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# West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan

Progress Report: July 2023



**WEST OF  
ENGLAND**  
Combined Authority

 **North  
Somerset  
Council**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of report

This West of England Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was jointly produced in October 2021 by the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council, in their role as Local Transport Authorities, to meet the objectives set out in the National Bus Strategy. It is both a strategy document and key component of our bid to Government for funding to support its delivery. More details can be found at:

[www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/bus-service-improvement-plan/n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/parking-travel-roads/transport-travel/bus-travel/bus-service-improvement-plan](http://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/bus-service-improvement-plan/n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/parking-travel-roads/transport-travel/bus-travel/bus-service-improvement-plan)

In November 2022, BSIP funding to support the delivery of elements of the plan was confirmed and the first year of funding drawn down in February 2023. A condition of the BSIP funding is to publish progress against BSIP Targets as well as delivery of supported BSIP initiatives every 6 months. This is the first 6-monthly progress report, following the first Annual Review of the BSIP in December 2023, also a Department for Transport (DfT) requirement but separate to any funding allocations. The timing of the Annual Review dictates that of the 6-month review and is why this report comes four months into BSIP funding.

## 1.2 Bus Service Improvement Plan Targets

While passenger growth is the overriding objective of the Government's strategy and therefore the resulting West of England BSIP, the BSIP sets out five key targets:

- **Bus journey time:** Reduce average bus journey times on designated corridors by 2% by 2025 and by 10% by 2030
- **Punctuality:** Achieve 95% of services running on time, defined as being no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late, by 2030
- **Single Passenger Journeys:** Return to pre-pandemic patronage levels by 2025 and grow patronage by at least 24% from that level by 2030
- **Passenger Satisfaction:** Increase passenger satisfaction to 89% for 2025 and 95% for 2030
- **Bus decarbonisation:** By the end of 2023 all buses operating in BSIP area will meet the Euro VI emission standard. By 2030, at least 75% of the local fleet will be

either zero-emission or ultra-low emission and by 2035 all buses will be zero-emission buses (ZEBs). Subject to securing funding and working with bus operators to accelerate plans, our ambition is to bring the ZEB ambition forward to 2030.

Building on the West of England Bus Strategy (2020), the BSIP and its targets were informed by our 2021 assessment of the status of the bus network, its weaknesses, external comparators such as performance of other Local Transport Authorities and standards set by external bodies such as the Traffic Commissioner. They also reflect a view of what is considered achievable through the initiatives outlined in this BSIP, of which a portion received Government BSIP funding, as well as those funded through our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).

The proposed programme of works outlined in the BSIP was costed at more than £1bn. In November 2022, the Department for Transport confirmed it would provide a total of £105m for the delivery of the West of England BSIP. This is broken down into £57.5m of revenue for both transport authorities, equivalent of 38% of the revenue bid, and £48m capital funding to North Somerset Council. Please refer to **Annex A** for BSIP funding allocations per BSIP Delivery Plan.

This was the second highest award in the country and the first year's allocation (2022-23) was received in late February 2023 - almost a year into the 3-year programme.

## 2 Progress against BSIP targets

### 2.1 Baseline data

A comparison to pre-pandemic times informs the baselining approach in the BSIP. The BSIP, therefore, uses data from 2019-20, where available, as an indicator of pre-pandemic performance. Data for 2018-19 is provided for context where available, or where 2019-20 data is unavailable.

Bus use in the BSIP area, a map of which can be seen in **Annex C**, had grown consistently over the fifteen years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with bus journeys per head 18% behind the average across other metropolitan areas in 2019-20 (down from 36% in 2014-15).

The pandemic caused a large shift in bus passenger habits, with patronage dipping to 12% of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2020-21 and 33% for that year overall. Bus usage has steadily recovered since then, with patronage returning to around 79% of pre-pandemic levels in 2022-23.

### 2.2 Overview of progress against targets

Four months into delivering the BSIP programme following Year 1 funding, positive progress has been observed in relation to journey times, where we are close to the target average of 63 minutes along key corridors.

Passenger numbers had declined significantly during the pandemic but are now recovering, having reached 79% of pre-pandemic levels over the 2022-23 year, and 90.1% in the last quarter of 2022-23 (January to March).

Reliability had been on a downward trajectory but partial data from April-May 2023 shows this is now recovering. Passenger satisfaction levels have declined significantly since last measured in 2019.

