



<b>Report to:</b>	Transport and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	26 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	BSIP, Bus Reform and Passenger Experience update
<b>Director:</b>	Simon Warburton, Executive Director for Transport
<b>Author:</b>	Helen Ellerton, Head of Transport Policy

## 1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Transport and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee on the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Bus Reform.

## 2. Information

### Background

- 2.1 Following publication of its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in October 2021, in April 2022 the Combined Authority was notified by the Department for Transport (DfT) that it had been indicatively awarded £69,974,070 in revenue funding to support its delivery ('Phase One' funding). A further £7,750,442 in revenue funding from DfT (BSIP+ or 'Phase Two') was confirmed in September 2023, bringing the total value of the programme to £77,724,512.
- 2.2 In agreeing what the funding should be spent on, the DfT advised that it wanted to see it prioritised towards 'cheaper and simplified fares' and 'increased service frequencies and new routes'.
- 2.3. The Combined Authority agreed its the priorities and set these out in a BSIP Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme, which was agreed with bus operators and made in November 2022, confirming allocation of. funding and a commitment to delivering the associated projects.
- 2.4 The current programme funding allocation is set out in Table 1 below.



**Table 1: Current BSIP Programme Funding Allocation (as of January 2024)**

<b>Schemes</b>	<b>Total allocated funding</b>
Mayor's Fares	£33,974,070
Network enhancements	£18,500,000
Superbus	£10,600,000
BSIP+ (network protection)	£7,750,442
Demand Responsive Transport	£1,000,000
Enhanced Safer Travel Partnership with West Yorkshire Police	£1,000,000
Marketing and Communications	£1,000,000
Travel Plan Network team	£500,000
Mobility Credits	£500,000
Mobility Hubs	£250,000
Urban Traffic Management Control	£450,000
Internal capacity	£2,200,000
	<b>£77,724,512</b>

### **BSIP 'Phase Three' funding and the Department for Transport's Requirements**

- 2.4 Following the announcement of additional BSIP funding as a result of the DfT's Network North, the Combined Authority received a letter from the DfT on 7 December 2023 which advised of an additional indicative allocation of up to £13,373,000 revenue funding to support delivery of the BSIP in the 2024/25 financial year.
- 2.5 This funding is in addition to the existing Phase 1 BSIP funding allocation of £69,974,070 million and Phase 2 BSIP (BSIP+) funding allocation of £7,750,442. Terms of the existing Memorandum of Understanding still apply – including quarterly reporting to DfT and publishing data against BSIP targets every 6 months.
- 2.6 Additional guidance advised that the DfT requires the following documents/information to be submitted by LTAs by 31 January 2024:
- Updated EP - can be submitted as a draft, but any changes to the existing published EP must be approved by the EP board and published by 31 March 2024 at the latest. This must present a confirmed list of funded schemes, including specific outputs, who will deliver them, and deadlines.
  - 2023-24 Q3 quarterly report.
  - Details of overall LTA bus budgets for 2023/24 and 2024/25.
  - As a condition of funding expected to submit Bus Connectivity Assessments and an updated Bus Service Improvement Plan, by dates to be specified (Spring/Summer 2024 expected).

### **Proposed Allocation of Phase Three Funding and Update to the Enhanced Partnership**

- 2.7 Following discussion with internal and external stakeholders, it is proposed to allocate the additional funding to further supporting the BSIP programme's existing priority schemes - the Mayor's Fares, Bus Network Improvements and the Enhanced Safer Travel Partnership with the West Yorkshire Police.
- 2.8 The proposed allocation is set out in Table 2, below.

2.9 **Table 2 – the proposed allocation of BSIP Phase 3 funding**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Phase 3 additional funding allocation</b>	<b>Total programme funding allocation</b>
<b>Mayor's Fares</b>	£11,000,000	£44,974,070
<b>Bus Network Improvements</b>  (inc. Network protection, Enhancements and Superbus)	£2,057,000	£38,907,442
<b>Enhanced Safer Travel Partnership</b>	£316,000	£1,316,000
<b>Other</b>	n/a	£5,900,070
<b>Total:</b>	£13,373,000	£91,097,512

- 2.8 This funding would ensure continuation of the Mayor's Fares, alongside the national scheme, until at least March 2025, the continued deployment of the Safer Travel team of 10 Police Community Support Officers and further protection / enhancements to the bus network – supporting the programme's overall aims of increased bus patronage and improved passenger satisfaction.
- 2.9 This approach was endorsed by the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance's Executive Board on 17 January 2024.
- 2.10 Subject to approval by Transport Committee, this allocation will form the basis of the updated BSIP Enhanced Partnership Scheme (draft) and the Project Adjustment Request due for submission to the DfT by 31 January 2024 and 29 February 2024 respectively.
- 2.11 Furthermore, and subject to any further comments from the Department for Transport, the Combined Authority will commence the process of formally updating its Enhanced Partnership via the required legal process and securing agreement to this from local bus operators and district councils through the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance.

