital Programme by Full Council on 28th February 2023.

² [Local Transport Plan 4 \(LTP4\) - Portsmouth City Council](#)

- 9.2 The financial implications of the recommendations outlined in this report have been approved by the Department of Transport via a Project Adjustment Request (PAR2).
- 9.3 Total BSIP grant funding remains at £48.3m, however the split between Capital and Revenue funding has been revised to £13.0m revenue (RDEL) and £35.3m capital (CDEL). An extension has been granted to allow expenditure in the 2025/26 financial year.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Bus Service Improvement Plan updated programme**
Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment

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
Bus Service Improvement Plan 7 March 2023	Bus Service Improvement Plan 7 March 2023
Portsmouth Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme 21 June 2022	Portsmouth Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme 21 June 2023

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: