

PORTFOLIO HOLDER – ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

DATE	13 February 2023
REPORT OF	Cllr Stewart Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Carolina Borgstrom, Director for Economy, Environment & Infrastructure
SUBJECT	Bus Service Improvement Plan & Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Progress Report
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	PHET 02/23/01

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The North East Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Plan and Scheme (EP) is expected to contribute towards key Council priorities by improving public transport within the borough, providing access to work, training, education, and social opportunities, and creating affordable transport services, which, in turn enables a 'Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities'. The BSIP is also expected to enable improved safety and sustainability.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update in relation to the work of the EP and BSIP in North East Lincolnshire (NEL).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended the Portfolio Holder notes the report and receives a further BSIP and EP progress report by early 2024, in line with the DfT and EP requirements.

REASONS FOR DECISION

This report provides an annual progress report which is a requirement of the DfT and Council's EP Plan.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the bus industry. Bus services in North East Lincolnshire play an important role in supporting the reopening of society, as communities continue to return to town centres for work and leisure purposes.
- 1.2 The Government's 2021 National Bus Strategy for England offered an opportunity for step changes in local bus services in North East Lincolnshire. The Council was awarded £4.7 million of Bus Services Improvement Plan funding through a successful funding bid to the Department for Transport's (DfT) National Bus Strategy.

1.3 Timeline of progress to date:

20 October 2021	Cabinet approval of the BSIP.
29 October 2021	Submission of BSIP to the Department for Transport.
4 April 2022	DfT announced indicative funding allocation for NELC of up to £4,684,754 (of which £3,236,512 is capital funding and £1,448,242 is revenue funding). This covers the period 2022/23 to 2024/25.
2 May 2022	Submission of 'summary table' to the DfT, setting out how the Council intends to use the indicative funding allocation. The summary table demonstrated prioritised interventions, estimated delivery timelines, and estimated costs.
30 June 2022	The Council were also required to submit a draft EP document to the DfT and provide confirmation that the Council's Section 151 Officer considers the funding represents value for money, a letter of support from local bus operators and a further document with supporting evidence.
8 August 2022	DfT confirmed the indicative BSIP funding allocation and provided feedback to the Council on the EP. (Following the DfT feedback which related to the EP document, the Council continues to address the feedback and remains in dialogue with the DfT to maximise the allocation of funding).
4 November 2022	Following the announcement of the indicative BSIP funding, the Council commissioned SYSTRA to conduct a Bus Priority Study of North East Lincolnshire to identify potential areas of improvement for public transport. The study was still being developed at the time of writing this report.
10 November 2022	In preparation for receiving the funding, the Council began the process of mobilising some of the BSIP schemes. There is a desire to deliver mobile CCTV cameras to combat antisocial behaviour, particularly around the town centre bus stops. In preparation for the delivery, arrangements were made to use the BSIP funding allocated to CCTV to tie into an existing Town Centre CCTV improvement scheme. At the time of writing this report, the town centre CCTV scheme has since been delivered, however the Council are still in a position to include the BSIP funding for further cameras.
	In addition to the CCTV cameras, the Council began looking at areas where enhanced parking enforcement will be of benefit to the local buses. From the locations identified, it was agreed that the BSIP funding allocated to parking enforcement will be used to employ one new Parking Warden who will predominantly focus on the local bus network.

6 January 2023	<p>Due to the timeline for receiving the funding, the Council have been engaging regularly with the DfT regarding the possibility of re-purposing the 2022/23 funding into the 2023/24 financial year.</p> <p>The DfT have confirmed that the Council are to continue to concentrate on getting the EP made. Once the DfT are satisfied with the EP, the DfT will advise that the Council can publish the EP document into the public domain and the DfT will release the allocated funding to the Council. The DfT have advised that once funding is released, the Council are to follow the DfT's Change Control process for the re-purposing of the funding.</p>
16 January 2023	<p>Within the BSIP submission, there was a desire to deliver Tap on, Tap off technology across all Stagecoach buses within North East Lincolnshire. This technology would enable fare capping, which would provide a fair price promise to the bus user. To support the delivery of Tap on, Tap off technology, the DfT requested that a Business Case be produced. The Council have submitted the business case and await approval/ further instruction from the DfT.</p>
18 January 2023	<p>Where possible, the Council continue to mobilise on BSIP schemes, ahead of receiving the funding.</p> <p>The Council met with Stagecoach East Midlands to discuss how the discounted fare scheme for youths will be delivered through the BSIP. In April 2022, Stagecoach delivered reduced fares for youths, separate to the BSIP, however it has since been agreed that a further reduction will be provided through the BSIP for those under 19 years of age.</p>
February 2023 (expected)	<p>It is expected that the EP document will be completed by the end of February 2023. It is anticipated that 2022/2023 funding will need to be carried into the financial year 2023/2024 to enable the re-purposing of the funding and to ensure effective and efficient delivery of the BSIP schemes across the 3 years.</p>

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 It has been agreed with Stagecoach that once the BSIP funding period ends, all measures within the BSIP that are delivered by Stagecoach will need to be commercially viable and operate without any local authority funding.