## **BSIP Programme Updates**

2.12 The following section provides updates relating to the key projects being delivered as part of the BSIP programme.

### **Mayor's Fares**

2.13 Following the launch of the Mayor's Fares in September 2022, the scheme has continued, offering bus passengers capped £2 singles and £4.50 day tickets, at a cost of £22.4m (as of December 2023).

2.14 The Mayor's Fares scheme is now running concurrently to a national £2 fare cap scheme launched by the DfT in January 2023, which is currently expected to continue to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024. The Combined Authority has not received any additional funding to support the Mayor's Fares within the West Yorkshire region during this time.

2.15 The Combined Authority commissioned an online panel survey to gain insight into West Yorkshire residents use and perception of the Mayor's Fares. The survey was conducted between the 12-24th October 2023 and received 1,028 responses. Respondents were aged 19-65 as the target audience for turn-up and go adult fares and the online panel sample was weighted by age, gender and ethnicity.

2.16 The headlines from the survey are:

- 62% of respondents were aware of Mayor's Fares, rising to 78% for regular bus users (those who use at least once a week).
- 25% of respondents reported using buses more than compared to before Mayor's Fares, whilst 19% said they were using it less, so an overall net gain.
- Of those who said they were using bus more often, two-thirds said this was due to Mayor's Fares.
- Half of respondents who now use the bus more often (than before Mayor's Fares) have shifted from using private motorised modes. Younger people in particular (those aged 19-30 year) are more likely to have switched from car (as driver or passenger) to bus.
- Overall, 35% of respondents reported either using buses more or were encouraged to keep using buses due to the Mayor's Fares scheme.
- Over 50% of respondents agreed that Mayor's Fares makes it easier for them to get around West Yorkshire and nearly 60% agreed that Mayor's Fares makes it easier for them to make multiple bus journeys on the same day.

- Nearly 70% agree Mayor's Fares have made the cost of bus travel easier to understand, with just under a third strongly agreeing.
- Over 70% of respondents think Mayor's Fares will encourage people to try using the bus, and over 60% say that they are likely to recommend using the bus to others as a result of the fare cap.

2.20 These outputs (see Appendix 1) indicate that Mayor's Fares is positively contributing to the objectives set out at the project's inception, and the BSIP programme more generally. Further research is planned to monitor and evaluate the schemes ongoing impact.

2.21 Work is now underway to determine the future funding requirements of the Mayor's Fares scheme within West Yorkshire, including operator subsidy levels and ensuring parity with other national fare offers.

### Bus Network Plan

2.22 Following funding approval by Transport Committee in May 2023, the first two BSIP-funded 'Superbus' schemes were launched in September 2023 in partnership with Transdev Blazefield. The schemes delivered improvements to services operating across the Keighley town network and the 'Aireline' route between Shipley and Leeds.

2.23 An increase in passenger numbers on the improved services has been noted and is currently being analysed further. Results will be shared in due course.

2.24 Further Superbus schemes are due to be delivered in Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield, in partnership with First and Arriva respectively as detailed in Table 3 below. A change request to draw down the funding required for this is covered later in this paper.

**Table 3: Overview of Superbus schemes.**

<b>Scheme (District)</b>	<b>Operator</b>	<b>Proposed Launch Date</b>	<b>Details of bus service enhancements</b>	<b>Allocated budget</b>
Keighley town network (Bradford)	Transdev	Sept 2023	K1/2 and K7 frequency uplift. £1 flat fare on all Keighley town network services	£1,475,944
Aireline services (Bradford/Leeds)	Transdev	Sept 2023	Frequency enhanced between Shipley and Leeds (from 30 to 20)	£1,282,963
Halifax-Huddersfield (Kirklees/Calderdale)	First	Feb 2024	New direct links	£2,637,772

Castleford- Normanton- Altofts (Wakefield)	Arriva	May 2024	Enhanced frequency to Altofts and Normanton. New direct links to Pinderfields.	Up to £2,000,000
<b>Total allocated revenue budget:</b>				£7,396,679

2.25 A first tranche of new and enhanced bus services, commissioned by the Combined Authority, is due to launch in February 2024 bringing improvements to buses across West Yorkshire. These services, as set out in Table 4 below, have been chosen based on a range of factors including local demand, standards of existing bus provision, housing and employment accessibility, deprivation of communities affected and other operational/commercial insight.