The first decarbonisation target set by the BSIP, whereby buses meet the Euro VI emissions standard by the end of 2023, has almost been reached - while there is still a long way to go towards ultra-low and zero emission bus targets. A summary of progress against the BSIP targets can be viewed in Table 1 below, with external factors and delivered BSIP initiatives likely to be influencing progress summarised in Sections 2.3 and 2.4.

**Table 1 - Overview of progress against BSIP Targets**

	2018/ 2019	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022	2022- 2023	2023- 2024	Target 2024- 2025
<b>Journey time</b> (minutes)	61	63*	No data	55	56	63***	62
<b>Punctuality</b> (% buses arriving between 1 minute early and 5 minutes late)	77%*	N/A	74%	71%	67%	71.2%*	82%
<b>Passenger numbers</b> (single passenger trips, millions)	-	70.2m*	22.5m	46.8m	55.3m	Partial data	70m
<b>Passenger satisfaction</b> (% respondents rating their overall satisfaction with the bus service as 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied')	85%	86%	No data	No data	78%**	Partial data	89%
<b>Bus fleet decarbonisation</b> (% buses Euro VI)	No data	No data	48.2%	88.6%	96%	Partial data	100% <sup>1</sup>
(% zero emissions buses)	No data	No data	0%	0%	0%-4%	Partial data	N/A

\*Baseline

\*\* Partial data

\*\*\* April to April comparison

Please refer to **Annex B** for data sources and measurement approach.

## 2.3 External factors affecting targets

Since the pandemic, a key factor affecting the ability of bus operators to deliver reliable services that encourage higher passenger numbers has been a chronic **shortage of bus drivers**. This shortage is in part due to higher wages on offer in the haulage sector, which itself has faced shortages. First West of England Ltd (trading as First Bus) alone reported a shortage of over 200 drivers in October 2022 and temporarily cancelled 1450 bus journeys in Bristol in October 2022 in response to the crisis.

High streets and tourist attractions in the West of England are now showing relatively strong signs of recovery despite store closures in city centres. However, it

<sup>1</sup> The target is 100% Euro VI buses by 2023, and 100% zero-emissions buses by 2035, aiming to bring that forward to 2030.

is not yet clear how cultural **shifts towards digital** rather than physical trips (such as online shopping or online health consultations), which were accelerated by the pandemic, may be translating into overall transport demand. While parking prices have generally risen in central shopping areas, helping to encourage travel by other means, some outer shopping districts continue to offer low or free parking.

The West of England's **population** is growing faster than the national average and has a relatively high proportion of people aged 15-40. This age group may be more likely to transition to digital than other age groups. While the overall population in the region is ageing, the population of Bristol is not: the city retains many young people leaving higher education, while this is not the case in Bath.

Unemployment in the West of England is at 2.3%, significantly lower than the national average, but there has been a **general decline in commuting trips** by all modes between Census 2011 and Census 2021, with working from home becoming more prevalent. 35% of people in the whole region worked from home in 2021, with a slightly lower proportion in North Somerset of 31%. Commuting is expected to increase again, even if not to pre-pandemic levels.

**Rising costs** nationally have created a cost-of-living crisis for citizens but also put businesses and publicly funded services under pressure, with 2022-23 levels of revenue support from constituent Local Authorities for non-commercial bus services able to support a fraction of the services previously run. As a result, 25 supported bus services were lost across the West of England Combined Authority area from April 2023 as well as six commercial services. Losses to supported services were felt in North Somerset in late 2022.

The principal **bus operator** in the BSIP and EP Area (see **Annex C** for the geographical area covered) is First Bus, which operates around 90% of total bus service mileage. As of 2 April 2023, 15 other bus operators were operating services open to the public locally alongside six operators servicing schools and events and three long-distance coach operators, some of whose services are partly registered as local bus services.

## **2.4 Delivered BSIP measures and facilities**

Despite the first release of BSIP funding having taken place almost a year into the intended three-year programme, some projects were commenced at risk and other initiatives have been delivered at pace since.

### **Fares Package 1**

Patronage figures suggest the £2 single and £3.50 2-trip **fares cap** introduced in the West of England in September 2022 have encouraged passengers to return to the bus.

Subsidised fares were BSIP-funded and initially delivered at risk prior to funding confirmation (and separate to the national Government scheme launched in January 2023). A campaign to promote the fares was run.

While the impact on overall patronage is still being understood, the data shows strong growth in subsidised adult and child ticket sales. Moreover, interurban services have seen a noticeable growth in passenger numbers and overall ticket sales have increased considerably since the caps were introduced.

