

Scrutiny Briefing Note

The Economy Scrutiny Panel have asked to monitor progress on the following issues. This briefing contains the latest position as of 19 October 2023.

Subject:

The Department for Transport (DfT) have suspended the requirement for Local Transport Authorities to update their Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP) by 31 October 2023. The DfT have advised there will be updated guidance which is anticipated to require the Council to publish an updated BSIP by 31 March 2024. This briefing note aims to provide the Economy Scrutiny Panel with an update on the delivery of existing BSIP schemes and it is anticipated the Economy Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet will consider an updated BSIP during February 2024.

BSIP Update

Positive progress has been made on the delivery of the BSIP schemes with the Council and Stagecoach East Midlands continuing to work in partnership. To date the spend on BSIP projects totals £217,726 (total capital and revenue spend) from a budget of £1,449,405 for the current financial year.

The council conducted a public consultation to gather the views of existing and potential bus passengers from 12 July 2023 to 1 September 2023. The results of the consultation will be used to help shape the next BSIP strategy document.

Delivery of BSIP Measures

The following measures are being delivered as part of the 2023/2024 BSIP program:

- **Bus priority measures** – Options to deliver bus priority measures have been considered which were based upon a bus priority study. A briefing note has been considered by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport and DfT are currently reviewing the approved bus priority measures via the DfT project adjustment process.
- **Acceleration of traffic signal priority programme** – Through the BSIP the council will deliver traffic signal priority at a number of junctions in North East Lincolnshire. Purchase orders have been issued to the suppliers, who will fit additional equipment to the identified traffic signals. The additional equipment will then allow for the 'back-office' system to be implemented supporting traffic signal priority for buses which are running late.
- **Fare capping** – The delivery of fare capping will see 'tap on, tap off' card readers installed on buses in North East Lincolnshire to enable fare capping. To deliver the scheme, additional debit card readers need to be installed on buses. Stagecoach East Midlands are unable to commence the delivery of the scheme until the 2024/2025 financial year and a project adjustment form will be submitted to the DfT to request the necessary funding adjustment.
- **Bus service Improvements** – Working in partnership, Stagecoach East Midlands and NELC delivered changes to several local bus services on 3 May 2023. On 11 July 2023, a public consultation



event was held to gather bus passenger's views on the May 2023 bus service changes. The feedback provided through the consultation shaped the September changes which included an extension of the 7 service to Tesco via Belvoir Rd, adjustments to the 6 and 8 timetable to address journey time reliability issues and minor timetable changes to spread buses out along key corridors including Grimsby Rd/Cleethorpe Rd and through the Willows estate.

- **Acquisition & deployment of CCTV units** – BSIP funding has been used to deliver additional CCTV cameras in the Riverhead bus station. This will ensure all bus stops in the Riverhead are covered by CCTV with the aim of helping to ensure bus passengers feel safer when catching the bus in the town center.
- **Discounted fares for young people** – The BSIP has delivered a fare reduction on the 'Student MegaRider' weekly ticket which, from 3 September has been reduced in price from £12.80 to £10.00. Stagecoach East Midlands have reported that the growth in the sales has hit 68% which is over the original estimate, but it is expected this will be within the available budget for the current financial year.
- **Real Time Bus Information** – The Real Time Bus Information (RTI) tender has been completed, and work has started to renew existing life expired RTI signs. The first 10 signs are planned to be installed within the Riverhead bus station in late October 2023.
- **Enhanced parking enforcement** – The role of these officers is to target the bus network and bus stops to combat illegal parking which impacts on the punctuality of the bus network. The job has been advertised and until staff can be recruited, existing Parking Enforcement staff will cover the wider area bus stops as part of their mobile enforcement routes.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation** – The Transport Focus survey continues and is due to close in December 2023.

BSIP+ funding

On the 24 July 2023 the DfT awarded the Council a BSIP+ revenue funding allocation of £280,128 for 2023/2024 and a further £280,128 in 2024/2025. The revenue BSIP+ funding is in addition to original the £4.7m BSIP funding allocation. Options for the BSIP+ funding allocation have been considered by the council and submitted to the DfT in August 2023. The Council is awaiting approval from DfT to commence delivery of the BSIP+ schemes.

Bus Passenger Satisfaction Surveys

To monitor the effectiveness of the BSIP schemes, the council have commissioned Transport Focus to conduct bus passenger surveys. Passengers have been randomly selected and asked for their views since the BSIP commenced earlier this year. The snapshot below shows the latest results based on data collected between June and August this year.



Item	2019 Data	2019 Average for England	BSIP 2024/25 Target	Results so far
Overall Satisfaction	90%	89%	92%	88% ↓
Satisfaction with value for money	72%	64%	77%	75% ↑
Satisfaction with bus stops	N/A	N/A	TBC	81%
Satisfaction with journey time	89%	85%	90%	88% ↓
Satisfaction with punctuality	79%	74%	82%	90% ↑
Satisfaction with drivers	79%	76%	82%	89% ↑

Next Steps

- The council will continue to progress with the BSIP update and it is anticipated the Economy Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet will consider a report in February 2024.
- BSIP schemes will continue to be mobilised and delivered with relevant good news and communications accompanying scheme delivery.
- Quarterly BSIP Progress Reports will continue to be published, with the next report due in November 2023.

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