**Table 4: Tranche 1 of Enhanced Bus Services Due to Launch in 2024**

District	Service No's	Route	Improvement
Calderdale	548/549	Halifax – Brighouse - Huddersfield	Daytime frequency uplift to combined 15 mins
Kirklees	212	Dewsbury – Hospital – Alverthorpe - Wakefield	Daytime frequency uplift to 30 mins
Leeds	14	Pudsey – Leeds	Daytime frequency uplift to 30 mins
Wakefield	106	Wakefield – Hall Green via Kettlethorpe	Evening frequency enhancement to 30 mins
	148/149	Wakefield – Knottingley via Pontefract	
	189	Wakefield – Castleford via Normanton	
	268	Bradford – Wakefield via Cleckheaton	
	444/446	Leeds – Wakefield via Rothwell	
	496	Wakefield – Upton via South Elmsall	
	126	Wakefield - Dewsbury	
	195	Wakefield - Hemsworth via Walton & Ryhill	

- 2.26 Subject to further funding approvals and successful procurement exercise, a further tranche (referred to as Tranche 1.5) of service enhancements is also planned to be delivered in July 2024. The proposed enhancements are set out in Table X below include new services and improved frequencies / service hours, improving services across all five district authorities.
- 2.27 Work is now underway to determine further service enhancements to deliver with the remaining money allocated to network improvements and will be reported to Transport Committee in due course.
- 2.28 Additionally, BSIP+ or 'Phase 2' funding to support network protections was received in summer 2023, totalling £7,750,442 for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years. As of December 2023, £765,201 of this has been invested, supporting 58 services in total including 30 contract cost uplifts and 28 services otherwise as risk of being withdrawn. Stabilising the bus network continues to be a key element of BSIP, working alongside investment in service enhancements, to ensure local communities continue to be served.

### **Enhanced Safer Travel Partnership**

- 2.29 Through the Enhanced Safer Travel Partnership with West Yorkshire Police, the BSIP programme is funding the recruitment of a team of 10 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) for three years to tackle anti-social behaviour and other safety issues across the bus network. The first eight of these PCSOs were deployed between September to November 2023, with the others currently in training and due to be deployed from February onwards. The team will be supported by a Police Sergeant and the Combined Authority's Safer Travel Manager.
- 2.30 Once the team is fully up and running, there will be three Safer Travel Officers in each district working full time, patrolling bus stations and buses across the county. Key aims of the team aim to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, increase the safety of women and girls, and reassure and protect more vulnerable travel users.
- 2.31 The officers are embedded in the neighbourhood policing teams across the county and work with partner agencies to proactively plan events in bus stations based on national themes, such as hate crime, disability awareness and knife crime. In the short time the team has been in place they have already been involved in 44 events/operations.
- 2.32 The new PCSOs join a range of improvements across the bus network to increase safety, including:
- 24/7 CCTV recorded CCTV, which is monitored by LeedsWatch at 27 bus stations across the region. LeedsWatch will alert the police or bus station staff to incidents, such as anti-social behaviour as required and regularly provide evidence packages to the police to assist with successful prosecution of offenders.



- Dedicated help points in unstaffed bus stations which have already been used in medical emergencies.
- All West Yorkshire Bus Stations are registered Safe Places, offering help if someone is anxious or feels vulnerable while they are out and about.
- Bus station staff receive conflict management training to minimise disruption and safety concerns for passengers.

### **Other programme updates**

- 2.33 To support delivery of the BSIP and other business-as-usual activity supporting the bus network, the programme has funded the successful recruitment of 10 full-time-equivalent Combined Authority staff members, and 4 existing posts have been regraded.
- 2.34 The BSIP programme has also invested £333,333 to support the launch of the 'Walk it Ride it' behaviour change campaign, alongside funding from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and the West Yorkshire Ticketing Company. The impact of this campaign on passenger perceptions and travel habits is currently being monitored and intelligence will be shared in due course.

### **Passenger Experience Update**

#### 2.35 Passenger trends

Weekday bus use in December was higher than last year, at 87% of baseline (March 2020). This compares to 82% at the same point in the previous year. While use of under 26 / student tickets reduced from 74% to 71% of baseline compared to last year, all other passenger cohorts saw increased usage.

- 2.37 Including weekend data reveals overall bus use at 89% of baseline compared to 82% last year, with some recent weeks reaching 92% of baseline.
- 2.38 In November 2023, weekday MetroLine call centre volumes were 87% of the equivalent month in 2019. Metro travel centre sales volumes in November 2023 were 4.6% lower than November 2022, however the number of enquiries was 13.8% higher.
- 2.39 Wider information relating to insights on transport network use and Metro-branded activity is presented in Appendix 3.

### **Network Performance/Reliability**

- 2.40 Bus service performance is measured by reliability, which is the number of service journeys which actually operate, and punctuality, the percentage of buses operating on

time (i.e., no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late) at the start of the route and at timing points along the route.