### **Multi-operator ticketing**

A key ambition of the BSIP is to move to multi-operator ticketing “as the norm”, enabling passengers to use the same ticket to travel on any local bus service irrespective of the operator. Early activity to progress this included the removal of price premiums on multi-operator tickets in November 2022 through the operators’ Rider Scheme, resulting in a more attractively priced multi-operator ticket.

### **Winter concessionary travel marketing campaign**

In November 2022, a marketing campaign was introduced to promote the utilisation of the Diamond Travelcard among eligible passengers during the winter season. This concessionary travel campaign spanned a four-week duration and encompassed diverse platforms across the region. These platforms included television, radio, local press, digital advertising displays, and social media channels.

### **Demand Responsive Transport**

The first West of England-wide Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service was launched in April 2023. The service comprises the two BSIP-funded DRT zones (North and South), along with the Future Transport Zone (FTZ) Dynamic DRT (DDRT) project zone. Combined, they make up **WESTlink**: <https://travelwest.info/westlink/>

**WESTlink** operates in the vast majority of the West of England, principally in rural areas, and is designed to bring citizens with a shortage of accessible bus services to main bus corridors. It runs without a fixed timetable or route and is booked ‘on demand’ by users through the **WESTlink** app or by phone.

As a new and ambitious service that was delivered at pace, operation is still under refinement and the longer-term impact on the network and patronage is yet to be determined. Driver recruitment continues to prove challenging for the delivery of the intended service, with some improvement seen in June 2023. A 3-month review of the project is to be undertaken, with a view to adjusting the service as appropriate.

Early data, however, tells us that there have been approximately 17,000 app downloads, with approximately 2000 people using the service and average rider ratings fluctuating between 4.3 and 5 out of 5. The total number of completed rides, to date is approximately 16,000 across all zones, with a percentage split by zone of:



- North Zone - 25%
- South Zone - 65%
- FTZ (DDRT) - 10%

### Long Ashton Bypass bus priority

A new bus lane was delivered along Long Ashton Bypass in April 2023 to facilitate faster journey times, improve service reliability and therefore convenience along the key corridor between North Somerset and Bristol. As a result of North Somerset Council's partnership with bus operators, the X1 service frequency on that corridor was also increased from 3 April 2023. Early indications show improved journey times, service reliability and an uplift in bus journeys on that corridor since the works and higher frequencies were completed.

### Driver recruitment and training programme

Through a mixture of funding from the West of England's BSIP allocation and the Regional Recovery and Adaptations Fund, a programme was delivered in cooperation with bus operators to address the driver crisis. First Bus are now using around 200 temporary agency drivers and have 150 drivers in training. In April 2023, the operator was able to reinstate the journeys it cut from its timetables in October 2022. Further patronage increases are expected as a result of the increased reliability that addressing the driver shortage will deliver over 2023/24.

### Enhanced commercial services

The Combined Authority and North Somerset, in partnership with First West of England, committed to promoting patronage growth through increased frequencies on the following services across the region from April 2023, as noted in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 - Joint BSIP-funded and First Bus enhancements since April 2023**

Service	Route	Enhancement
1	Southdown - Central Bath	4-5 buses per hour Mon-Fri, up from 3-4, and additional Sunday journeys
5	Whiteway - Central Bath	5 buses per hour Mon-Fri, up from 4, and additional Sunday journeys
43	Cadbury Heath - Central Bristol	8 buses per hour at peak times Mon-Fri from/to Kingswood, up from 6
48/49	Emersons Green - Central Bristol	8 buses per hour Mon-Sat, up from 6, from Fishponds to central Bristol
74	UWE Frenchay - Central Bristol	3 buses per hour Mon-Fri, up from 2 (now a total of 6 per hour combined across 74 and 70 services)

172	Bath - Paulton - Bristol	12 min frequency Mon-Fri between Midsomer Norton and Bath, up from every 15 mins. Half hourly service between Paulton and Bristol, up from every hour
349	Keynsham - Central Bristol	Timetable changes to provide combined 4 buses per hour with newly supported 522 (replacing 178), up from 3
m2	Long Ashton P&R - Centre	Every 15 mins, up from 20 mins
T1	Thornbury - Bristol	Every 20 mins, up from 30 mins
W3	Worle - Weston-super-Mare Asda	Additional evening service
W7	Haywood Village - Worle	Additional evening service
X1	Weston-super-Mare - Bristol	Up to every 15 mins, up from 20 mins
X4	Portishead - Bristol	Up to every 20 mins, up from 30 mins
X5	Portishead - Weston-super-Mare	Introduction of Sat & Sun service
X6	Clevedon - Bristol	Additional early and late journeys
X7	Clevedon - Bristol	Additional early and late journeys
X8	Nailsea - Bristol	Hourly Mon - Sat service between Nailsea, Backwell and Bristol.
X39	Bath - Bristol	4 buses per hour Mon-Fri, up from 4 buses only at peak times, and enhanced weekend service

### Supported services

Having followed the Government's criteria for the use of BSIP funding for supported bus services at the time, the following services were supported from April 2023.