It is envisaged the BSIP, and EP performance will be taken into account by the DfT when they consider future external funding bids from the Council, therefore poor performance may have a negative impact on future bidding opportunities.

- 2.2 The continued economic downturn may have an impact on the commercial viability of bus services, which would require future consideration regarding

subsidy.

- 2.3 The BSIP and EP provides the Council with an opportunity to be seen as a best practice authority which may enhance future bidding opportunities.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1. This report provides an update in relation to the work of the Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Plan and Scheme in NEL, options are to be considered as part of the EP delivery process.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. There are potential positive and negative reputational implications for the Council resulting from this report. A formal Highways and Transport engagement process has been agreed by the Council and Equans for all transport schemes to ensure that reputation and communications are considered at an early stage for all schemes.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. The confirmed NELC BSIP and EP funding allocation is:

Financial Year	Revenue Delivery (£)	Capital Delivery (£)	Total (£)
2022-23	495,570	341,500	837,070
2023-24	520,526	669,756	1,190,282
2024-25	432,147	2,225,255	2,657,402
Total	1,448,243	3,236,511	4,684,754

- 5.2 All measures identified within the BSIP, and EP will be funded through the £4.7 million awarded to NELC from the Governments National Bus Strategy. Following the end of Government BSIP and EP funding, all BSIP schemes will need to be delivered on a commercial basis.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. During the development of the BSIP and EP, public consultation was delivered which identified the need for discounted fares for young people.
- 6.2. The BSIP and EP will aim to deliver cheaper fares to young people and those in education/ apprenticeships, which, in conjunction with other BSIP measures, will break down barriers to young people accessing employment and educational opportunities.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Government expects Local Authorities to develop ambitious strategies, targets, and measures for cutting carbon from transport in their area and to work with bus operators and energy providers to include ambitions to decarbonise the local bus fleet. The measures within the BSIP will encouraging the use of public transport within the borough by making it cheaper, and more accessible,

which supports the Councils Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, which aims to cut NEL's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030 by encouraging and supporting modal shift away from single occupancy car trips to public transport.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

- 8.1 The Economy Scrutiny Panel considered the BSIP on 12 October 2021 and the EP document on the 1 March 2022.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. All measures identified within the BSIP and EP, will be funded through the £4.7 million awarded from the Governments National Bus Strategy. It is currently anticipated that 2022/2023 funding will need to be carried into the 2023/2024 financial year to ensure effective and efficient delivery of the BSIP schemes across the 3 years.
- 9.2. Following the end of Government BSIP and EP funding, all BSIP schemes will need to be delivered on a commercial basis.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. As this is an update paper there is very little to comment upon. It remains the case that the BSIP is consistent with the stated aims and objectives of the Council underpinning its strategic objectives of Stronger Economy, Stronger Communities.
- 10.2. It should be noted that amendments to the EP from the version agreed by Cabinet will need a decision under delegated powers.
- 10.3. Any actions undertaken under the EP will need to comply with procurement and subsidy control law and Council policies.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1. There are no direct HR implications

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. All Wards

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 North East Lincolnshire Bus Service Improvement Plan, Cabinet Report, 20 October 2022 –

<https://democracy.nelincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/3.-North-East-Lincolnshire-Bus-Service-Improvement-Plan-reduced.pdf>

- 13.2 Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership and Scheme, Cabinet Report, 9 March 2022-

<https://democracy.nelincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/9.-Enhanced-Bus-Quality-Partnership-and-Schemes-combined.pdf>

13.3 Bus Services Improvement Plan and Enhanced Bus Quality Partnership Plan and Scheme – Update, Economy Scrutiny Panel Briefing Note, 8 November 2022 –

<https://democracy.nelincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/7.-Bus-Partnership-Review-Update.pdf>

<https://democracy.nelincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/7.1-BP-Appendix-A.pdf>

<https://democracy.nelincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/7.3-BP-Appendix-C.pdf>

13.3 National Bus Strategy, Bus Back Better –

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/980227/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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