- 2.41 The Bus Alliance collates figures on this from the three major bus companies in the region (First, Arriva and Transdev), the latest available quarterly figures West Yorkshire wide are:

Month	Reliability (%)	Punctuality (%) (from the first stop)	Punctuality (%) (stops along the way)
July 2023	97.72	90.86	82.52
August 2023	97.64	91.41	84.34
September 2023	96.50	88.60	79.43

- 2.42 The bus industry target is for 99.5% of registered bus service mileage to be operated (reliability) and 95% of buses to run no more than 1 minute early or 5 minutes late (punctuality). The above results show performance significantly less than the target over the full period. The results are currently aggregated over all operators at all times of the week and the passenger experience at busier times may be worse than this in some places.

### Real Time Information

- 2.43 Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) is provided on digital displays at approximately 2,500 bus stops and bus station stands across West Yorkshire. Generally, this provides a good reflection of service timetables combined with predicted arrival times based on live vehicle tracking.
- 2.44 However, where a bus journey that is not running is nevertheless reported as running by an RTPI system, it can be considered a 'ghost bus'. The customer sees an impending bus arrival on the bus stop display or online, but the bus doesn't arrive, and the predicted bus arrival disappears from the screen. The customer then either continues to wait for a bus or makes alternative travel arrangements. As this is a bad outcome for all involved, work with bus operators is ongoing to improve the systems and practices to reduce the number of ghost buses occurring.
- 2.45 With the currently available data sources and IT systems in the UK, and despite the CA having a leading RTPI system, it is not possible to identify the bus journeys that have been cancelled before or after the journey has started. This makes it difficult to understand the full scale of the problem or attribute particular causes. However, the CA is aware that the primary cause of ghost buses is where bus operators have not recorded in a timely manner which buses have been cancelled, using a back-office system linked to the CA's RTPI system. Although the recorded cancellation rate has gone up, it is not as high as it need to be.

- 2.46 To address these challenges, commencing in January 2023, the CA convened a Ghost Bus Working Group with operator representation from Arriva, First and Transdev. The working group's fourth meeting took place in November 2023 and the group will continue to meet as required. One recent positive outcome is that a systems issue was identified, investigated and resolved by the group, enabling bus cancellation data to be fed through to the CA more consistently. Another improvement is that the three large operators' electronic ticket machines on buses are being upgraded to 4G, which should improve vehicle tracking particularly in rural areas.
- 2.47 From 1 January 2024, bus occupancy data will no longer be reported on real time displays. Introduced in November 2020, occupancy data was a very useful feature for customers to have during the height of the Covid pandemic. The customer could see 'low', 'medium' or 'high' occupancy on the display and use that information to decide which bus to take. This was very successfully implemented and achieved, facilitating social distancing and inhibiting the spread of the virus. It was implemented across approximately 2,500 bus stops with real time displays, out of approximately 13,000 total bus stops in West Yorkshire. Three years later, the West Yorkshire Bus Alliance decided that the purpose had been achieved and was no longer relevant within the current bus environment. However, the feature can easily be turned back on if and when a public health situation warrants doing so.

### **Bus Reform**

- 2.48 In September 2023, following final approval of the Bus Reform Assessment and provision of the external Audit report, the Combined Authority agreed to proceed with consulting on the proposed Franchising Scheme.
- 2.49 The consultation closed on Sunday 7th January 2024, following a 3-month consultation period. The results of this are now being analysed and will be presented as part of the consultation report to the Combined Authority in March 2024, informing a final recommendation to the Mayor of West Yorkshire at the Combined Authority meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> March.

### **3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications**

- 3.1 A key aim of the West Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan is to support the decarbonisation of the local bus network, including delivery of a carbon zero bus fleet by

2036, as well as encourage more travel by bus and other sustainable modes in order to tackle the climate emergency.

#### **4. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 4.1 The key aims of the West Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan are to create a more inclusive, accessible bus service and to better connect communities, particularly those area of high deprivation, in order to support the region's inclusive growth ambitions.

#### **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 Supporting Equality and Diversity through ensuring the bus service is attractive, inclusive and accessible for all is a key aim of the West Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 5.2 The Mayors Big Bus Chat public engagement prioritised engaging with seldom heard groups and, where possible, obtaining data on protected characteristics from participants, in order to strengthen the insights it provides to support Equality and Diversity within the BSIP.
- 5.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and will be reviewed regularly throughout the programme's delivery.

#### **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

#### **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

#### **8. Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

#### **9. External Consultees**

- 9.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

#### **10. Recommendations**

- 10.1 That the Scrutiny Committee notes the report.

#### **11. Background Documents**

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

#### **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Mayors Fares Survey Results

Appendix 2 - Insights on transport network use