**Table 3 - BSIP-supported services from April 2023**

Service	Route
522	Bath to Bristol via Keynsham
525	Yate - Emersons Green

### Creation of the West of England Enhanced Partnership

As committed to in the BSIP, the Combined Authority and North Somerset Council have developed an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with local Bus Operators and Local Highways Authorities (Councils) to deliver against the BSIP targets.

On 9 February 2023, the first EP Plan and EP Scheme were officially made, locking in specific commitments to deliver against the plan and unlocking the first year of BSIP

funding. The partnership is designed to be the long-term mechanism to deliver bus improvement objectives across the EP Area, beyond existing funding streams such as BSIP, which runs until March 2025, and CRSTS, which is funded until March 2027.

The EP Plan and Scheme are legally binding documents, reviewed annually and 6-monthly respectively, and varied according to the governance arrangements laid out in the scheme. EP Scheme commitments from the authorities and operators will evolve over time in response to progress against BSIP targets, changing regional context and availability of additional funding.

### Transfer of bus registrations function

Previously the responsibility of the Traffic Commissioner, the West of England Combined Authority now manages the registration of bus services for services operating solely in the Enhanced Partnership (EP) area. While this transfer is unlikely to influence BSIP targets in a direct way, it will give higher levels of control to the Local Transport Authorities to enforce the requirements in the EP Scheme.

## 2.5 Breakdown of BSIP Target Data

### Journey Times

**Target 1: Reduce average bus journey times on designated corridors by 2% by 2025 and by 10% by 2030**

**Table 4 - Journey times**

(Source: Timetable sample)

Area	Journey times (minutes)						Target for 2024-25
	2018-19	2019-20 (baseline)	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	
	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Apr	
<b>West of England + North Somerset</b>	61	63	No data	55	56	63	62

Improved journey times in 2022/23 are likely to have been influenced by ongoing reduced traffic volumes as we exited the pandemic as well as the effect of reduced levels of bus services on the sample size. Data for 2023/24 so far shows journey times have increased in Bristol, likely due to increased roadworks and dwell time at stops as more passengers use the bus following lockdown. Journey times reduced in Bath and North East Somerset, although the average across the BSIP area amounts to an overall increase.

## Punctuality

**Target 2: Achieve 95% of services running on time, defined as being no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late, by 2030**

In 2018/19, 77% of non-frequent bus services ran on time across the BSIP area, with non-frequent services in Bristol the fourth worst in England. Over the course of the pandemic, and since, bus punctuality has declined further as shown in Tables 5 and 6 below.

**Table 5 - Annual Bus Punctuality at principle timing points**

(Source: Real Time Information system)

Area	% of services running on time (at principle timing points)					Target for 2024-25
	2018-19 (baseline)	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
West of England + North Somerset	77%	N/A	74%	71%	67%	82%

**Table 6 - Annual Bus Punctuality at all timing points**

(Source: Real Time Information system)

Area	% of services running on time (all timing points)					Target for 2024-25
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
West of England + North Somerset	Comparable data unavailable				63%	82%

Other than the effect of the driver shortage on punctuality and reliability, inadequate recovery time built into timetables since traffic volumes have again increased is also a likely factor, as is the large number of road works on main bus corridors - which is set to increase as capital bus priority schemes are rolled out.

Initial data from 1 April, when timetables were updated and some previously removed services restored, shows that on-time journeys are now back up to 71.2%. 14.8% of journeys are late (over 5 mins) while 14% are early (over 1 min). This will be examined in more detail once more data is available.

First Bus have also worked on reliability by using prospective scheduling software to reconfigure timetables to improve punctuality from April 2023, following up with investment in additional driver hours to meet the new running times.

## Patronage

**Target 3: Return to pre-pandemic patronage levels by 2025 and grow patronage by 24% by 2030.**

Total bus trips in each area are shown in Table 7, with total trips per person in Table 8.

**Table 7 - Bus Patronage**

(source: ticket systems)

Area	Bus passenger trips (millions)			Target for 2024-25		
	2018-19*	2019-20 (baseline)	2020-21	2021-22	2022/23	Target for 2024-25
Bath and North East Somerset	No data	14.6	3.7	9.5	11.3	14.6+
Bristol	No data	40.4	13.9	28.4	32.7	40.4+
North Somerset	No data	5.0	1.5	3.0	3.8	5+
South Gloucestershire	No data	10.1	3.5	6.0	7.4	10.1+
West of England	No data	65.2	21.0	43.9	51.5	65.2+
<b>West of England + North Somerset</b>	No data	70.2	22.5	46.8	55.3	70.1+

\*Not available

**Table 8 - Bus Patronage per head**

(source: ticket systems; ONS mid-year population estimates)

Area	Bus passenger trips per head				
	2018-19**	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022/23
Bath and North East Somerset	No data	75.8	18.9	48.9	58.6*
Bristol	No data	87.3	29.7	60.1	69.2*
North Somerset	No data	23.3	6.8	13.7	17.7*
South Gloucestershire	No data	35.4	12.0	20.7	25.6*
West of England	No data	69.2	22.1	45.9	53.8*
<b>West of England + North Somerset</b>	No data	60.7	19.3	39.9	47.1*

\*Using 2021 Census population data as population estimate for 2022 not yet available

\*\* Not available

The effect on punctuality and reliability of the driver shortages felt in 2022-23 is likely to have prevented patronage from rising more significantly.

## Customer satisfaction

**Target 4: Increase passenger satisfaction to 89% for 2025 and 95% for 2030**

**Table 9 - Bus passenger satisfaction by local authority**

(source: Transport Focus)

Area	% of passengers who are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'					Target for 2024-25
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
West of England + North Somerset	85%	86%	No data	No data	Q4 78%*	89%

\*Interim data 30 January - 31 March

Early survey responses for 2022-23 indicate that passengers were most satisfied with their bus driver and the bus stop they caught the bus from, and least satisfied with the length of time they had to wait for the bus, and whether the bus they caught had arrived on time.

This may reflect the reduced services available at the time, and difficulties caused by a lack of bus drivers, given that this data was collected before the services cut in October 2022 had been restored.

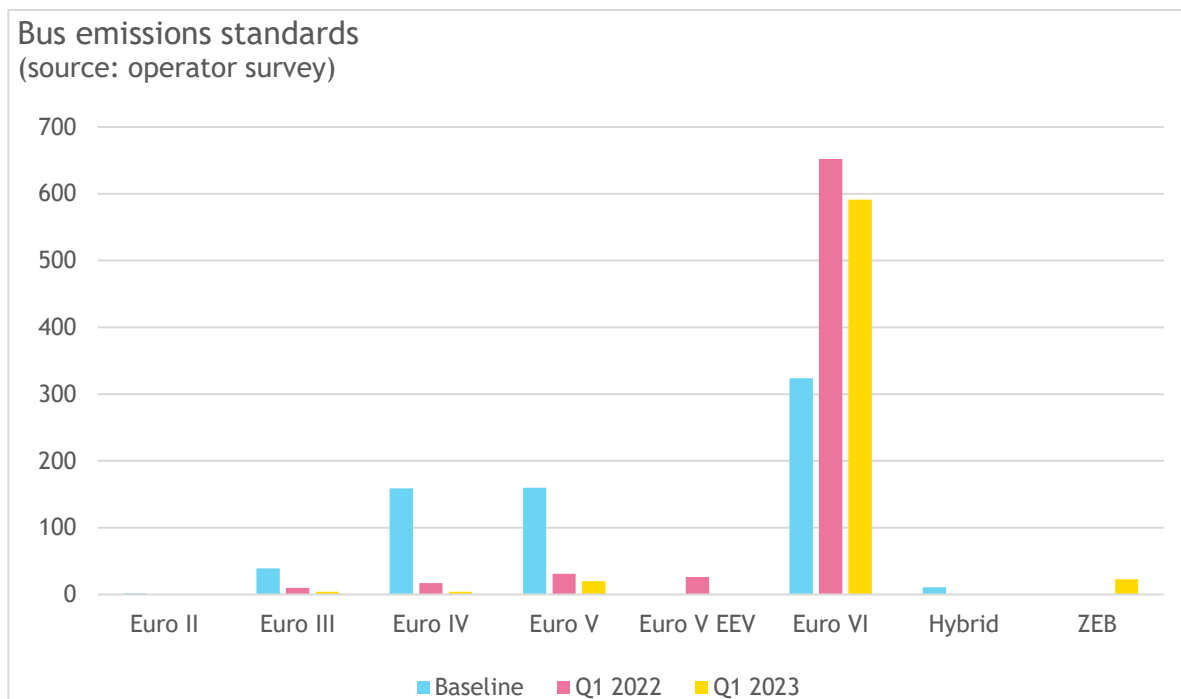
Satisfaction recorded among age groups appears to show that 16-25 year olds are least satisfied, with those aged 60+ most satisfied. Concessionary travel has been slow to recover though.

## Decarbonisation of the bus fleet

**Target 5: By 2023 all buses operating in the BSIP area will meet the Euro VI emission standard and by 2035 all buses will be zero emission - with the ambition to bring this forward to 2030.**

The number of vehicles per emissions standard is shown in *Figure 1* and the percentage of the total fleet per emissions standard in *Figure 2*. The survey sample includes buses used in the region as well as vehicles based in depots in and outside of the region, but that may operate in the region.

**Figure 1 - Number of vehicles by vehicle emission standard**



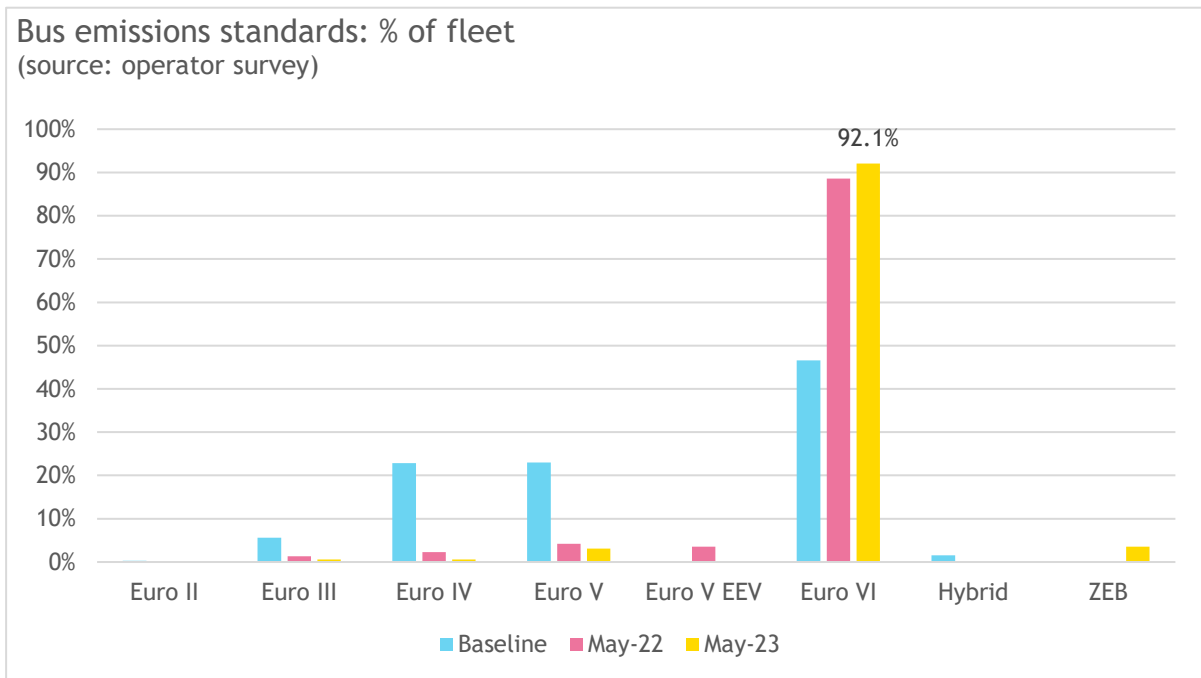
In the first quarter of 2023, 92.1% of the fleet is Euro VI standard. This indicates that we are close to our target of 100% Euro VI or higher by the end of 2023.

This data is indicative due to a small portion of buses included that may operate principally outside of the EP Area. For instance, the 4% zero emissions buses (ZEB) are mainly based in a Newport depot (23 buses), some of which may be used to operate one service in the EP Area. The next fleet survey will seek to exclude this data. The figure for ZEBs is therefore closer to 0%.

Significant progress will be needed to meet the target of 100% ZEBs by 2030.

Other than the EP Scheme requirement on operators to meet the Euro IV target by the end of 2023, also incentivising the change are the Clean Air Zones. The Bath Clean Air Zone applies charges to diesel buses that meet Euro V or lower standards (or Euro III or lower for petrol). The Bristol Clean Air Zone applies charges to diesel buses that meet Euro VI pre-2015 or lower standards (and Euro III petrol or lower for petrol buses).

**Figure 2 - Proportion of vehicles by vehicle emissions standards**



The average age of the fleet was 9.5 years in the baseline survey (2021), 8 years in 2022 and 10 years in 2023. This compares to the average age of 9.5 years for buses in England outside London in 2020-21<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> DfT [Bus 0605](#): data discontinued after 2020/21.



## Annex A - BSIP funding allocations

**Table 10 - BSIP funding allocations per Delivery Plan**

Delivery Plan	Total BSIP Revenue to 2025 (joint)	Total BSIP Capital to 2025 (NSC)
A: Intensive Services	£7,500,000	£0
B - Bus priority	£0	£35,160,000
C: Fares	£21,466,857	£0
D: Integrated Ticketing	£110,000	£70,000
E: Integrated Services	£0	£12,753,000**
F: Single Integrated System	£5,700,000	£0
G: Modern Buses	£0	£0
H: Passenger Voice	£80,000	£0
I: Non-intensive services	£19,848,641	£0
J: Longer-term	£0	£0
Delivery (including EP & consultancy)	£2,700,000	£0
Skills training for drivers and engineers	£100,000*	£0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£57,505,498</b>	<b>£47,983,000</b>

The West of England BSIP covers the period up to 2030, with delivery in two phases:

- Phase 1: up to 2027
- Phase 2: from 2027 onwards.

Delivery of the first phase relies on the release of BSIP funding on an annual basis up to March 2025, as well as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) - for capital expenditure in the West of England Combined Authority area. CRSTS funding covers the period from 2022-23 to 2026-27.

The BSIP funding covers the period from 2022-23 to 2024-25 and required the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme to be made for the release of Year 1 BSIP funding, and to be developed year on year for the remaining funding to be released.

The making of the EP (originally envisaged for April 2022) was delayed until after the Government's Autumn Statement in 2022, with Year 1 funding drawn down in late February 2023. As a result, the timescales for delivering the funded BSIP

initiatives have been significantly compressed.

Delivery of Phase 2 will depend on the availability of future streams of funding and further commitment to invest from bus operators.

Delivery of both phases will also depend on organic growth as the local bus market recovers from the pandemic, adjusts to changes in lifestyles and takes advantage of the new funding opportunities to meet the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy.

## Annex B - Data sources and approach

### Journey times

A representative sample of bus journey times for journeys in each area is sourced from the registered timetables, and the average journey time calculated. This is carried out shortly after timetable changes in April and September.

### Punctuality

Punctuality is measured using schedule adherence reports from our real-time information system (RTI).

- The data covers non-frequent<sup>3</sup> services as these are the majority of services (e.g. 100% of services are non-frequent in Bristol)
- From April 2022 intermediate timing points<sup>4</sup> are measured in addition to key timing points. This covers roughly 90% of bus operating mileage in the area and will be expanded to cover 100% of mileage
- This punctuality data includes services that are cancelled on the day as well as buses that are early or late. This data is sometimes referred to as ‘reliability’ data
- Analyse Bus Open Data (ABODS)<sup>5</sup> will be reviewed and considered in future evaluations. Currently it only covers approximately 60% of services, while the RTI data covers approximately 85% of services.

### Bus patronage

Data is recorded by electronic ticket machines (ETMs) and supplied by bus operators to the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council.

Patronage figures in the BSIP itself differ to those included in this report. This is because the data in the BSIP came from DfT’s annual reporting, which is based on the data collected by the Local Transport Authorities from the operators, but which includes some adjustment and weighting. Since DfT expects reporting against BSIP targets every 6-months but only reports these figures annually, we will begin to use our own collected data for the BSIP progress reports and, from December 2023, the BSIP Annual reviews (replacing DfT’s figures with our own where possible).

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<sup>3</sup> Frequent services are those where the service interval is 10 minutes or less i.e. on at least 95% of occasions: Six or more buses will depart within any period of 60 minutes; and the interval between consecutive buses will not exceed 15 minutes. Non-frequent services are any services that do not meet these criteria.

<sup>4</sup> A timing point is a designated stop where the bus has been registered with the relevant Traffic Commissioner to depart from at a specific time. Intermediate timing points are bus stops between these timing points which do not have a specific time registered, but where passengers may expect buses to arrive at a certain time.

<sup>5</sup> ABODS data is collected from ticket machines and analysed by DfT.

Patronage figures for WESTLink are not included in the overall patronage data recorded for this report as it is not a scheduled service.

### **Passenger satisfaction**

The annual Bus Passenger Survey carried out by Transport Focus is used to measure passenger satisfaction in the West of England.

The surveys were paused after 2019 due to the pandemic. These surveys restarted on 30 January 2023.

While interim data is becoming available for 2023, the survey portal system is new and data requires a review and cleanse by Transport Focus ahead of the August 2023 mid-year report. The figures reported above for 2022-23, can therefore only be taken as an early indicator.

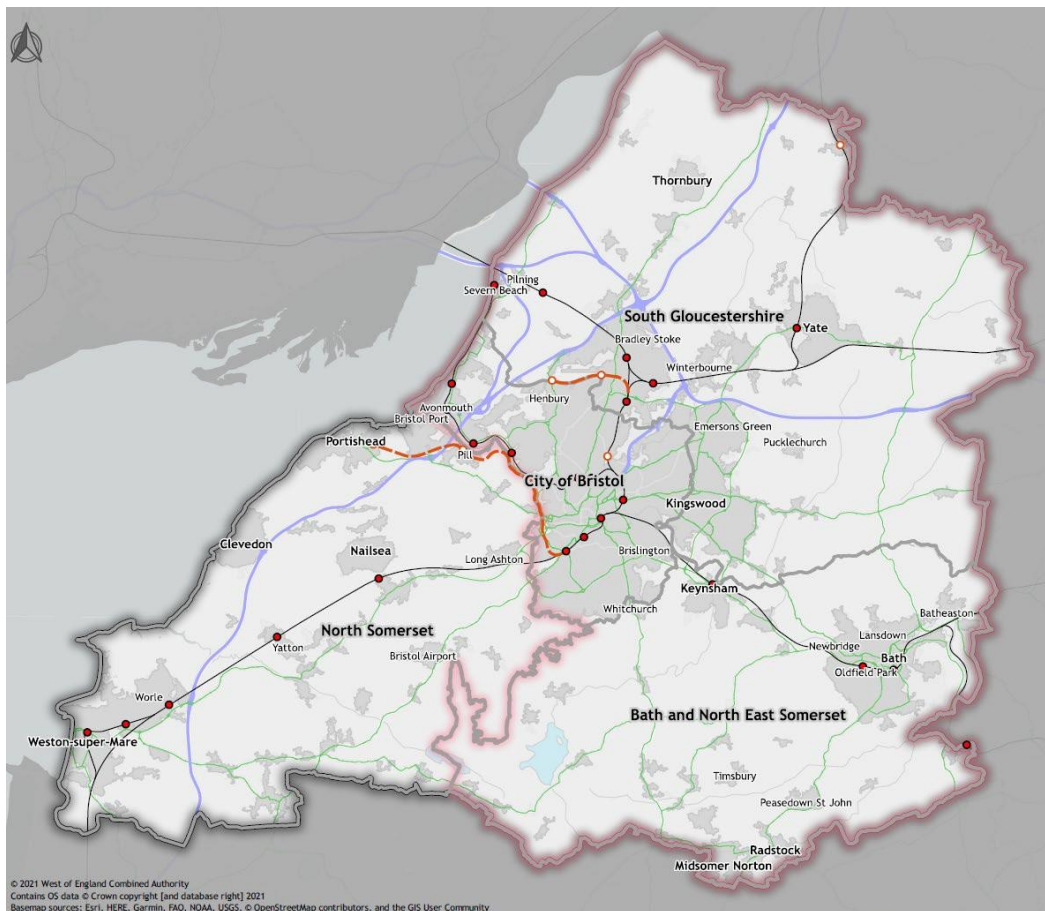
### **Bus fleet decarbonisation**

A Vehicle Standards Fleet Survey has been carried out annually since 2021 during the initial development of the BSIP. This was repeated in May 2022 and June 2023. From 2022-23, these surveys will be carried out every six months.

## Annex C - Geographical area covered by the BSIP

The area covered by the BSIP and the Enhanced Partnership Scheme consists of the combined areas of the West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council. Over 1 million people live in the region, including Bath, Bristol, Chipping Sodbury, Clevedon, Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Nailsea, Portishead, Radstock, Thornbury, Weston-super-Mare, Yate and the surrounding rural areas. A map of the geographical area is shown in *Figure 3*.

**Figure 3 - Geographical area covered by the BSIP**



Travel patterns in the region are based predominantly around the wider Bristol Travel-to-Work area and this aligns well with the two partner authorities' outer boundaries. The principal local bus operator - First West of England Ltd (trading as First Bus) - covers the whole of this area, with some overlap into Somerset and Wiltshire. Apart from the Weston-super-Mare town network, most bus services from North Somerset run into the West of England Combined Authority area.